

# Nature & Art

## Artist Statements

### Clayton Bass

*Emergence, Convergence* is a confluence of five mixed media works combined to tell an expanded narrative of humans' natural origins converging with technology. Human destiny hangs in the balance of the perceived advantages of enhanced living through technology versus our shared emergence from nature.

Inspired by the Green Man of European and Celtic mythology, the female and male characters are a synthesis of nature infused with the realm of human-made objects. This inevitable push-pull is counterbalanced by human's innate connection to the cosmos—the great unknown—depicted here by the Sun and Moon. Terrestrial meets celestial—the ongoing dance.

Nature inspires creativity in humans, from Paleolithic cave art to contemporary works within this exhibition, *Nature and Art*. Plants have powers. Their properties have shaped cultures for millennia by providing nutrition, healing, and materials for clothing and shelter. This exhibition reveals how human creativity is both inspired by nature while integrated natural materials take a lead role in the creative process.

***Nature requires nothing of us,  
but we require nature.  
Everything we seek to know about the world  
surrounds us; we have only to be still,  
and use our senses.***

### Connie Enzmann-Forneris

Natural fabrics are created using actual leaves that are contact printed by binding tightly and steaming. Natural dyes such as indigo, cochineal, madder root, weld and brazil wood produce areas of color that interact with the printed leaves. I hand stitch both to collage and accent the fabrics.

Nature rules for me. It keeps me on track, organizes my compositions and inspires me. When it is often difficult to know what to do next, nature gives me the logic and pattern for decision making.

### Lisa Freeman

I work with branches, roots, sticks, and trees. I collect these raw materials from the mountains and arroyos around Santa Fe. I often wrap or partially wrap these forms with wire or cotton gauze and paint them an intense carbon black. This process de-emphasizes the physical object in order to distill the internal expressiveness of the form. The sculptures flow calligraphically, as the wrapped

pieces become more elemental and take on new life. The work may appear blackened and wounded, vulnerable and expressive. A branch, a root, or an arrangement of sticks and roots can simultaneously sensitize us to the exquisite beauty of nature and to the pain of our losses in an intimate and personal way.

### **Marc Hinkley**

Do trees dream when they sleep? If so, of what do they dream? The ebb and flow of seasons past? The eternal thirst for water? The many lives hatched in its care?

This piece evolved over a period of time. Many fallen trees were searched until the right branch presented itself. An intimacy with the tree emerged as my fingers caressed each branch, twig and crook during its transformation into this work. Though the inverted branch implies sleep, it is at the same time reminiscent of a tree's roots. Roots reaching deep into the origins of our own dreams; water, birth, death, rebirth and the cycle/ring of life.

### **Deeda Hull**

The process for both of my pieces was similar:

For "Curtain Falls", I wandered and gathered dried Yerba Mansa from Leonora Curtin Wetlands Preserve, bundled it and enveloped it with handmade abaca paper embedded with twigs and secured it with magnets.

For "Take Leave", I meandered and collected fallen branches in the hills near the Randall Davey Audubon Nature Preserve and embedded them into a blend of handmade cotton and bamboo paper pulp mixed with green tea leaves, mica flakes, poppy seeds and turmeric for color.

Nature is the purest form of Art so it was an easy challenge to forage and incorporate such raw beauty into my creative process. Showcasing Nature by combining it with other materials gave me the opportunity to turn it into a new mixed media piece of art. Without Nature there would be no art!

### **Shirley Klinghoffer**

Discovering & rediscovering beauty in diverse places is a joy that knows no bounds. Being able to bring disparate elements from nature (organic, authentic, weathered) and vintage "women-made" objects is my pleasure... to hopefully enhance the interest of eyes that behold this artwork.

### **Stephanie Lerma**

Like many pollinators, Monarch populations have been declining. Changing weather patterns, food sources and the use of herbicides are affecting the health of this beautiful pollinator. Sanctuary speaks to the importance of environmental stewardship and our responsibilities to protect and create safe havens.

**Nicki Marx**

The pieces in this exhibition, **MEMORY BOOKS**, are an homage to some of the many magical places I have visited in nature. They are a story, told through the materials collected on site, of a place and an experience. I hope they communicate to the viewer/reader the beauty and power of what I experienced.

The overall motivation/expression in these pieces continues the theme of all my work:

"My work is a personal celebration of life and an exploration of natural materials. The process of working is for me a ritual, a dance, a prayer of thanksgiving and a plea for survival. I believe our culture is sorely lacking in meaningful ritual and celebration and is lacking a deep, respectful awareness of nature.

My work has always dealt with paradox through the merging of dark and light to create unity and through dealing with death, life's counterpart. The work is connected to ancient traditions yet is related to modern forms and ideas. I am acutely aware of the materials with which I work: of how they invoke the peaceful, the intimate and the delicate, yet also the violent, grand and awesome beauty found in nature. These materials allow me to celebrate the earth's mystery, vitality and power."

**Elizabeth Mesh**

My art reflects upon the culture of my European ancestors in an attempt to respectfully respond to and appreciate the ancestry of others. I am currently exploring Polish, Irish, French, Welsh, German, and English cultures through centuries-old lace. Historically, lace has a sordid past that involves royalty, and the black market. However, it is world-wide, some of the most revered and respected artwork ever created by women.

