

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Leaf Impressions*, fabric collages by Dominie Nash, on view at Adkins Arboretum**

Reception to meet the artist is Sat., Oct. 24

Massive leaves spread in rhythmic patterns across Dominie Nash’s art quilts. On view at the Adkins Arboretum Visitor’s Center through Nov. 27, they are so lush and intricate that you almost feel you’ve been transported to a tropical forest. There will be a reception to meet the artist and learn about her methods of working on Sat., Oct. 24 from 3 to 5 p.m.

Nash, who lives in Bethesda, prints leaves directly onto fabric, reproducing their spreading veins, graceful contours and the delicate details of their texture. Then, like a collage artist, she cuts the fabric into rectangles, strips or even individual leaf forms that she rearranges into striking compositions. Using quilting and appliqué techniques, she sews the printed pieces of fabric together. Often, she highlights the leaf veins with stitching—sometimes by hand, sometimes with a machine—and she may energize the spaces between the leaves with repeating lines of stitching.

Nash creates quilts in many sizes. Some are wide and over six feet tall, but others are narrow like Japanese scrolls. “Foliated Calligraphy 1,” an elegantly slim quilt, has panels in top and bottom in subtle shades of deep green and muted gold with shadowy suggestions of leaf shapes highlighted with hand stitching. In the center is a repeating motif of leaves printed in subtly fading shades of gray.

Fascinated by their structure, Nash concentrates on large leaves whose prominent veins will print well, and she collects them in an amazing variety of shapes. They may be from native species, like the tulip poplars and oakleaf hydrangeas found on the Arboretum’s grounds, or they may be from tropical plants, such as the leaves from a banana tree a friend has growing in her backyard.



“Everybody loves leaves,” Nash said, “but there’s something startling about seeing these enormous ones. People are just amazed that they’re actually leaves. They say, ‘How did you get them so big?’”

Nash was a weaver for many years, but a growing interest in dyeing and batik gradually morphed into creating art quilts. For the past several years, she has been focusing on two series of works—a still life series and this one, which she calls her “Big Leaf Series.”

“I had done a little bit of printing with leaves here and there,” she said, “but it really started when I found some deciduous magnolia leaves on the ground. I picked them up and thought, ‘I bet I could print these.’”

Nash loves to experiment with different leaves and with various printing processes, both hand-rubbing and screen printing. Using acrylic-based black and white textile paint, she explores bold patterning softened with many shades of gray. Thickened dye lends other quilts subtle, earthy hues. Another technique she uses involves printing with various color-removing chemicals on black fabric. This process yields rich shades of gold, tan, gray or even red, but depending on how the fabric was originally dyed, it’s unpredictable.

“It’s really a lot of fun,” Nash said. “I’ve had some beautiful surprises and some yuck. It’s something of a treasure hunt to see what will happen.”

This show is part of Adkins Arboretum’s ongoing exhibition series of work on natural themes by regional artists. It is on view through Nov. 27 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.

CUTLINE: “Foliated Calligraphy 1” is one of the works comprising *Leaf Impressions*, fabric collages by Bethesda artist Dominie Nash on view at Adkins Arboretum, Ridgely. There will be a reception to meet the artist on Sat., Oct. 24.

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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. For additional information about Arboretum programs, visit adkinsarboretum.org or call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.

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