



ADKINS ARBORETUM

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**This Little Glade: Mixed-media works by Irene Pantelis and Rhonda Luckey
on view November 4 through January 2 at Adkins Arboretum**



(Top) *Bog Queen Trilogy* by Rhonda Luckey
eco-printed vintage cotton and silk hand-stitched art quilt

(Bottom) *The Thing Within* by Irene Pantelis
ink and watercolor on yupo paper

(RIDGLEY, MD—November 4, 2025)

Spirited and full of fascinating details just waiting to be discovered, *This Little Glade*, an exhibition of mixed-media works exploring natural themes by artists Irene Pantelis and Rhonda Luckey, is on view in the Arboretum's Visitor's Center Art Gallery from November 4 through January 2. At a reception on Saturday, November 22, 2 to 4 p.m., the artists will speak about their innovative ways of working.

Both artists focus on plants and see their work as a kind of collaboration with nature both in terms of materials and imagery. Pantelis, a Bethesda artist who teaches at the University of Maryland at College Park and Montgomery College, paints fluid images of entire plants from their roots to their leaf tips using sumi ink,

watercolor, and vegetable and flower dyes that she makes herself. Luckey, a retired educator who divides her time between her studios in Central Lake, MI, and Indiana, PA, creates eco-prints using a dyeing technique in which heat and moisture cause leaves and flowers to leave natural imprints on cloth or paper. She then combines them with traditional art materials and materials she gathers from nature including sprigs of dried plants, bark and the curly twigs of a shrub called walking stick (corkscrew hazel) to create animated, yet gentle meditative artworks.

“The process of eco-printing—where art and science meet—captivates me,” Luckey said. “It allows endless exploration and experimentation, blending naturally with other media. Through eco-printing, I can work with textiles and paper, layering inks, paints, dyes, and stitching, to create pieces that feel both grounded in nature and alive with discovery.”

Pantelis shares Luckey’s urge to explore and experiment. She has developed a unique method of working with very wet media, painting the stalks, leaves and roots of plants with bold, energetic brushstrokes while allowing her ink, watercolors and dyes to freely flow and mingle before drying very slowly over days or even weeks. This balance of skill and chance results in images filled with subtle shades of color that stream, bloom and ripple across the surfaces in natural patterns mimicking water or windblown sand.

“I always think of my works as the record of what happened during my process,” she said. “I focus on plants because their forms and growth patterns fascinate me, and I think they are also important because, like food and music, they have the ability to transcend cultures, generations, and geopolitics.”

The two artists also share the fact that they each lived abroad during their childhoods. For Luckey, it was Okinawa, Paris and Naples according to her father’s military assignments.

“My parents approached each place with deep curiosity and respect, encouraging me to do the same,” she explained. “Those years of living abroad taught me to see beauty in contrasts and connections—lessons that continue to weave through my work today.”

Pantelis lived in various South American countries where her parents did missionary work but each summer, she stayed with her grandparents in the grasslands of the Pampas in Uruguay. As she began to understand the interconnected complexity of their fertile ecology, her lifelong love of plants was ignited.

“I love to read about their survival mechanisms or to learn about how humans have interacted with them over the millennia,” Pantelis said. “Our fates have always been intertwined.”

The artists borrowed the show's title from a poem called "This Little Glade, Remember" by Pattiann Rogers. Celebrating the intricate and varied beauty and nourishing spirit of the earth, the poem affirms their mutual love of nature and deep interest in the interconnections that allow life on earth to flourish.

This show is part of Adkins Arboretum's ongoing exhibition series highlighting regional artists whose work engages with natural themes. The Arboretum, located at 12610 Eveland Road near Tuckahoe State Park in Ridgely, is a 400-acre native garden and preserve offering exceptional experiences in nature.

For gallery hours or more information, contact Adkins Arboretum at 410-634-2847 or visit adkinsarboretum.org.

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

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