

# Reaching for the Light

An invitational art exhibit hosted by The Rackham Graduate School.  
Currently on display on the 4th floor.



Jennifer Baker, "Rose", pigmented inkjet print

October 6 - December 15 / 2014  
Curated by River Gallery + Exhibits, Chelsea, MI

# Reaching for the Light

## Observations, lessons, mysteries of the botanical world



Martha Ceccio, "Courmayeur Italy", Photograph

In August of 2014 an 80-year-old American Agave growing in the greenhouse of the Matthaei Botanical Gardens in Ann Arbor bloomed for the first and last time. The plant grew so tall that a pane of glass had to be removed from the ceiling of the greenhouse. After blooming the plant dies, it's life cycle complete. Inspired by this event, River Gallery sent out a call-for-entries to regional artists asking them to submit artworks interpreting the theme "Reaching for the Light". Over 60 artists submitted, with 40 artists and 52 artworks being included in the 4th floor exhibit.

The interpretations are as varied as the media employed for artistic expression. Detailed botanical observations, lessons learned in nature, mysteries and memories were explored. Most artists began their investigations with solitary experiences of nature. Morning walks, nature hikes, camping trips and purposeful gazing at protected environments and domestic gardens induced for these artists detailed observations of color, form, texture, movement, light and shadow.

Mood and character are central to the artworks on display. Vitality, intense color and strong emotions radiate from some works, while others display fragility, decay and dreamlike qualities. Many of the artists are teachers and professors of art and that calling is reflected in a subtle, instructive quality in their art. These artist/educators seem to be mapping, memorializing and preserving for us what is experienced by them to be of utmost importance. This may be a detail in a petal or leaf or maybe an insight or memory.

The show includes paintings (watercolor, acrylic, oil, and egg tempura) pastels, photographs (both film and digital including work utilizing a Holga camera), prints, drawings, collage, encaustic, textiles, mixed media (with petioles as subject and sumi ink paint-brush) and a stainless steel floral series.

Curated by River Gallery + Exhibits, October 6 through December 15, 2014  
view the entire exhibit online / [www.chelsearivergallery.com](http://www.chelsearivergallery.com)



## Jennifer Baker

*"Rose"*  
Pigmented Inkjet Print

In creating my botanical pieces, I'm always fascinated by the way in which light illuminates texture, repetition, color and form. In my shooting process, isolation via the camera's frame is a way of elevating an individual plant's presence to a place where it becomes its own unique world.

## Jean Bartlet

*"Clay Pots with Willow Supports"*  
Selenium Silver Toned Prints

I find inspiration in the natural world, botanical prints and drawings, contemporary literature and design. A strong sense of place, escape, observation, the creative process, and leading an artistic life are essential to me.



## Cathy Barry

*"Buttonbush Summer"*  
Watercolor on Paper

This work represents my on going interest in "florilegiums" and the art of botanical illustration in general. Buttonbush is especially attractive to me because I am intrigued by shape and repetition. This Buttonbush grows on the Johnson Preserve on the south side of Ann Arbor.

## Frederick Birkhill

*"Sunflower 3"*  
Egg Tempura

No other medium has such a unique effect on canvas, or in my case, gessoed board; the effect egg tempura achieves is a delicacy of color and near microscopic detail.





## Boisali Biswas

*"Sunflower"*

*Woven Painted Wallpaper*

"Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow. It's what sunflowers do." ~ Helen Keller

## Lesa Chittenden Lim

*"Dancing in the Light"*

*Watercolor Pastel*

Rather than recording an exact external reality, I express the inner sensations caused by my visual perceptions; calmness, serenity, movement, awe, desolation to name a few.



## Martha Ceccio

*"Courmayeur, Italy"*

*Photograph*

On a day off, I took my camera to the small Italian mountain town of Courmayeur, and was able to capture this image. Clouds were forming and shifting on the peaks in the distance. And trees were silhouetted against the light, with branches extending upward.

## Joel Ellis

*"Purple Pair"*

*Acrylic on Linen*

My work ranges from calming natural scenes to abstract bursts of color and form. Each piece defines its own story in content, creative techniques and style.





