

## NEWS RELEASE

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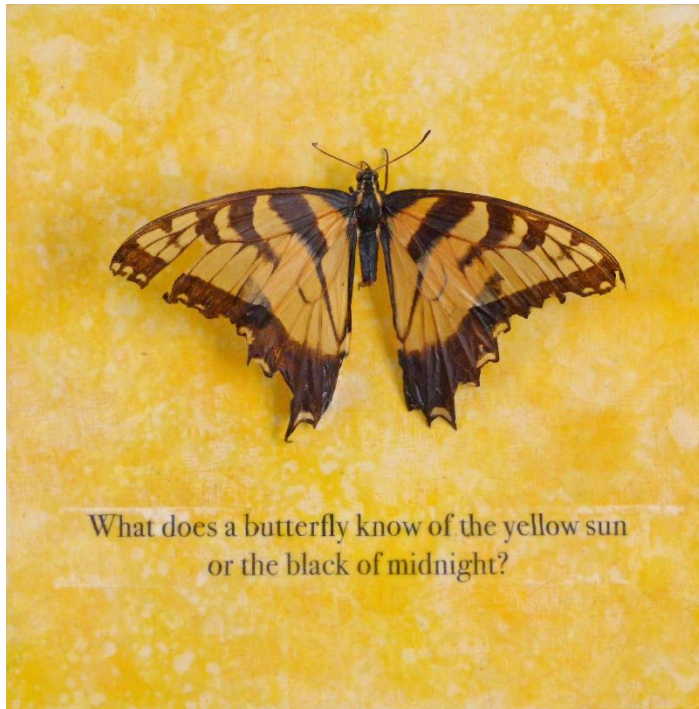
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(RIDGELY, MD—Sept. 30, 2019)

### ***Listening*, Mixed Media Drawings, Paintings, Sculpture and Poetry by Mary McCoy, on View Through November at Adkins Arboretum**

There's a peculiar intimacy about the tiny panels of shells, pressed leaves and feathers in *Listening*, an exhibit by environmental artist and writer Mary McCoy on view through November 29 in the Adkins Arboretum Visitor's Center. Hung casually alongside printed poems, pencil drawings and large sculptures made with branches or vines, they create the curious feeling that you're almost hearing the artist wondering about the nature of the plants and animals, landscape and water she encounters living on the Eastern Shore. There will be a reception to meet the artist and learn about her work on Sat., Nov. 16 from 3 to 5 p.m.

McCoy uses a wide, unhindered vocabulary when creating her art. Natural materials from stones to butterfly wings mingle with poetry, drawings and colorful acrylic paint. There's a dramatic drawing of an osprey soaring overhead, but somewhat more unorthodox are a poem written on a deer's skull, a ruffly oyster shell laid on a bed of antique lace and an 18-foot-long curlicuing sculpture made entirely of greenbrier vines bristling with thorns.



*Mary McCoy, "What Does a Butterfly Know?", butterfly, iron-on transfer and acrylic on panel, 6" x 6" x ½"*

Familiar to many in the area for the outdoor sculptures she creates in collaboration with her husband, Howard McCoy, in the Arboretum's forest, McCoy's own work has been deeply influenced by her experience of living on her family's riverside farm near Centreville.

"I spend as much time as possible outside, walking on our farm, kayaking on the river," McCoy explained. "Art-making is my method of exploring the world around me and synthesizing my experiences. I guess you could say I'm trying to see nature from the inside out."

For McCoy, nature isn't some large, faceless thing that's "out there." It's ubiquitous, familiar and fascinating. Each artwork chronicles a discovery, whether it's the beauty and intricacy of a butterfly's wings, an autumn leaf or the irrepressible way vines climb into trees. Some of her works are comic—a wasp's nest is labeled "Home," and a panel of assorted beach pebbles is titled "No Two Stones Are Exactly Alike." Others are poignant. One small painting with three maple leaves brushed with white paint has a line of type that reads, "What if there was no more green?"

It's important to McCoy that her art be friendly and approachable. Before moving to the Eastern Shore nearly 27 years ago, she lived in the Washington area, where she actively exhibited her work and was an art critic for publications such as *The Washington Post*, *New Art Examiner* and *The Washington Review*. Her experiences taught her that too many people miss out on art because they see it as frivolous, incomprehensible or aloof. In her current art exhibits and her writings on art for *The Chestertown Spy*, *The Talbot Spy* and other organizations, she focuses on making art welcoming and accessible and showing how its main purpose may be to present opportunities to consider our viewpoints and think in new, creative ways.

"One of my favorite things about showing art at Adkins Arboretum is that all kinds of people come here, especially kids," she said. "With all the time we spend on our computers and smart phones, we're losing out on direct, personal encounters with nature. There's so much to see and wonder about out there, and you can learn so much. I hope that my work can help open people to that experience."

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. 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 and gardening. For more information, visit [adkinsarboretum.org](http://adkinsarboretum.org) or call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.*

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