(RIDGELY, MD—June 6, 2013)

Walking into Light, Landscape iPhoneography by Karen Klinedinst, on view at Adkins Arboretum

Karen Klinedinst “paints” with her iPhone. Each landscape she creates glows with the breathtaking beauty and nuanced details of nineteenth century Romantic paintings. On view at Adkins Arboretum Visitor’s Center through August 2, they capture trees, meadows and waterways in a magical dance of light and shadow. There will be a reception on Sat., June 22 from 3 to 5 p.m. to meet the artist.

“Winter, North Meadow” is one of several works shot at Adkins Arboretum. Light plays across its bending grasses and silhouettes the delicate needles of its pine trees, while white clouds touched with gold spread across a cerulean blue sky. But this is not just a photograph. You can practically see “brushstrokes” in the seed heads of the grasses and the textures of the clouds.

“It’s not straight photography,” Klinedinst explained. “I’m interpreting what I’m seeing. I shoot everything with my iPhone, and I also use the iPhone to process the images by using many different apps. Sometimes they’re made out of multiple images stitched together, then I layer textures and colors until I get them exactly how I envisioned them.”

Printed with archival ink on bamboo fiber paper, “Golden Tree” captures one of her favorite trees growing amid the rolling hills of her family’s land in Pennsylvania. Ghostly textures resembling intricate tree branches or grasses are woven into the image. They create a sense of
time and memory and reveal Klinedinst’s deep feeling for the landscape she has visited all her life.

Walking and image-making are Klinedinst’s two great loves, so every weekend she leaves her home in Baltimore to visit parks or mountains. Taking her iPhone along, she photographs the landscape and processes her images right there in the field.

Klinedinst said, “I’m a big walker and I do a lot of hiking, so that’s part of the process of just being there and experiencing and moving through the landscape. And with the phone it’s just so freeing and unencumbered. I don’t have to go back to my studio and sit in front of my computer screen. I can do it there.”

Capturing the feeling of a landscape is all-important for Klinedinst. In “The Advent of Spring,” you instantly feel the primordial stirrings of new life as woodland flowers bloom and skunk cabbages spread their broad leaves along the Arboretum’s winding creek. With shadowed edges reminiscent of a vintage photograph, “Day’s End” has an achingly beautiful clarity and sense of passing time as pale wintry light filters through its bare waterside trees.

A graduate of Maryland Institute College of Art, Klinedinst feels a strong affinity with two schools of art that emerged in the nineteenth century. Reacting to the rise of science and industrialization, Romantic painters focused on the emotional and spiritual power of untamed nature. Pictorialism developed as artists took photography beyond the mere recording of factual images to develop its creative and interpretive possibilities.

Likewise, Klinedinst turns her high-tech iPhone and up-to-the-minute apps into tools for exploring the intangible emotional qualities of the landscape. Like a plein air painter, she works outdoors studying the landscape and its changing moods firsthand. What she brings to light is the magic of our shared relationship with the land, something that most of us don’t take the time to consider as we live our hurried lives.

This show is part of Adkins Arboretum’s ongoing exhibition series of work on natural themes by regional artists. It is on view through August 2 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.