

NEWS RELEASE

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Outdoor Sculpture Invitational—Artists in Dialogue with Landscape—on View through September at Adkins Arboretum

There are glittering crystals, lichens crocheted from yarn and rivers of sticks glowing brilliant red under the green leaves of the Adkins Arboretum forest. After a year's postponement due to the COVID-19 shutdown, once again the woodland trails are full of surprises as the Outdoor Sculpture Invitational returns.

Responding to the show's theme, *Artists in Dialogue with Landscape*, seven artists from the mid-Atlantic region and California have created eight sculptures along the wooded paths. The show is on view June 1 through Sept. 30. On Sat., July 10, the artists will talk about their work during a guided sculpture walk from 3 to 5 p.m.



“Chorus,” by Falls Church, Va., artist Marc Robarge, is among the works on view through September.

As might be expected as we emerge from months of quarantine, the pandemic has deeply affected these artists. One of the show's most playful works, “Containment Conundrum,” is also one of the most serious. Columbia, Md., artist Jillian Storms, assisted by her daughter, Katherine Elicker, used the spiky seedpods of sweetgum trees to call to mind the uncertainty surrounding the spread of COVID. Tangled amid spiraling vines, they are both comical and menacing as they

appear to leap from the sculpture onto surrounding vines and branches, just as the virus spread in unexpected ways.

“Shelter in Place,” by Bridgette Guerzon Mills of Towson, Md., is a cozy pair of chairs and a small table tucked under a pine tree. Encrusted with an enchanting array of mosses, twigs and nests mingled with crocheted lichen and leaves, it invites thoughts about how the natural world became a haven for people seeking solace and renewal in nature. While not specifically about the quarantine, “Chorus,” by Marc Robarge of Falls Church, Va., presents a ring of branches sprouting strange ceramic pods that look almost as if they are singing. With a disk of oak providing an inviting seat at the center of the circle, this sculpture offers a meditative place to sit and listen to the forest’s sounds.

“Frozen,” by Laurel, Md., artist Melissa Burley, considers another pressing issue—climate change. Burley travels frequently for her job as an art handler and has encountered sudden weather events like the unprecedented cold and blizzard conditions that hit Texas last winter. As if hoarfrost had suddenly sprung up under the trees, glinting mirrors and sparkling shattered glass lie on the forest floor, while crystals from an old chandelier hang like icicles in nearby branches.

Several of the artists explore natural cycles of death and renewal. For “An Ending Is a Beginning,” Elizabeth Miller McCue of Yardley, Penn, wound vines sprouting hundreds of green patinated bronze leaves in and out of two fallen trees to conjure the irrepressible urge of nature to renew itself. In his second sculpture, “Seeds of Light,” Robarge also focused on nature’s potential by hanging seed-like shapes made of ceramic and stained glass from a cedar arched over the mossy path. On a sunny day, light glows through the pale green glass at the center of each seed.

In two large sculptures titled “Wood about Wood I & II,” Bozman, Md., artist Georgia Goldberg and her collaborator, Marco Hyman-Romero of Oakland, Calif., highlighted two large fallen trees by laying bright red sticks along their sides. Often unnoticed in the forest, these decaying tree trunks are vital to the forest’s ecosystem as the slowly rotting wood provides habitat and nutrition for both plants and animals. As with all the works in this show, these sculptures invite thoughts about the intricate ways that nature constantly revitalizes itself, humans included.

This show is part of Adkins Arboretum’s ongoing exhibition series of work on natural themes by regional artists. It is on view through September 30 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 more information.

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Adkins Arboretum is a 400-acre native garden and preserve at the headwaters of the Tuckahoe Creek in Caroline County. For more information, visit adkinsarboretum.org or call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.

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