

NEWS RELEASE

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Undressing Trees, Wood Sculptures by Lynda Smith-Bugge, on View at Adkins Arboretum Beginning Oct. 1

Reception to meet the artist is Sat., Oct. 5

It's the character of the wood that inspires Lynda Smith-Bugge's superbly crafted sculptures on view at Adkins Arboretum Oct. 1 through Nov. 29. With wit and poetic imagination, she finds stories in the evocative shapes, colors and textures of the wood itself, and she brings them to light using traditional woodworking methods. There will be a reception on Sat., Oct. 5 from 3 to 5 p.m. to meet the artist.



"Epiphany"

For Smith-Bugge, working with wood is a collaboration with nature.

"Once I slice the wood, I intuitively let the natural lines, shapes, wounds and imperfections guide my next steps," she explained.

There's a feeling of joyous inspiration in "Epiphany." Shaped almost like upward-flying birds, bits of dogwood are suspended on thin wires between curving pieces of walnut. Smith-Bugge sliced the walnut open, allowing the curvature of its grain to determine the shapes of the four "arms"

that surround the bird-shapes in a rhythmic embrace. Looking almost like some ancient musical instrument, this sculpture owes its animated energy to the natural flow of the woodgrain.

Born in Colombia and educated in Ecuador, Smith-Bugge developed an early love of nature in the beauty of the Andean landscape. After coming to the United States in high school, she became interested in art and started painting, but it was while studying at Hunter College that she discovered woodworking. After graduating with a B.A. in fine arts, she landed what she terms a “dream job” teaching woodworking in the Catskill Mountains to urban youth from New York City.

“I fell in love with trees,” she said. “Once I was living amongst the trees of the Catskills, I found that I wanted to work with them the way they were. I wanted to highlight specific aspects of the wood, to shape and to finish it in a way that would entice the viewer to touch it and enjoy its sensuousness.” Smith-Bugge went on to earn her master’s degree in museum education at Bank Street College of Education in New York City. Now living in Falls Church, Virginia, she has taught and done museum work for many years, but for over a decade she has been concentrating her energies on creating sculptures from wood.

Using traditional woodworking tools, including a band saw, lathe, table saw, jointer, planer, sanders and finishes, she focuses on the beauty and fascinating imperfections that are natural in wood. The curls of fungus growing on birch wood are contrasted with the dark grain of walnut. Scars in the wood reveal its history.

Smith-Bugge uses wood that has fallen naturally. There’s burlled maple from a tree in her backyard and boxwood from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts where she is a Fellow.

“As many artists discover, once you are known for a medium, word gets out,” she said. “My palette is limited to local trees, mostly in my neighborhood, that have been cut for a variety of reasons.”

Smith-Bugge’s love of wood is plain to see, and it’s fascinating how she interprets the angles, curves, textures and colors created by the way each tree grew through the seasons and the years. Revealing the rich hidden interiors of her wood, she finds animation and emotions and turns walnut, cherry, oak and birch into poetry.

This show is part of Adkins Arboretum’s ongoing exhibition series of work on natural themes by regional artists. It is on view Oct. 1 through Nov. 29 at the Arboretum Visitor’s Center located at 12610 Eveland Road near Tuckahoe State Park in Ridgely. Contact the Arboretum at 410-634-2847, ext. 0 or info@adkinsarboretum.org for gallery hours.

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Adkins Arboretum is a 400-acre native garden and preserve at the headwaters of the Tuckahoe Creek in Caroline County. Open year round, the Arboretum offers educational programs for all ages about nature and gardening. Through its [Campaign to Build a Green Legacy](#), it will build the [W. Flaccus and Ruth B. Stifel Center at Adkins Arboretum](#) and a “green” entranceway to broaden educational offerings and research initiatives promoting best practices in conservation and land stewardship. For additional information about Arboretum programs, visit www.adkinsarboretum.org or call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.

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