

NEWS RELEASE

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Quoting Nature, Works by Erin Murphy, on View at Adkins Arboretum *Public reception is Sat., April 4*

Erin Murphy finds worlds within a patch of sunlight or shadow. On view through May 29 at the Adkins Arboretum Visitor's Center, *Quoting Nature*, her show of paintings, drawings and monoprints, draws the viewer into deep, atmospheric space. There will be a reception on Sat., April 4 from 3 to 5 p.m. to meet the artist.

Murphy's works are full of sensuous, subtle colors and rich textures. Inspired by landscapes from Baltimore to South Africa, her poetic abstractions often hint at vast swaths of sky and earth but might just as easily be intimate close-ups. Mysteriously shining through velvety shades of darkest blue, the luminous radiance of "The Field," a large monoprint, suggests a twilight sky above a meadow and distant tree line, but it could be many other things.

A young artist who graduated from Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in 2011 with a BFA in painting, Murphy is an avid hiker and traveler with a fascination for varied landscapes. She studied at MICA's Summer Study in Sorrento, Italy, and at Central Saint Martin's College, University of the Arts London and has had artist residencies at Salem Art Works in Salem, N.Y., and the Bijou Studio in Cape Town, South Africa.



"The Field" is among the works of artist Erin Murphy on view through May 29 at Adkins Arboretum. A public reception to meet the artist will be held Sat., April 4.

While studying at MICA, Murphy made copies of Old Masters paintings, a practice she sometimes still uses when she's looking for inspiration. In working on these close studies of

major works of art by artists such as Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, J. M. W. Turner and John Singer Sargent, she would often find herself fascinated by a small area of a painting and use it as a jumping off point for creating her own painting. This is the same process she uses when working from nature.

“I take in bits of sky or patches of light streaming through the trees or filtering onto a crumbling rock face into darkness,” she explained. “I try to isolate that moment, which is abstract but very alive. I’m an extreme editor of nature.”

Murphy’s works imply thresholds into subtle worlds of changing shadow and light. These are images of possibility and revelation. A brushy streak of bright yellow flashes across the lush brown surface of “Glimmer,” a small oil painting created while Murphy lived in Baltimore. It is as if in a moment, a sunbeam, an open door or a huge mountain will come into focus.

Occasionally, Murphy’s titles refer to specific places. In “Mist on Table Mountain,” a raw pigment drawing made during her residency in Cape Town, a curl of blue-white edges over the top of a dark triangle in a reference to the mist that can often be seen flowing over the dramatic horizontal peak of the mountain that soars up behind the city.

“There wouldn’t be any cloud cover,” Murphy said, “and it would literally be the mist pouring over the mountain. They say that’s how you can tell a storm is coming.”

Currently living in Nashville, Tenn., Murphy uses her artistic skills in her day job creating window displays for Anthropologie while pursuing her studio work at Fort Houston, a communal creative work space for artists and craftsmen that features a print shop, wood shop, photography studio and other facilities. Adding to her skills in painting and printmaking, she is learning woodworking techniques there and constructed her own frames for the works in the show.

“I feel like it hones my observation skills to take on a new project in a new space,” she said, “And I’m excited to think about what my work will look like in a year!”

This show is part of Adkins Arboretum’s ongoing exhibition series of work on natural themes by regional artists. It is on view through May 29 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 additional information about Arboretum programs, visit www.adkinsarboretum.org or call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.

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