

# BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Photographs of the Golden State's public lands address climate change and its effect on a universal symbol of beauty: the wildflower.

In 1992, conservation photographer Rob Badger first experienced a rare and spectacular display of California wildflowers in the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve, a state park in the Mojave Desert. Not wanting his partner and fellow photographer Nita Winter to miss what he was seeing, he returned to San Francisco to get her. They quickly drove back to the desert so that they could enjoy and photograph this beauty together.

Over 25 years later, their partnership continues with their documentary art project *Beauty and the Beast: California Wildflowers and Climate Change*. Through their art, Rob and Nita have created a visual story about nature's diverse wildflower communities, now found mainly on our public lands.

Nita and Rob document spectacular wildflower landscapes and create intimate floral portraits on California's public lands, from below sea level in Death Valley National Park to above 11,000 feet in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. *Their photographs show us how climate change is irreversibly altering these delicately balanced ecosystems.* As wildflower habitats change or disappear, the animals, birds, and insects that depend on them vanish as well.

Nita and Rob's mission is to inspire action through visual storytelling by combining documentary art with conservation, climate, and botanical sciences. *It is the artists' hope that this exhibit will inspire you to help reduce carbon pollution, habitat destruction, and species loss.*

So, as you move through the exhibit, take a moment to stop and admire the beauty of California's wildflowers and where they live, and learn how you can help ensure that these striking flowers will be around for generations to come.