

Newton and Helen Mayer Harrison

Newton and Helen Mayer Harrison (often referred to simply as “the Harrisons”) have worked for almost forty years to research issues of water in an ecological context. Their work involves extensive study, community discussion, proposals for solutions, and a mapping and documentation of these proposals in an art context. The *Sacramento Meditations Project* in 1977 began with six months of research in the Berkeley Water Resources Library. The three-museum show that resulted from this work included street posters, billboards, and graffiti. The work traveled to the San Francisco Museum of Art and to the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art. The work illuminated water conditions that were not public knowledge at the time, and advocated a bio-regional approach to Central Valley water issues.

The Harrisons have focused on watershed restoration, urban renewal, agriculture and forestry issues among others. The current work, *Sagehen: A Proving Ground*, is a projected 50-year research project that studies the effects of global warming, drought, and species adaptation, at a 9,000 acre site in the High Sierras. “Our work begins when we perceive an anomaly in the environment that is the result of opposing beliefs or contradictory metaphors. Moments when reality no longer appears seamless and the cost of belief has become outrageous offer the opportunity to create new spaces – first in the mind and thereafter in everyday life.”

A third work in the Conley Gallery exhibition, *The Bays at San Francisco Become a 400,000-acre Estuarial Lagoon When The Oceans Rise About 3 Meters*, examines the future possibility of a large estuarial lagoon in the central valley and its implications for biological adaptation.

The Harrisons are Professors Emeriti at the University of California, San Diego, and research professors at University of California, Santa Cruz.