

NEWS RELEASE

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(RIDGELY, MD—June 7, 2017)

A Walk in the Garden, Sculptures and Drawings by Elizabeth Miller McCue, on View through July 28 at Adkins Arboretum

Step into the gallery in Adkins Arboretum's Visitor's Center and you'll feel as if a breeze has just sent multitudes of delicate leaves flying into the air. Gracefully scattering down one corner and across a long white wall, each of these 135 leaves is a tiny bronze sculpture artist Elizabeth Miller McCue cast from butterfly bush leaves.

On view through July 28, *A Walk in the Garden*, McCue's show of bronze sculptures and large black-and-white drawings, is all about the beauty, bounty and aliveness of nature. There will be a reception to meet the artist on Sat., June 24 from 3 to 5 p.m.



*Elizabeth Miller McCue, "Ball of Leaves,"
patinated bronze, 16" x 16" x 16"*

Many Arboretum visitors are already familiar with McCue's site-specific sculptures created for the past five biennial *Outdoor Sculpture Invitational* shows. Now living in Yardley, Penn., she studied art in New York at the Art Students League and the New York Studio School and worked in documentary film before she began concentrating on drawing and sculpture. She has received numerous grants and commissions, and her work is in more than 30 corporate and private collections.

McCue began making castings of actual leaves in 1995 when she was awarded a commission for the corporate headquarters of Salomon, Inc. at the World Trade Center in New York. The finished sculpture, "Ball of Leaves," was destroyed in the 9/11 terrorist attack, but a maquette (a smaller, preliminary model) is included in this show. With its layers of subtly shaded blue-green bronze leaves, showing every detail of the veins and zigzagged edges of the original leaves, this

sphere is an exuberant image of growth and abundance.

More recently, McCue was chosen as a semifinalist for a large sculpture for St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C. She received an honorarium to develop her proposal with preliminary castings of flowers, leaves and stems from a butterfly bush along with butterflies created from bronze screening.

"I was in and out of New York a lot and actually made a lot of the butterflies on the train," she said. "Very entertaining to the other passengers."

When a D.C.-based artist was awarded the final commission, McCue was left with the castings and butterflies and soon turned them into other sculptures. The butterfly bush leaves became a site-specific work for an exhibit on New York's Governor's Island in 2014, a piece that was so successful that McCue cast dozens more leaves to create "In the Wind," her piece on the Adkins walls.

Likewise, her delicate butterflies became "A Walk in the Garden," in which several clusters of butterflies are suspended on deep brown panels, creating the impression of butterflies gathered in the gentle shade under trees.

McCue's drawings are large, strong and spare. Whether perching in her children's playhouse to get a lofty vantage point for sketching pine trees or capturing the bare-bones shapes of the weathered stalks of plants still standing in her garden in autumn, her work is unfailingly direct and is animated by a powerful sense of growth and change.

"I work directly from nature and often make sketches, then enlarge them," she explained, "I like linear, gestural drawings. They tend to be large because I always think that—and this is why I do sculpture—I like to be physically engaged."

This show is part of Adkins Arboretum's ongoing exhibition series of work on natural themes by regional artists. It is on view through July 28 at the Arboretum Visitor's Center located at 12610 Eveland Road near Tuckahoe State Park in Ridgely. Contact the Arboretum at 410-634-2847, ext. 0 or info@adkinsarboretum.org for gallery hours.

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Adkins Arboretum is a 400-acre native garden and preserve at the headwaters of the Tuckahoe Creek in Caroline County. Open year round, the Arboretum is the region's resource for native plants and education programs about nature, ecology and wildlife conservation gardening. For more information, visit adkinsarboretum.org or call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.

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