

00:00 (gentle music)  
00:00 (birds tweeting)  
00:04 - [Deborah] Hello, I'm Deborah Davidson,  
00:05 director of the Suffolk University Gallery.  
00:08 Welcome to a virtual tour  
00:09 of "Poetic Botany: Artists and Plants".  
00:13 There has long been a strong relationship  
00:15 between plants, the scientists who study them,  
00:18 and the artists who visualize and draw them.  
00:21 During the Age of Discovery,  
00:22 when botanical illustrators accompanied plant hunters,  
00:26 botanical illustration became a way  
00:28 of making a record of what a plant looked like.  
00:31 This enabled the scientists working in botanical gardens  
00:35 to make sense of the dried specimens of plants  
00:38 being brought back from overseas expeditions.  
00:42 Watercolor studies of the plants were made on board ship,  
00:46 and were painted to indicate color and morphology.  
00:50 This exhibition takes a look at the way  
00:52 this group of contemporary artists,  
00:54 working in a variety of ways,  
00:56 express their passion and interest in botany,  
01:00 which expands their own fascination with flora.  
01:03 Their work brings into focus  
01:04 the importance and the imperative  
01:07 of sustaining the living planet.  
01:09 The earlier artists  
01:10 were part of a great moment of discovery.  
01:13 Their progeny, both artists and scientists,  
01:16 test themselves as stewards  
01:18 of what literally nourishes us all.  
01:21 (gentle music)  
01:22 The artists included in the exhibition are Anne Wessman,  
01:26 Michelle Samour, Jenine Shereoes, and Beth Galston.  
01:30 Ann Wessman's objects and installations  
01:33 explore themes relating to time, memory,  
01:36 beauty, and the ephemeral.  
01:38 She develops works through repetition,  
01:40 and the accumulation of a variety of materials  
01:43 that are chosen for their expressive potential.  
01:47 For the works in "Poetic Botany",  
01:49 natural materials such as parts of trees and flowers  
01:52 become her palette.  
01:54 The works have a strong relationship  
01:56 to text and textiles, pattern, transformation,  
02:00 order and chaos, landscape, and the body.  
02:05 In her recent series, "Adaption",  
02:07 Michelle Samour creates a group of drawings  
02:09 based on direct observation  
02:11 of the interior and exterior structures of plants.  
02:15 Drawn with a quill pen,  
02:17 they reference early natural history illustration.  
02:21 The series has led her to ask many questions

02:24 including how does global warming  
02:26 cause plants and animals to adapt,  
02:29 and what does that look like?  
02:31 In Jenine Shereos "Leaf Series",  
02:33 the intricacies of a leaf's veining  
02:35 are recreated by wrapping, stitching,  
02:38 and knotting together the strands of human hair.  
02:41 She states that she was,  
02:42 "Inspired by the delicate and detailed venation of a leaf,  
02:46 and began stitching individual strands of hair,  
02:49 by hand, into a water-soluble backing material."  
02:52 At each point where one strand of hair intersected another,  
02:56 she stitched a tiny knot,  
02:58 so that when the backing was dissolved,  
03:00 the entire piece was able to hold it's form.  
03:04 The complex network of lines present in this work  
03:07 mimics the organic patterns found in nature,  
03:10 and speaks to the natural systems  
03:12 of transformation, growth, and decay.  
03:15 In the works presented as photographs here,  
03:19 the installation "Ephemeral Garden" and "Thaw"  
03:21 are records of ephemeral gatherings  
03:24 of ephemeral natural materials.  
03:27 Beth Galston's project "Leaf Prints 2017-19"  
03:31 is part of an ongoing series of large scale inkjet prints  
03:35 of decayed leaves.  
03:37 She thinks of them as portraits.  
03:39 The leaves are scanned at a high resolution,  
03:42 and printed at a very large scale,  
03:44 creating a visceral experience  
03:46 that draws the viewer into the image.  
03:49 She is fascinated with the process of decay,  
03:52 and how it reveals the unique inner structure of each leaf.  
03:55 By collecting the leaves and bringing them indoors,  
03:58 she is stopping the process of decay,  
04:01 then capturing the moment through the scanning process.  
04:04 We often stop looking at things  
04:06 we think we know well, an oak leaf, for example.  
04:09 By encountering the leaves at an exaggerated scale,  
04:13 they can be seen in new ways.  
04:15 Also included in the exhibition are earlier works,  
04:19 forms from nature, embedded and encapsulated in resin.  
04:23 (gentle music)  
04:25 (birds tweeting)