

Words and images from the road to Marfa

By CHACOUR KOOP | Posted: Wednesday, August 19, 2015 12:30 am

GALVESTON — A couple years ago, Joshua Edwards trekked by foot from his Galveston birthplace to Marfa, a West Texas wellspring for artists and writers.

The 37-year-old poet snapped a photograph hourly, or about every 3 miles, during the roughly 700-mile journey. Whether it was rolling landscape, close-up texture images or roadkill, Edwards photographed his surroundings. He aimed to portray a humble documentation of the land, not draw attention to the arduous trip.

The result is 230 black and white photos inspired by the land art movement. An exhibition of the work opens at the Galveston Artist Residency, 2521 Mechanic Street, Saturday night. It's open through the end of October.

“As primarily a writer, I would try to take a photograph of something I would write a poem about,” Edwards said. “I wanted to do something outside my comfort zone, but also very much seen as a part of our practice.”

The photos taken on the 40-day journey are simple: Gulf beaches, textured leaves, grain elevators, a lone mountain. When asked to use a one word to describe the project, Edwards settled on “stillness.” It works on a literal level — the photos show little movement — and accurately describes the state of mind he sought during the journey.

At the conclusion of his trip, Edwards and his wife, poet Lynn Xu, collaborated with family and friends to begin construction on a house based on philosophical and architectural theories. The trip led to two books. Aptly titled “Photographs Taken at One-hour Intervals During a Walk From Galveston Island to the West Texas Town of Marfa,” is a publication of Edwards’ photos. Another book titled “Architecture for Travelers” includes a travelogue and a collection of poetry.

“I’m interested in the formal and lyrical possibilities of photography and poetry,” Edwards said. “I try to find the same things in a photograph that I would like to create in a poem.”



Joshua Edwards

Images from the Galveston Artist Residency exhibit "Photographs Taken at One-Hour Intervals During a Walk From Galveston Island to the West Texas Town of Marfa" by the poet, Joshua Edwards.

The exhibit opening is from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Edwards and Xu will sharing poetry at 8 p.m.

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