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Heather Shillinglaw

What kinds of plants did the artist depict? Why did she make them so large?

Artist Heather Shillinglaw has been learning how to collect and use plants of her home territory from her mother. In her textile works, she depicts medicinal (pine cones, yarrow, tree fungus, cow parsnip) and edible (rose hip, prairie lily bulb, wild onion, puffball) plants, as well as those with household and spiritual uses.

Shillinglaw expresses her Métis identity in the content of her work and her techniques, combining European and Indigenous textile traditions in her large-scale pieces, demonstrating these plants' cultural importance.

QR code

audio tour

view the QR code through your smartphone camera to access the exhibition audio tour.



Climate Anxiety,
Rachel Broussard

What is the artist afraid of?

Artist Rachel Broussard has meticulously cut photographs of nature (plants, animals and fungi) from glossy coffee table books. Three small lamps flood each fragile paper assemblage with light. The word fear, a shadowy message of doom, is projected as a large shadow upon the wall behind. One might wonder, what is the artist afraid of?

The title of this artwork, *Climate Anxiety*, is a clue. The artist created her collages from images of species, such as orcas, polar bears and owls, that are threatened, at risk or endangered.

Her delicate paper artworks remind us of the fragility of the environment from which life could vanish like a shadow.

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Self-guided Tour

WE ARE ALL
ELECTRIC BEINGS



Rachel
Broussard
Alyssa
Ellis

Heather
Shillinglaw
Laurel
Terlesky

official
exhibition sponsor



TD Asset
Management

October 13, 2022 –
January 8, 2023

curator: Sandee Moore

AGR

Engaging.
Contemporary.
Art.

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.