## Judith Enright

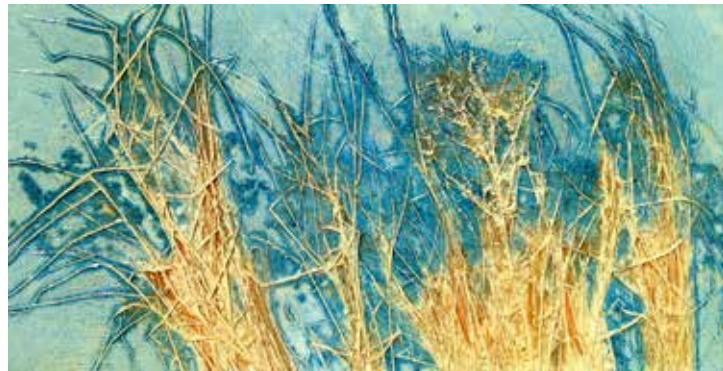
*"Citrus Connection"*  
Oil on Canvas

Using symbols reaching as far back as the Renaissance, I add a touch of humor to make all the works unique.

## Lonora Flores

*"Fields 4". Mixed Media*

One of the many things that fascinate me is the texture and movement of grasses. The way the wind ripples over fields creating waves and motion. The movement is like a magical dance that makes me want to join in.



## Mark Gregg

*"Finish Line"*  
Digital Photography

Out of curiosity this past winter I took one of my landscape photos and added the 'Other Side'. Since that moment I have been looking at the landscape with a different eye, seeking scenes that have hidden possibilities and motifs that might provide access to another unexpected visual experience.



## Pam Guenzel

*"Forest Path 2"*  
Toned Gelatin Silver Print  
on Fiber

The random possibilities generated by Holga combined with careful observation and selection of structure and patterns found in nature have deepened my sensitivity to the elements of landscape.

Artwork included in the exhibition:  
"Forest Path 3"  
"Forest Path 4"





## Cathe Hendrick

*"Eucalyptus"*  
Watercolor

My expression is influenced by my world view and my drive for innovation. I enjoy combining techniques and materials from various art making processes to express a unique point of view and uncommon design.

## Maureen Huffman

*"Blue Iris"*  
Stainless Steel

I look toward a graffiti side for its boldness, color and quiet beauty that superimposed over the modern beauty of an industrial canvas of decay.

Artwork included in the exhibition:  
"Fiery Orchard"  
"Violet"



## Nancy Hopwood

*"Light Beam Red Bud"*  
Photograph

As I traveled to over 60 countries, the beauty of the landscapes was impressive, particularly desert spaces, but it was the people that were the most rewarding to me.

Artwork included in the exhibition:  
"Dead Tree Namibia"



## Meighen Jackson

*"Variable Winds"*  
Ink, Papers, Foil,  
and Photography

Making art is how I think. And recently I have been thinking a lot about how the rhythms of nature – wind through tall grasses, water cascading over rocks, the braiding of river currents – shape and mirror my own internal rhythms.





## Ann Kelly

*"Wheeling Color"*  
Pastel

The vast offerings of nature provide the images for my landscapes: a secret quiet cove, dappled by the evening light of the sun, a swift river current bathed in the golden light of autumn, or the quirky gesture of a chicken, showing off amazing features of color and pattern.



## WanChuan Kesler

*"Sunflower"*  
Oil on Canvas

It is perpetually fascinating to me how an object of art can speak to us without any language barrier. I would like my paintings to speak of life, of love, and of humanity.

Artwork included in the exhibition:  
"Aloe"

## Katherine Larson

*"Vessel 2"*  
Acrylic on Board

Often, plants would turn during the course of my painting to face the setting sun. After searching for some time to find a way to express this invisible relationship, I came upon a photo of a Tesla coil and was struck by how much the radiating energy resembled the veins, or vessels within leaves and flowers.



## Meghan Lee

*"Fell Along the Path"*, Pen, Ink, Transfer

The ever-changing palette and movement of the sky, a deep gorge carved by a river, ocean waves leaving silvery lines of salt on the sand, visually awaken me.





