

## NEWS RELEASE

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### ***The Art of Nature, Works by Students of the Adkins Arboretum Botanical Art Program, on view through Jan. 29***

Works by students in Adkins Arboretum's Botanical Art Program are featured in *The Art of Nature*, on view through Jan. 29 at the Arboretum's Visitor's Center. Depicted in precise, highly detailed drawings and paintings are sprigs of holly, ripe pears, magnolia leaves and blossoms, winterberries and even a perky wren perched on an illuminated letter W.

Focusing on plant diversity of the Eastern Shore, with the addition of some fruit and fauna, this show presents a range of botanical art from beginning drawings through advanced botanical art pieces. There will be a reception on Sat., Dec. 5 from 3 to 5 p.m.

"We use many materials from the Arboretum and walk the trails to see the plants in their natural environment," said Lee D'Zmura, who has been teaching in the program since its inception in 2006. "We work mostly with native plants, and each class focuses not only on artistic techniques but also on the botanical characteristics and values of the subject material."

Turning their love of nature into an art form, both D'Zmura and Kelly Sverduk, who began teaching at the Arboretum in spring 2015, received their certificates in botanical art from Brookside Gardens School of Botanical Art and Illustration and have gone on to exhibit and teach in many venues.



*Anna Harding's "Magnolia Leaf" is among the pieces on view in The Art of Nature, an exhibit comprising works by students in Adkins Arboretum's Botanical Art Program.*

The two artists see Adkins Arboretum, with its 400 acres of native forests and meadows, as an ideal setting for the study of botanical art. Working in a variety of mediums, including graphite, watercolor and color pencil, students in the program learn to observe and accurately document native species.

“Artists sometimes say they are terrified by the blank sheet of paper,” said Sverduk. “I like to break projects down into a step-by-step approach so that students understand how to start a painting, how to simplify the bulk of the work into layers and sections, and finally how to finish with details. If you have a plan in place, starting a painting becomes much less scary.”

Merging art and science, botanical art aims at capturing the essence of a plant with botanical accuracy. Dating back at least to the fifth century, botanical illustration came into its own in the eighteenth century as a method of plant identification, used particularly for medicinal purposes. Through the years, it has evolved as a true art form embracing expressive interpretation of plants, and it continues to be one of the most popular kinds of art enjoyed in homes and businesses.

The Arboretum’s botanical art program focuses on teaching students fundamental drawing and painting techniques and skills. From beginning classes, students can progress through more advanced workshops that hone their skills and introduce new mediums.

“I find it so exciting to see a student’s skill level and confidence increase over several classes, or sometimes even over the course of the painting,” Sverduk said. “The program at Adkins gives students a good base of skills that they can use for any subject, not limited to botanicals.”

This show is part of Adkins Arboretum’s ongoing exhibition series of work on natural themes by regional artists. It is on view through Jan. 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](mailto: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, conservation and gardening. For more information about programs, visit [adkinsarboretum.org](http://adkinsarboretum.org) or call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.*

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