

For Immediate Release

**HEADLANDS CENTER FOR THE ARTS PRESENTS
VISHAL K. DAR'S *EDGE OF SEE: TWILIGHT ENGINES***

**Site-specific installations in the Marin Headlands landscape embed augmented reality
virtual light sculptures in former military sites**



Vishal K. Dar, *Edge of See: Twilight Engines (working sketch)*, 2018

Sausalito, CA, November 27, 2018 – A solo, public exhibition of new media work by India-based artist Vishal K. Dar that investigates the boundaries of perception will debut at Headlands Center for the Arts in its Project Space galleries and at three nearby decommissioned military sites the Marin Headlands from January 20 through March 3, 2019. This site-specific work was created through a commission from Headlands Center for the Arts.

Gaining increasing notice in international and Indian contemporary art, for the past several years Dar has created epic and immersive site-specific works that employ architecture, computer-programmed light installations, and other digital technologies. Moving well beyond digital ornamentation, Dar uses technology to plumb the mythic and the personal, the philosophical and the perceptual. With *Twilight Engines*, Dar brings these concerns to the uneasy landscape of the Marin Headlands as augmented reality virtual light sculptures overlaying former military sites.

Visitors to the exhibition will download the app from the iOS App Store in advance, pick up a map at Headlands Center for the Arts, then head out into the coastal terrain to find Batteries Mendell, Wallace, and Smith-Guthrie, army bunkers with remnants of former gun implants. Sited on bluffs above the Pacific Ocean, the batteries afford views of both land and sea—a location key to Dar’s project. With the augmented reality app, viewers can use smartphones or tablets to view light sculptures overlaid on the sites. The artist calls these abstract sculptures “engines” for their state of constant motion; far from static, they spin, turn, tumble, and oscillate in response to the environment. The “engines” stay active around the clock, morphing between pigment black and particle light as day changes to night.

Back at Headlands Main Building 944, audiences can find another presentation of the virtual sculptures in the third-floor Project Space. Here, Dar will install wooden architectural scale models of the three batteries. Using their own mobile devices or tablets provided in the gallery, visitors can view the light sculptures as overlays on the battery models. The presentation will also include maps, drawings of the sculptures, and related video work.

In creating his site-specific works, Dar often chooses to work in ruined spaces, such as the Marin Headlands batteries. “There is something hauntingly beautiful about encountering sites of abandonment and ruin,” he says. “My immediate reaction to such spaces is, how can I connect with their present state so that I can reimagine them as marvelous beings? I am moved by these sites because they have run out of the functionality they were created for. But that does not mean they are defunct.” To the contrary, Dar capitalizes on the disconnect between a site’s past and present to insert sculptural experiences that change the way the viewer sees, thinks about, and relates to the location.

Moving through the liminal space of both bunkers and screen, Dar’s “engines” unlock a world of other realities. He wants viewers to experience something they’ve never seen before, as a catalyst for a deeper looking and thinking. Without suggesting a narrative, these virtual light sculptures leave the doors to interpretation wide open. “Viewers can project themselves into it. It’s going to be their experience, and therefore their narrative, not mine,” Dar says.

The Headlands installation, *Twilight Engines*, is part of *Edge of See*, a series of works that investigates edge sites around the world and how we relate to borders where ocean meets land. Headlands’ program director and curator Sean Uyehara says, “Vishal’s content is not historical metadata, but aesthetic objects that spark cognitive relationships in the mind, ideas about visual perception and what it means to be in this space at the edge of land and sea.”

Edge of See: Twilight Engines was germinated while Dar was an Artist in Residence at Headlands in the summer of 2017. He has spent the intervening time developing the project, including working with a team of engineers at Okaynokay (OKNK) to create the proprietary software that runs the piece, specially designed to work around the connectivity challenges the sites present. A San Francisco Bay Area-based creative studio, OKNK focuses on audio visual software experiences. The studio was founded by Ryan Alexander and Gabriel Dunne in 2015 produces high-end custom software, art, installations, graphics, and experience designs, including their debut project, *Seaquence*, a playful synthesizer for iOS.

Edge of See

Twilight Engines is the second presentation in an ambitious global project called *Edge of See*. Taking place at coastal sites around the world, the project uses physical and virtual installations to investigate how artistic interventions within the built environment can enact an experience of embodied presence. Working at these continental edges with their vast, oceanic horizons, *Edge of See* distorts our sense of sight, thereby also interrupting our sense of scale, motion, and time to address the project's fundamental question: What is the edge of sight?

Located in Lulea, Sweden, the first site-specific work in the series is *Dirghtamas*, or "a long darkness," a reference to the long winter nights of the northern latitudes. *Dirghtamas* debuted in November 2018 as a monumental light sculpture, with beams of light in three locations along the coast. Future *Edge of See* works are being created for Delft Island, Sri Lanka; Okinawa, Japan; and the Diomed Islands in the Bering Strait.

A Virtual Experience in the Gallery and in the Landscape

Edge of See: Twilight Engines includes the following resources and experiences:

Online

- Learn about the project or download the iOS app in advance of your visit at headlands.org. The app will be available in the iOS App Store starting January 20, 2019. Advance download before visiting Headlands is highly recommended.

