

## NEWS RELEASE

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### ***Surface Treatments, Works by Marian Glebes, on View through May 30 at Adkins Arboretum***

If you've ever made a wish by blowing the seeds off a fluffy dandelion, you'll want to see Marian Glebes's art at Adkins Arboretum. On view through May 30 in the Arboretum Visitor's Center, her small, intimate works show the evidence of how she rescued dandelion seeds after they'd been wished on and preserved dead butterflies by carefully stitching their torn wings back together.



*"Untitled (stitched, fourth attempt)" is among the works of Baltimore artist Marian Glebes on view through May 30 at Adkins Arboretum.*

Glebes sees the natural world with childlike wonder, even as she recognizes the futility of trying to save its plants and animals from death and decay. There will be a reception on Sat., April 19 from 3 to 5 p.m. to meet her and learn about the ideas behind these gentle, fragile works of art.

This Baltimore artist began working with dandelions when she was earning her Master of Fine Arts degree at University of Maryland, Baltimore County. At the time, she was considering our paradoxical love of nature and the urge to control it and shape it to fit our plans. Using the suburban environment and the ideal of pristine green lawns, free of weeds, as an example, she began a series of work called "In Defense of Native Soil." She

invited people to come and wish on a dandelion, then she painstakingly glued the seeds onto paper, thus preventing them from growing to become weeds in a lawn.

Glebes explained, "I was really inspired by the performance artists of the '60s and '70s and how they could change the way you see the world without lecturing you, without giving you a speech, without being violent. So the performance is me making these things and the labor involved. The object is sort of a relic of thinking about why we try to protect or preserve and what preservation does to objects."

With rows of seeds delicately marching across pure white paper, four of her dandelion works are included in this show, along with works that preserve butterflies, cicadas, rose petals and garlic skins. Glebes finds remarkable ways of drawing attention to the beauty of their shapes and textures, but most particularly, she conveys an aching sense of their preciousness and fragility.

Glebes began working with insects when she was on an artist's residency in Ohio. Frustrated that the project she was pursuing in water research wasn't going well, she noticed a butterfly that had died on the windowsill of her studio. Using a needle and thread, she began to mend its torn wings.

"It was like, I'll fix this butterfly because I can't save the world," she explained. "And this has now been my meditation work when I can't be working on something else. I keep coming back to it."

Because insects are so fragile, Glebes often has to make many "attempts" at preserving them before she is successful. The titles of her works reflect this. "Untitled (stitched, fourth attempt)" displays a moth whose wings were finally mended after three failed attempts.

Meditative and inventive, Glebes's work is very much about our familiar everyday world. We see insects and dandelions all the time, but Glebes inspires a fresh look at how they live and change and die. In so doing, she makes us think about our human place in nature and about our impulses both to love it and to control it.

"In the context of landscape, we're trying to do good but we might also be a force of evil," she said. "We need a road, but we're still cutting into the landscape. It's like mending cloth. Every time you put a stitch in it, you're mending it, but you're still putting a hole in it. I think it's something we need to be more mindful of."

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 30 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](mailto: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 offers educational programs for all ages about nature and gardening. Through its Campaign to Build a Green Legacy, it will build the W. Flaccus and Ruth B. Stifel Center at Adkins Arboretum and a “green” entranceway to broaden educational offerings and research initiatives promoting best practices in conservation and land stewardship. For additional information about Arboretum programs, visit [www.adkinsarboretum.org](http://www.adkinsarboretum.org) or call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.*

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