All botanicals portrayed in my work are an attempt to recognize the beauty of the present and the potential for all humans to unite through nature.

For this work, I was interested in exploring New Mexico's past and present. I weave NM endangered plants into nineteenth century French Chantilly Lace structures. The Pecos Holy Ghost, Tufted Sand Verbena, and the Limestone Violet are laced into a lily blossom and centered in compasses, protected by the curiosity and mystery that humans attribute to things that are rare.

Please go to the NM Native Plant Society website for more info on endangered plants and to purchase endangered plant temporary body tattoos!

**Karen Milstein**

I love to wander through arroyos as a way to be active while connecting with nature. Sometimes I am fortunate enough to find a uniquely gnarly, intriguing piece of wood, and then I am challenged to figure out a piece I can construct around that root using clay. This time, when the possibility of creating a hanging piece was presented to me, the project started to come together. My abstract

boat form emerged, and absolutely required fish, many kinds of them! Here it all is.

### **Judy Naumburg**

The piece I am submitting to the Community Gallery challenged me beyond photographic boundaries where I am most comfortable. The photograph I have incorporated was taken at the Lenora Curtain Wetland Preserve, just south of Santa Fe, a beautiful, unlikely spot hidden within our dry climate. I returned to gather some dried seeds, many from the photo, which I used to form a ragged, natural frame, much like the wetlands themselves. The title comes from an Edgar Allen Poe poem, Lenore, which reflects the end, the death, yet golden in nature, will not be lost.

### **Janet O'Neal**

The Tree of Life emerging from the human heart is both a magical and mystical symbol of renewal and regeneration. Growth is almost always accompanied by beautiful tears. As the Native American proverb illustrates..." The soul would have no rainbow if the eyes have no tears." This sculpture was created from a resin casting and peach tree branch. It was then covered with beeswax and tinted white to symbolize the innate purity of the inner heart. The tears and hands are cast beeswax.

### **Patricia Pearce**

I am fascinated with the Alchemy of Decay. The beauty in the structure of something after it dies is magical. As a result, I wanted to capture the beauty. I then decided to cast the piece in bronze. It was the right time somewhere in the world.

### **Victoria Rabinowe**

Victoria's work is a meditation upon the environmental issues of living in the high desert. She has coined the phrase *ZeroScaping* to introduce her environmentally symbiotic way to live in the desert by enriching the landscape with artful plantings without the use of water. When the Spirit Poles are installed in a landscape, they seem to emerge from the earth as archetypal totemic beings.

### **Diane Rolnick**

It has been an exciting learning curve and journey over these last 3 months developing "Danc'in in the Rhythmics" for the Nature & Art Exhibition. I have been working with digital mixed-media for a number of years and this piece has pushed my ideas into new realms and possibilities as I worked and stacked together 6 large pieces of plexi-glass as substrates.

Collecting moving figures, textures, colors, patterns, and shadows with my camera have allowed me to alter, layer, and define a space with the idea of the portrait and how we, as humans, express who we are internally externally as we intermingle with the "debris" of life.

Last Fall I set up a photo shoot in my studio of my friend, Morningstar, a young Native actress and dancer and asked her to move to music. Her wonderfully expressive images fit beautifully into my ideas for “Danc’in”. In the following months I developed the work on my computer in Photoshop with 13 images from the shoot that overlapped into a singular piece. Many configurations were printed out until I had a composition that was dynamic both spatially and individually. In a coincidence of time, I was able to print the images on plexi-glass at the Roland DGR facility in Irvine, CA where I was taking a UV printer workshop with the wonderful artist, Bonny Lhotka. Once these components were shipped home I assembled and adhered the individual pieces with grasses and spray paint to create a ground for the figures. I held my breath and my framer, David Learner, secured the layers.

### **Greta Ruiz**

Nature is my strongest influence as an artist. On my arroyo walks I visited with the Juniper trees and gathered weathered wood, like bones that remind me of wings. Combining these with branches, berries and fired clay from the earth, my process became a way of honoring the strong medicine of Juniper.

### **Romi Sloboda**

The materials used in this piece are the dried heads of *onopordum acanthium*, Scotch thistle; branches of *tamarix ramosissima*, more commonly known as salt cedar; and birch wood lumber. All are non-native botanical species to New Mexico however the thistles were harvested from my own garden, and salt cedar is often found along the banks of New Mexico waterways, including the Rio Grande. Although the shrubby mountain birch, *betula occidentalis*, is native to New Mexico and the Rockies, the birch species used for lumber, *betula alleghaniensis*, also known as yellow birch, is not native to this region.

An abacus is used as a device for making calculations. According to wikipedia, it is a tool that was in use in Europe, China and Russia, centuries before the adoption of the written Hindu–Arabic numeral system. The exact origin of the *abacus* is still unknown. There was an abacus in my childhood home that belonged to my mother, a small brass abacus, that she had used during her childhood growing up in Seoul, Korea. Over the past year I have been thinking a great deal about time: how to calculate time, mark its passage, that it is an abstract concept that we employ everyday. After I gathered the thistles from my garden, handling them with care, and after abandoning an alternate basket construction I’d started, it occurred to me that an abacus constructed with thistle heads would be an apt metaphor to express the difficulty and tenderness that comes with trying to calculate time while you are grieving.

