

NEWS RELEASE

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2024 Juried Art Show, *Discovering the Native Landscapes of Maryland's Eastern Shore*, on View through April 26

With a tiny painting of a pair of buzzards comically perched on a dead tree, a ceramic pitcher encrusted with honey bees, and a serene photo of winter trees and a farmhouse silhouetted against the blush of a dawn sky, Adkins Arboretum's 24th annual Juried Art Show, *Discovering the Native Landscapes of Maryland's Eastern Shore*, is lively, varied and full of surprises. On view through April 26, the show was juried by Mehves Lelic, who will speak about her choices at a reception on Saturday, March 9, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Lelic is the Director of Mosely Gallery at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore and was formerly the Curator at the Academy Art Museum in Easton. From the 171 entries that were submitted, she chose 31 works by artists from Maryland, Delaware, Virginia and Washington, DC. It's an energetic and fascinatingly diverse show in a variety of mediums, including watercolor, oils, acrylics, pastel, watercolor, sumi ink drawings, photographs, found object sculpture, ceramics, and even pyrography (drawing with a wood burning tool).



Irene Pantelis's "Of Water Too Are the Grasses" won first prize in the Arboretum's annual Juried Show.

Lelic explained, "I was looking for artists who interpreted what is essentially a shared experience of space through their unique visual languages, took risks, and alluded to not just the commonly depicted, calming associations with nature but its more complex, cyclical facets."

While the show includes many beautiful and inspiring landscapes and waterscapes created at different seasons of the year, several of the works are quite unusual. Lelic chose two of these to receive the annual Leon Andrus Awards.

First prize went to a large sumi ink and colored pencil drawing by Irene Pantelis, of Bethesda, called "Of Water Too Are the Grasses" in which ink and color flow in swift, watery brushstrokes that describe grasses with roots reaching deep into water-saturated earth. A close look reveals a myriad of tiny concentric rings that bloom within the brushstrokes where Pantelis added pigment to the still wet ink.

"I love how the ink is traveling on the paper and telling us about the intentions of the artist," Lelic said, "but there are parts of it that are so controlled. I also like the undercurrents of decay, which to me is such an important part of our relationship with nature. I think this piece touches on that while carrying a sense of exuberance."

She awarded second prize to Alexandria artist Ceci Cole McInturff's "Animalis" a sculptural installation with two pale, curving branches, one dangling long strands of white horsehair, the other sporting a bird's wing, as if it is flying.

"I selected this as the second-place award winner because the piece displays a consideration of how living cells can take all these different forms from feather to hair to branch," she explained. "I also loved that it was suspended as if you were actually experiencing it out in its natural environment. From found object to contemporary sculpture is a really winding path and I felt the artist navigated that path very successfully."

Lelic also gave Honorable Mention awards to "Dunes of Maryland," a bold oil painting by Michael Dean of Fredericksburg, VA, "Creek with Trees," a whimsical and colorful painting by Easton artist Sheryl Southwick, and an exquisite toned cyanotype print hand-colored with watercolor and gold ground called "Persimmon" by Paige Billin-Frye of Washington, DC.

"The Arboretum holds such an important place in our community," Lelic said, "and it was exciting to see artistic responses to the natural respite and inspiration it provides. It was a privilege to spend time with all the incredibly strong pieces everyone submitted as we slowly but surely leave winter behind and see the first signs of spring reawakening."

This show is part of Adkins Arboretum's ongoing exhibition series of work on natural themes by regional artists. It is on view through April 26 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. 100 or info@adkinsarboretum.org for gallery hours.

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A 400-acre native garden and preserve, Adkins Arboretum provides exceptional experiences in nature to promote environmental stewardship.

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