

What are electric beings?

What does "We Are All Electric Beings" mean and how does it create an understanding of the artworks in the exhibition?

The title of this exhibition comes from knowledge about collecting medicine plants passed from Elder Shirley Norris Shillinglaw to her daughter, artist Heather Shillinglaw.

Shirley's poetic insight - that we are all electric beings - mirrors what biologists understand. Following in the footsteps of traditional knowledge, science has measured an electric charge on the cell surface of every living being, whether plant, animal or fungi. *We Are All Electric Beings* asks viewers to consider the spark of life that unites us with other living things. To consider plants as equals to engage in a reciprocal relationship of care, not as commodities to be exploited.

Plant Adoption, Alyssa Ellis

Why does the artist use "adoption" instead of "buy" or "take"?

Artist Alyssa Ellis deliberately chose the word "adoption" for her project that allows people to take home a plant she has rescued from the garbage and restored to health.

Like adopting a baby, the artist wants people commit to a life-long relationship of care with their plant. The plant adoption contract is a conceptual framework for considering the plant's needs. Those adopting a plant must bring a vessel to the gallery and agree to house the plant in it for the rest of its life. The point is not to create an unhealthy situation for the plant but to provoke consideration for its needs as it grows.

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Tenacity of Hope, Laurel Terlesky

How do we affect the world around us?

Artist Laurel Terlesky created direct casts of salal bush leaves, native species where she lives. Due to human activity resulting in climate change and habitat destruction She noticed these once-plentiful shrubs disappearing.

If you *gently* shake the rope attached to each column of white leaves, you will see it erupt with an array of blinking lights, making clear how our most minor actions can impact plant life and the world around us.

The artist has manufactured a pale facsimile of the original plant that will withstand many adverse conditions but fails to fill the role in the ecosystem that living salal does. In some ways, the dull clatter of the clay leaves when the rope is tugged is like sounding an alarm bell: we should wake up to how our actions impact our environment.