I am by training a printmaker, although most of my work is a blend of painting, printmaking and mixed media works on paper. Over the last several years I have been experimenting with pieces using textiles and basketry materials and I was

intrigued by the concept and theme of this exhibition, *Nature & Art: Source, Subject and Spirit*. Participating in this show gave me the opportunity to explore creating a piece with materials from my own garden and to use the skills, with gratitude, that I learned from my late husband.

### **Suzanne Stern Brant**

This piece was inspired by a honey locust growing on the Navajo Nation. I've passed the tree many times over the years and have always wondered about its origin, such a long way from its natural range. The tree's singular presence and ominous thorns are metaphoric. I have habitually returned to decipher its meaning.

On my last visit, I removed three thorns from the tree. I made silicone molds from the thorns to make waxes that could be cast in glass. The bowl's surface texture was achieved through a chemical reaction between the glass and fine silver, known as deposition or fuming.

### **George Vogel**

Slot canyons provide dramatic lighting that allows the photographer to create images rich in texture and colors with a dimensional depth as well as an abstract feel. The two images that are integral to this sculptural work were taken at Antelope Canyon, Arizona.

I chose to use a print method in which the image is transferred onto the surface of an aluminum panel. In order to do this a special mask is formulated from the digital version of the picture. This mask is placed on the metal that has been coated with a substrate. By heating the mask to 400°F the pigments are converted into a gaseous state in a process called sublimation. The final product emerges with totally true colors by the absorption of the gas. It has depth, stability and permanence. The surface can be handled with no ill effects, obviating the need for glass.

For the presentation I was assisted by local artist Carlos Gonzalez. The goal was to create surroundings that harmonize with the subject matter. The gravel color and texture combined with the shape and flow of the rocks reinforce the visual. Our guiding sense was that of an ongoing coherent dialog between the actual natural elements and the images of wild desert landscapes. This sculptural composition (albeit in miniaturized dimensions) is also informed by the innovative link between sculpture and photography popularized in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Robert Smithson and other members of the Land Art movement.

### **L. Wren Walraven**

My work is a direct expression of the concern and adoration I feel for the wildlife that lives on Earth with us. "Crow Feathers" was certainly a challenge for me and it took me three times to get it right. My first two tries were extremely intricate pieces using what felt like every stick in my yard. Hours of gluing was spent on

these but I disliked the outcomes. This project I found tricky because I am so used to using bright acrylic paints on canvas or wood panels. I thought I found a perfect way to bring bright color in the piece while still using natural materials. The background is painted with Gentian Violet, but I later discovered it is a synthetic product and probably does not fall into the “organic” category. The color was so delicious I kept it anyway, knowing that the whole piece did not have to be made from organic materials. After my first two failures, I felt that simple may be better. My Chickens had finished molting and the yard was covered in black feathers. It wasn’t long before I came up with the idea of depicting a Crow made up of Chicken feathers. The idea was so literal I found it humorous. I accented the piece with twigs and those tiny little native nightshade berries you see growing around our state.

### **Ruth Weston**

I am a ceramic artist who started my career in a very traditional way with a Bachelor of Art from the University of California Berkeley and a Masters in Art History from Rosary College Graduate School of Fine Arts, at the Villa Schifanoia, Florence, Italy. My medium is glazed stoneware. I have developed my own matte glazes, which give a unique surface to my sculpture. A constant in my work is the feeling that I am painting with my glazes. A thin layer of glaze can have the appearance of a watercolor wash, where the underlying clay color becomes part of the final surface.

My art is a celebration of the feminine, with distinctly female subject matter. My intention for doing “In Evening Air” was to incorporate nature into a ceramic figure. I spent an afternoon walking through the arroyo near my studio. I found various twigs and sticks, which I brought back to my studio. As I built the figure I selected the stick, which best fits in with the clay figure. This sculpture represents myself as I walk through the arroyo, which I often do.

### **Molly Zimmer**

Molly Zimmer is an artist, educator and textile restorer. She is passionate about observing the world around her through the act of weaving, and plein air painting. Working as a textile restorer for Navajo Rugs, Molly uses these experiences of blending colors of wool, and spinning yarn to reweave the patterns in rugs to influence her painting process. She pulls on her intuitive perceptions of color, form, pattern and movement—where the repetitive hand of weaving transforms into the language of her brushstrokes. Molly’s interaction with textiles is one of intense and close observation, that extends to the natural world. She began see in her daily routine a variety of flexible grids that mimic the structure of weaving—window blinds look like looms, and architectural forms reference the invisible horizontal and vertical 3D structure of a weaving. Collecting moments of mundane beauty and cultivated natural spaces finding the patterns throughout them: a blanket over the earth. The woven patterns of textiles become the coverings that soften our interior space and bring the landscape into our homes.