## Rosemary Lee

*"Peony Leaves"*  
Monotype

My perennial garden provides some excellent materials as well and inspires me with the sights and smells of living, growing flowers and plants. Every season holds magical views of nature and compels me to try to capture these beautiful visions.

Artwork included in the exhibition:  
"Good for Wine"



## Felicia Macheske

*"Black Eyed Susans"*  
Acrylic on Canvas

By following the progression of the natural year it is possible to transcend the day-to-day. Nature constantly renews itself and finds ways to impose itself, even in the least of circumstances.

## Nancy McKay

*"Arbor Peonies"*  
Stitched Silk Painting

I paint with fine French dyes on silk that are steam-set, forming a bond with each fiber. Because of the intrinsic nature of the color bond and reflectivity of silk, the depth and brilliance of colors appear more natural.



## Steve McMahon

*"Calla Lily on Blue"*  
Digital Imaging

I work with all media from high resolution digital imaging to traditional film and darkroom technique, utilizing black & white and / or color imaging as best suites my subject.

Artwork included in the exhibition:  
"Sunflower"







## Bern Merlo

*"Matthaei Botanical Gardens"*  
Oil on Canvas

Whether the finished piece is a highly realistic portrayal, or an abstract in nature I strive to permeate my art with a sense of the obscurity, splendor and purity I find in nature.

## David Patria

*"Stark Lily"*  
Photograph

This image represents a lily in a black and white mode which invokes its beauty, exclusive of any color, but for an appreciation of its form.



## Sue Moran

*"Milkweed September"*  
Shibori, Collage, Stitching

My work presents images of the natural world and the human experience in it, and I feel that the traditional textile techniques I use enhance the imagery.

## Teresa Petersen

*"Floral arrangement with Orioles"*  
Collage on Found Painting

My submissions take two found vintage flower paintings and add collage elements. They are transformed into Tree of Life images, showing birds, babies and other things growing off of the bouquets like apples at harvest time.





## Jim Rehlin

*"Sunflowers 1"*  
Acrylic on Canvas

I like to build layers of complexity into my paintings, which can become more apparent with each viewing. My inspiration comes mostly from nature and the people and animals around me.



## Denise Rohde

*"Naked City Route"*  
Photo Manipulation

Traditionally trained in photographic processes, I have embraced digital editing to create a style of my own. By deconstructing and reconstructing familiar subjects, my photographs have a dream-like quality that can appeal to a broad range of viewers.

Artwork included in the exhibition:  
"Detroit Landscape"

## Maria Ruggiero

*"One Fruit"*  
Watercolor on Paper

Much of my work incorporates botanical elements, most of which relate to the home—such as houseplants and cut flowers. I use these varied botanical elements as a means of reflecting on aspects of life such as fertility and decay, or, in other works, growth and change.



## Amy Sacksteder

*"Cumulous"*  
Gouache, Ink, Salt  
and Correction Tape  
on Collaged Paper.

"An odd thing, souvenir-hunting: now becomes then even while it is still now. You don't really believe you're there, and so you nick the proof, or something you mistake for it."  
-Margaret Atwood,  
The Blind Assassin





## Leslie Sobel

*"Summer Woods", Encaustic*

I often focus on places that are vulnerable to human depredations, climate change or invasive species. I aim to preserve, remember, and celebrate places I love.



## Tricia Soderberg

*"Orange Still Life #2"  
Monotype Print*

In these works I am taking actual fragments such as leaves, twigs, etc. and collaging them on the printing plate to create abstract imprints, each one a unique image.

## Lori Sten

*"Wet Hosta"  
Acrylic on Canvas*

The freedom that abstraction allows an artist to be expressive, along with the fascination of depicting subject matter with photographic realism is equally compelling to me as an artist.



## Mary Tallman

*"Bird of Paradise"  
Color Pencil*

My intense interest in botanical images reflects my exploration of forms as they occur in nature. This exploration is extremely satisfying for me, as both an artist and a master gardener.