Outside Headlands Main Building 944

- Maps showing the locations of the site-specific works in the landscape
- WiFi connection and instructions on how to download and use the iOS app

In Project Space at Main Building 944, Sunday-Thursday, 12-5pm

- Handmade wooden architectural scale models that trigger the virtual light sculptures when viewed through the augmented reality app
- Loaner tablets for viewing the sculptures within the Project Space
- Drawings, diagrams, and related video work

In the Marin Headlands landscape

- Installations at Batteries Mendell, Wallace, and Smith-Guthrie, viewable with the augmented reality iOS app and a smartphone or tablet; see technical specs below
- Batteries are accessible from Headlands by car or on foot, and are walking distance from each other; visiting all three from Headlands Center for the Arts on foot takes approximately 1.5 hours.

Technical Requirements

- The augmented reality app is compatible with iPhones and iPads running iOS 12 or later. The following models are supported: iPhone SE, 6S, 6S Plus, 7, 7 Plus, 8, 8 Plus, X, XS, and XS Max; iPad 5th generation, 6th generation, and Pro.

Edge of See: Twilight Engines is free and open to the public. The Project Space installation is open Sunday through Thursday, noon to 5 pm, from January 20 through March 3, 2019. Virtual installations at Batteries Mendell, Wallace, and Smith-Guthrie are active 24 hours a day. The batteries are located within the Marin Headlands, part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area; accessibility is subject to National Park hours and rules. Most parking lots in the Park close at sunset; evening parking is available at the Headlands Center for the Arts parking lot.

Sited Within a History of Artist Commissions

When Headlands Center for the Arts took up residence at historic Fort Barry in 1984, its mandate included stewarding the historic structures of its campus. The rehabilitation of its two main buildings through artist commissions allowed visionary artists to remake the space of the military industrial complex into a site of creative experimentation and possibility. Headlands' ongoing commissions fund both permanent modifications to its buildings and immediate surroundings as well as new artworks that debut at Headlands and move out into the world.

Considering both the layered cultural history of the Marin Headlands and its physical setting overlooking the Pacific, Vishal Dar's *Twilight Engines* presented a perfect match for Headlands' commissions program. "We're so pleased to be able to support Vishal's project and the process behind it, from seeing it germinate here during his residency to becoming a completed work accessible to the public. The territory of *Edge of See* is a natural for this place, and it feels especially rewarding to host a project that ties our organization and its history to the local socio-cultural landscape within the frame of a wider, global context."

RELATED EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Opening Reception for *Edge of See: Twilight Engines*

Sunday, January 20

Visits to Batteries Mendell, Wallace, and Smith-Guthrie, 2-4pm

Project Space reception: 4:30-6:30pm

Gallery walkthrough with the artist, 5:30pm

Headlands Center for the Arts

Free and open to the public

Toast the opening of Vishal K. Dar's *Edge of See: Twilight Engines*. Come early to visit the batteries and see the augmented reality light sculptures *in situ*.

Sunday Supper

Sunday, January 20, 6:30 pm

Headlands Center for the Arts Mess Hall

\$40 general; \$30 members

Join us for Headlands' seasonal Sunday Supper, crafted and cooked by Chef Damon Little and served family style in the historic, artist-renovated Mess Hall. Tickets at headlands.org/events.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Working internationally from his home base in Gurgaon, India, Vishal K. Dar (b. 1976, India) is known for large-scale, site specific works that masterfully mix architecture and digital technologies. He won critical acclaim for *Storm Dieties*, a light installation inside the chimney of a former power plant created for the 11th Shanghai Biennale in 2016. This immersive work included seven oscillating beams of light installed in the power plant's massive and crumbling 541-foot chimney, set above a reflecting pool in its base. Each beam represented one of the Maruts, the rain god Indra's army of young warriors from the classic Indian stories of the Rig Veda. In 2015, Dar and collaborator Gabriel Dunne created *NAAG XY* for the *New Experiments in Art and Technology* exhibition at San Francisco's Contemporary Jewish Museum. Other recent exhibitions include the Serendipity Arts Festival (India, 2017), the Lulea Biennial (Sweden, 2017), the Jaipur Kala Kendra (India, 2018), and Alserkal Avenue (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 2018). *Edge of See: Dirghtamas* made its debut in Lulea, Sweden in November 2018. More at vishalkdar.com.

ABOUT PROJECT SPACE

Located on the third floor of Headlands' Main Building 944, Project Space comprises two adjacent galleries that feature site-specific work informed by artists' experiences and research while at Headlands. Home to select Artists in Residence each season, as well as occasional solo and group exhibitions by visiting artists and curators, Project Space is a place of exchange among working artists and public visitors—a place where ideas are germinated, conversations shared, and new work is made. Past exhibitions have debuted new work by artists such as Will Rogan, Lucas Foglia, Gala Porras-Kim, and FICTILIS, among others.

ABOUT HEADLANDS

Founded in 1982, Headlands Center for the Arts operates a multidisciplinary, international arts center best known for its dynamic public programs and highly lauded artist residency. Located in the coastal wilderness of the Marin Headlands, within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Headlands' historic nine-building campus is dedicated to process-driven exploration and risk-taking contemporary art in all disciplines. Its year-round programs provide visual artists, performers, musicians, and writers with opportunities for research, professional development, and peer-to-peer exchange at critical times in their careers. More at headlands.org.

* * *

Media Contact

Apollonia Morrill, 415-331-2787, ext. 23, communications@headlands.org