

NEWS RELEASE

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Zoetrope, Watercolors by Katherine Binder, on View Through Sept. 1 at Adkins Arboretum

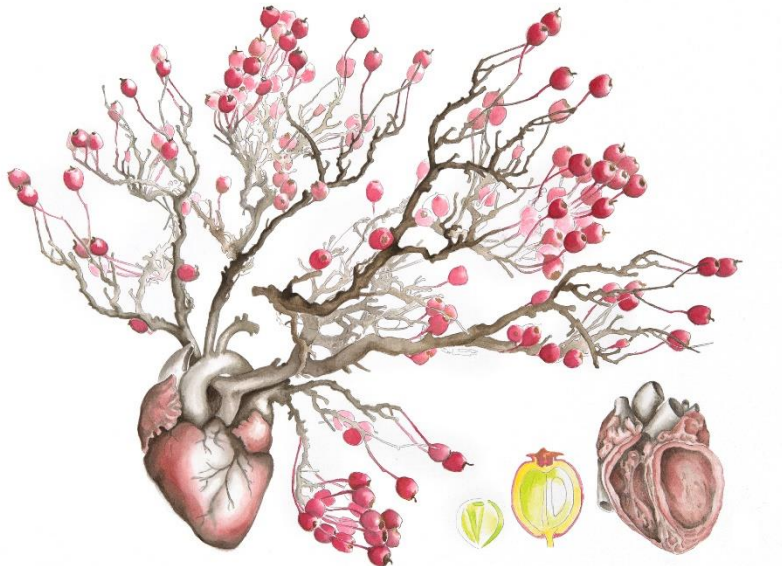
*Meet the artist at a reception
Sat., July 15*

For Katherine Binder, art is a process that helps her understand the nature of the world around her. Stunning watercolors of birds of prey, rabbits and plants paired with human organs fill her show, *Zoetrope (Wheel of Life/Life Turning)*, on view at Adkins Arboretum through Sept. 1. There will be a reception to meet the artist on Sat., July 15 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Binder's art is deeply influenced by her practice as an acupuncturist and prosthetist and her interest in traditional Taoist medicine. As beautifully descriptive as natural history paintings and as inspiring as images in illuminated manuscripts and Tibetan Buddhist tangka paintings, each of Binder's works offers a compelling narrative that explores the relationships between plants, birds, animals and the human body.

The show's title, *Zoetrope*, comes from the Greek words *zoe* (life) and *tropos* (turning) and refers to a 19th-century optical toy in which slits in a spinning cylinder reveal a series of pictures painted on the inner surface, giving an impression of continuous motion. One of Binder's paintings, also titled "*Zoetrope*," shows a zoetrope with the life cycle of a dandelion flower painted on the inside.

"If it were animated, the viewer would be watching the dandelion grow, bloom, wither, die and grow again and again," Binder explained.



Katherine Binder, "Hawthorn Berry Heart," watercolor, gold paint over graphite underdrawing on paper, 24" x 18" unframed.

There's a curious magic in her paintings that stems from her extensive research into scientific illustrations and field studies, as well as myths and archetypes. With precision and flair, she deftly conjures the characteristics, interrelationships and life energy of each of her subjects, often highlighting them with gold paint to emphasize their sacred nature.

In her work as an acupuncturist and prosthetist, as well as in her art, Binder draws on Taoist medicine's complex system of correspondences between the human body and the natural world. The correspondences between plants and individual human organs are the subject of her "Yin Organs Herbal Series," in which she links the shape and color of the human heart with the red berries of the hawthorn and the liver with reishi mushrooms growing on a tree stump.

Myths and fables also factor into Binder's work. A snake may symbolize the life force or rebirth, while rabbits may call to mind good luck and intuition. Her art-making process, like her work as an acupuncturist, is based on channeling energy. Working in a meditative state, she allows ideas to flow through her onto the paper.

"I have powerful muses," she said. "They are not the slight sweet ones that you see gently whispering into the ears of an artist. My muses are muscle-bound brutes who startle me awake, pull me out of bed, drag me down the stairs and seat me at my art table."

During the year after her father's passing, Binder was unable to paint. It was only when she learned that a Eurasian eagle-owl she knew from visiting the Central Park Zoo had escaped that her muses began to return. As she followed the bird's story, she found herself painting him with a scrap of a broken tether still wrapped around one leg. From there, she began painting other raptors—screech owls, a barred owl, a red-tailed hawk and, finally, influenced by a recurring dream, a peregrine falcon flying free. With the gentle humor found throughout her work, she calls these paintings her "Rapture Series."

Throughout this show, Binder invokes the visceral qualities of each organ, plant, bird or animal while setting them humming with symbolism and a sense of life cycles and interconnection.

"When I look at the body of work created for this exhibit," Binder said, "I see my life—the griefs and joys that were the catalyst for each piece. The bitter sweetness of life is the zoetrope, the wheel of life. All of it, even the weeds, are precious, sacred and exquisite."

This show is part of Adkins Arboretum's ongoing exhibition series of work on natural themes by regional artists. It is on view through Sept. 1 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.

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

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