## Sharron VanCampen and Mary Tallman

*"Purple Clematis"*  
Acrylic on Quilted Fabric

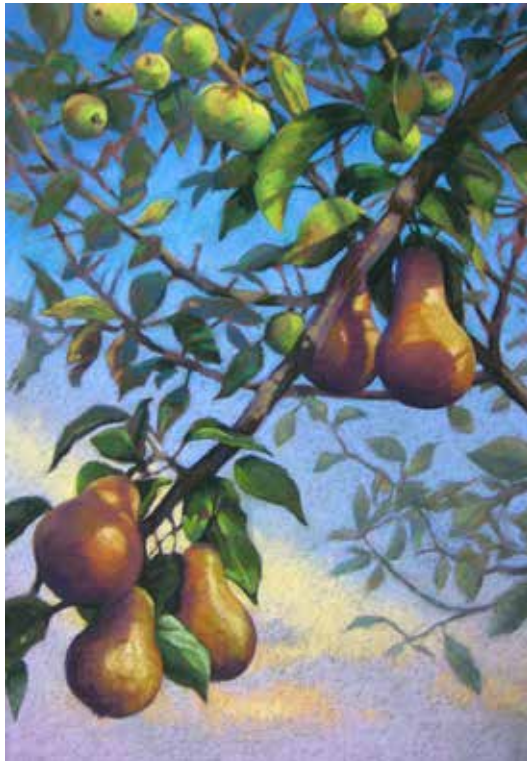
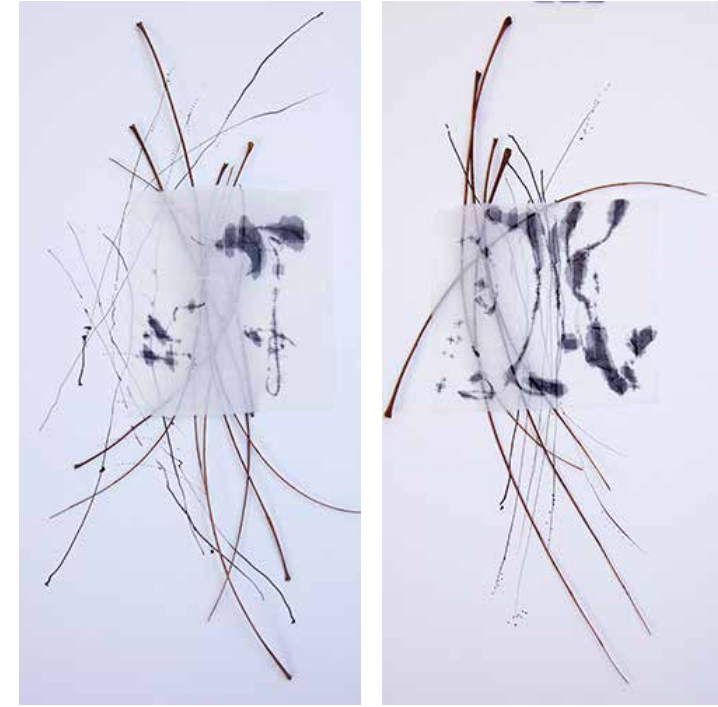
"My passion for quilting has always included a deep love of fabrics. Color and the subtlety of texture are my first love."

- Sharron VanCampen

## Marsha Wright

*"Petioles 3"*  
*"Petioles 4"*  
Mixed Media, Leaf Petioles,  
Sumi Ink, Fabric

This process began with a walk in the park during the fall after the leaves had fallen. I enjoy connecting with nature in this way and then extending the relationship through my artwork.



## Jill Wagner

*"Prussian Pears"*  
Pastel

I strive for realism with a painterly twist, but sometimes I allow the rich hues and textures of a scene to dominate. Watercolor, pastel and oil are exhilarating mediums that afford me endless adventures... and sometimes, I'm just happy to follow their lead.

## Eric Zeigler

*Middle of Nowhere Series*  
*"Uncle Gene's"*  
Photographic Inkjet Print

This is before it was loud.  
Before the highway brought the  
tire whine and the rumble strip growl.



info about art, artists, and pricing available  
River Gallery + Exhibits / 734.433.0826

**view the entire exhibit online / [www.chelsearivergallery.com](http://www.chelsearivergallery.com)**

Rackham Viewing Hours: Monday - Friday, 8am - 9pm



WanChuan Kesler, "Aloe", acrylic on canvas