

From: Columbia Museum of Art
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PRESS RELEASE

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RELEASE**

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February 17, 2015

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The CMA Hosts "Tatara Fire: A Discussion with Henry Mandell"

The Burning of Columbia and Transformation Through Fire

Tuesday, February 24, 2015

<https://files.ctctcdn.com/c19373e7001/a9632e3b-1338-47ca-b841-e937da99c207.jpg>

Columbia, S.C. - The Columbia Museum of Art hosts a discussion with New York-based artist Henry Mandell about his mural, *Tatara Fire*, and its

connection to the 150th anniversary of the burning of Columbia on Tuesday, February 24, at 7:00 p.m.

"The commission to create *Tatara Fire* has allowed me to explore the theme of transformation through fire on a grand scale," says Mandell. "The painting is composed from ancient stories, the history of Columbia, and the transformative power of fire. The layered, stretching, and folding of the words and the unique coloring of each individual letter combines into a rich visual metaphor about unleashing energy. Each line is the altered shape of an individual letter of these stories. I transform the words into abstraction, to infuse the mural with the spiritual nature of creating sacred objects from humble materials."

Mandell was born in New York City and continues to live and work there, making abstract artworks with unusual methods. Paintings and works on paper are composed from text which is transformed into complex patterns from the outlines of all the words. Using stories, raw data, or poetry as a starting point and working by hand with a digital brush, Mandell transforms the shapes of letters into new forms using computers and drawing programs. Once completed, the paintings are printed on canvas with archival inkjet printers.

In 2014, his 11 x 26 foot mural *Tatara Fire* was installed in the CMA. Commissioned by the museum, *Tatara Fire* refers to the symbols of transformation through fire. From the forging of ancient Japanese steel in traditional clay tatara kilns to the burning of the city of Columbia at the end of the Civil War, the artwork draws viewers into its intricate patterns, perhaps to reflect on how our past informs our present.

The acquisition of the mural was made possible by a generous gift from the CMA's young professionals membership affiliate group, the Contemporaries. The mural is the first digital painting to enter the CMA collection. *Tatara Fire* is now on view in CMA's second-floor atrium.

In addition to his fine art practice, Mr. Mandell is also project manager for the estate of Mark Rothko, working there to create digital archives of Rothko's work and historical records, as well as overseeing all reproductions of the artist's work and management of licensing. Mr. Mandell received a BFA in Fine Art from Ithaca College and has studied at Parsons School of Design and The School of Visual Arts in New York.

This lecture is sponsored by the CMA's Contemporaries and by The Palladium Society of Historic Columbia.

Happy hour begins at 6:00 p.m. Lecture begins at 7:00 p.m. Cash bar. \$10 / \$8 for members / \$5 for students. Free for Contemporaries and Palladium members. Please RSVP by February 23.

For more information, visit columbiamuseum.org <http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Zo7caXg8uJOPXmUQUrn1mw9as8IL_cJ-h8XEWFSWPWiVYtElhRtwk25ij4ShiAc6AVzU_Ec8tVVP3eXGtGCBdD6XZxMpeWvV3vwW4kF4wTf2CxVX5tRUiKjiJpQ7V9dii0TqNnTZN8n5GMY3l4cHrOfLxyYIMM8XLW4U6GScYcWcQE4Dwli-lyQ==&c=vdfCGI-aNcMs7sDfFc-uZZTfqj3uRTp8fKJ6gEwFaZ-e8nlZMbcL4w==&ch=DtazyqdEweNSYXARAwWrPcOb4Sh4kd9cBCqGHfrN2ZSGm2skM1iYfg==>

For a biography of the artist and to see more of his work, visit henrymandell.com <http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Zo7caXg8uJOPXmUQUrn1mw9as8IL_cJ-h8XEWFSWPWiVYtElhRtwk2y3rtiNEa82JJiH24wqaw1h4ETSMM6LK_8JvCLB2kGYVXIIKRT-91JK0fSSZBR0okzWjT3JV2maRkpl352yW4OaNLtmT_PS-cWtap0mlp_jU7oFWD8BG0VFe3UnOchmzw==&c=vdfCGI-aNcMs7sDfFc-uZZTfqj3uRTp8fKJ6gEwFaZ-e8nlZMbcL4w==&ch=DtazyqdEweNSYXARAwWrPcOb4Sh4kd9cBCqGHfrN2ZSGm2skM1iYfg==>

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About the CMA

The Columbia Museum of Art is a charitable nonprofit organization dedicated to lifelong learning and community enrichment for all. Located in the heart of downtown Columbia, SC, CMA ranks among the leading art institutions in the country and is distinguished by its innovative exhibitions and creative educational programs. At the heart of the CMA and its programs is its collection,