



DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

PRESS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DELAWARE ART MUSEUM ANNOUNCES BEYOND WORDS: THE SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE OF PLANTS

WILMINGTON, DE (January 11, 2012) – The Delaware Art Museum is pleased to present *Beyond Words: The Symbolic Language of Plants*, an exhibition of approximately 60 works in various media that emphasize the historic and symbolic meanings of plants. On view February 4 through April 8, 2012, *Beyond Words* – which was created by a group of D.C.-based artists known as Studio 155 – is part of the Museum’s Outlooks Exhibition Series.

Members of the press are invited to a special breakfast reception and artist tour of *Beyond Words* on Saturday, February 4 at 10:00 a.m. Please RSVP to Molly Keresztury at mkeresztury@delart.org by Thursday, February 2.

About Beyond Words

Beyond Words is inspired by artists’ use of plants as symbols across cultures and throughout history. In the ancient world, Roman artists used roses to represent Venus, the goddess of love; Egyptian art connected the lily to Isis, the goddess of fertility; and Asian art included lotus flowers to convey beauty. Plant symbolism reached a high point in Medieval Christian art when religious craftsmen and artists used plants to explain the meaning of church parables and doctrine to a largely illiterate population. The lily and rose, for example, were used to denote perfect purity and love. Inspired by Medieval artistic quality, the Victorian Pre-Raphaelite artists revived the use of this ancient plant language to provide additional layers of meaning in their paintings.

This exhibition, which includes over 60 works in watercolor, oil, tempera, and colored pencil, features a variety of symbolic natural subjects – flowers and trees, fruits and vegetables, and herbs and vines. For example, Wendy Cortesi’s whimsical watercolor *Pumpkin* recalls Dia de los Muertos, the Hispanic

tradition of Day of the Dead and the autumn season; Neena Birch's painting *Rose* symbolizes ancient spiritual contemplation and centering; and *White Oak* by Michael Rawson stands for strength and endurance.

About Studio 155

The 17 artists of Studio 155 all reside and work in the Washington D.C. area. Their collaboration began during the 2006 Corcoran Gallery of Art exhibition *Botanical Treasures of Lewis and Clark*. Since then, they have continued to paint as a group in a shared studio and show their work together in Washington-area galleries. Their mission is to realistically capture the natural world while expanding the boundaries of botanical art.

Studio 155 members have participated in numerous widely-celebrated projects and exhibitions. Wendy Cortesi created a series of watercolors depicting Camp David's native plants for First Lady Laura Bush; Roberta Bernstein, Vicki Malone, Kappy Prosch, and Eva-Maria Ruhl joined Cortesi to illustrate the 2010 White House Holiday Tour Book; Cortesi, Malone, Debbie Bankert, and Eileen Malone-Brown contributed plant portraits for Monticello's 2009 Lucy Meriwether Lewis Marks exhibition; and Debbie Bankert is currently working on a series of projects in the Columbian rainforest.

Learn more about Studio 155 at www.studioonefiftyfive.blogspot.com.

About the Outlooks Exhibition Series

Beyond Words: The Symbolic Language of Plants is part of the Delaware Art Museum's Outlooks Exhibition Series, which encourages community involvement in the creation of exhibitions that will be hosted by the Museum. The Delaware Art Museum accepts proposals for Outlooks exhibitions from organizations, community groups, and residents of the surrounding area, contributing to the Museum's mission of providing an inclusive and essential community resource. All Outlooks exhibitions are displayed in the Ammon Galleries on the Museum's second floor. For more information, please visit www.delart.org/exhibitions/outlooks/index.html.

About the Delaware Art Museum

The Delaware Art Museum, located at 2301 Kentmere Parkway, Wilmington, DE 19806, is open Wednesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Sunday noon – 4:00 p.m. Admission fees are charged as follows: Adults (19 – 59) \$12, Seniors (60+) \$10, Students (with valid ID) \$6, Youth (7 – 18) \$6, and Children (6 and under) free. Admission fees are waived every Sunday. For more information, call 302-571-9590 or 866-232-3714 (toll free), or visit the website at www.delart.org

Founded in 1912, the Delaware Art Museum is best known for its large collection of British Pre-Raphaelite art, works by Wilmington-native Howard Pyle and fellow American illustrators, and urban landscapes by John Sloan and his circle. Visitors can also enjoy the outdoor Copeland Sculpture Garden and a number of exhibitions throughout the year.

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