



Palo Alto
ARTCenter

1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto, CA, 94303

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(IMAGES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST)

Contact:

Anna Weldon, Publicist

Phone: 650-329-2605

Email: anna.weldon@cityofpaloalto.org

Linda Craighead, Director

Phone: 650-329-2519

Email: linda.craighead@cityofpaloalto.org

Signe Mayfield, Curator

Phone: 650-329-2179

Email: signe.mayfield@cityofpaloalto.org

**The Palo Alto Art Center Announces...
Summer 2007 Exhibitions / June 21 – September 9, 2007**

"From the Ground Up: Painting, Process & the Garden - Frances McCormack"

"Photography: Beyond Botanica"

"Renee Adams: Under Fragile Skies"

~ Public Reception: June 21, 2007, 6:30-8:30 p.m. ~

Slide Lecture by Frances McCormack, 6:00-6:30 p.m., Before Reception

PALO ALTO, Calif. – May 14, 2007 – The Palo Alto Art Center (PAAC) explores the metaphoric and lyrical possibilities in the garden and botanica through three inspired exhibitions, *"From the Ground Up: Painting, Process & the Garden - Frances McCormack," "Photography: Beyond Botanica"* and *"Renee Adams: Under Fragile Skies,"* June 21- September 9, 2007. *"From the Ground Up: Painting, Process & the Garden - Frances McCormack,"* is a mid-career survey, (1984-2007), of Frances McCormack's lush paintings. McCormack's lyrical abstractions are uncommon in the way they consider the multiple processes and diverse meanings of the garden and reference both physical and psychological realities. *"Photography: Beyond Botanica,"* features work by artists who have expanded the genre of botanical photography, which originated for scientific purposes. Pieces in the exhibition were selected for their historic importance or new directions and include photographs by André Kertész, Imogen Cunningham, Karl Blossfeldt, Jerry Ueslmann, Flor Garduño, Lee Friedlander, Masao Yamamoto, Brian Taylor, Sandy Skoglund, Theresa Ganz, and Anna Atkins. *"Renee Adams: Under Fragile Skies"* is a collection of new botanically-inspired, mixed media sculptures by Renee Adams. Displayed beneath glass domes, these delicate and alluring works depict hybrid plant and animal organisms appropriated from the eccentric drawings of 19th century biologist Ernst Haeckel.

A public opening reception for the three exhibits will be held at PAAC on June 21, 2007 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Admission is free. A slide lecture by Frances McCormack will be presented in the PAAC auditorium prior to the reception that evening from 6:00-6:30 p.m. Advance reservations are recommended. Contact 650.329.2366 for more information. Other free associated programming includes docent-led tours, *"Art Dialogues,"* that are offered every Saturday during the exhibitions at 2:00 p.m., a *Design in the Garden Family Day*, July 15, 2007 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at PAAC, and a *Preschool Family Day (in the Garden)*, August 5, 2007, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Contact 650.329.2366 for more information.

"FROM THE GROUND UP: PAINTING, PROCESS & THE GARDEN - FRANCES MCCORMACK"

This exhibition is a mid-career survey, (1984-2007), of the lush paintings by Frances McCormack, a resident faculty in painting at the San Francisco Art Institute. In her most recent works, landscape design drawings provide the initial structure. Upon this she layers marks, gestures, and masses of color to evoke the actual movements of working in the garden. Shaking earth from roots, driving a shovel into the soil, molding, and weeding all find their echoes on the canvas. The artist, a resident faculty in painting at the San Francisco Art Institute who lives in Sonoma, has written that, "Depending upon the culture, the garden as a form implies many different things; respite from the harshness of the elements, sustenance, pleasure, power, and even an earthly vision of paradise." McCormack is the first recipient of the San Francisco Art Institute Faculty Residency at the American Academy in Rome, three Buck Foundation individual artists' grants, and a Djerassi Artist Residency. She received a BA in English from the University of Massachusetts and an MFA from the University of California at Berkeley.

The exhibition monograph is made possible by special support from Susan Beech, Simon Blattner, Tom Perot, and the Rotasa Foundation.

"PHOTOGRAPHY: BEYOND BOTANICA"

The exhibition combines contemporary work with seminal historic photographs, including cyanotypes by the first woman photographer Anna Atkins; Karl Blossfeldt's microphotographs of plants reflecting the New Objectivity in Germany during the 1930s; and flowers as icons of Modernism by André Kertész and Imogen Cunningham. Contemporary works include Jerry Ueslmann's surreal, multiple image photography. Created in the dark room, these works anticipate advancements in digital photography. His dialogue between the real and the fabricated is mirrored in Sandy Skoglund's laboriously set-up theatrical tableaux *Ferns*. Botanical imagery as form of self exploration is seen in Lee Friedlander's series on *Stems* and Flor Garduño's basket of lilies. Photographs by Masao Yamamoto and Michael Kenna are portals for quiet meditation, while Theresa Gantz's new hybrid photo-sculptures mystify perception.

"RENEE ADAMS: UNDER FRAGILE SKIES"

This collection of new botanically-inspired, mixed media sculptures by Renee Adams depicts hybrid plant and animal organisms appropriated from the eccentric drawings of 19th century biologist Ernst Haeckel. Displayed beneath glass domes, the sculptures become hermetic specimens, quarantined and of unknown origin. Much of the artist's recent works question ideals of beauty using botanical motifs. *Under Fragile Skies* considers our manipulation of nature and ourselves for our own pleasure and gain. Through their meticulous detail, these works mirror the way we preen, fluff and fuss over ourselves. In this sense the works become vacuous reflections of our own vanity, at once enticing and offensive. Renee Adams lives in Thorp, Washington and works as an arts programmer at Gallery One Visual Arts Center. She has taught art both in her local community and at Central Washington University, where she obtained her MFA in sculpture.

EXHIBIT-RELATED PROGRAMS & EVENTS:

- **Docent-led Tours "Art Dialogues"** - Every Saturday / 2:00 p.m. / Free

ART DIALOGUES are free docent-led tours designed for adults presented at the Palo Alto Art Center. Docents are specially trained to illuminate the content and aesthetics of the images and objects on display. Tours last 30 to 45 minutes. "Private" and "family" tours (geared for teens and adults), may be arranged for after 2 pm. For more information, please call 650.329.2370 or 650.329.2366.

- **Design in the Garden Family Day** - July 15, 2007 (Sunday) / 2:00-4:00 p.m. / Free

An afternoon of art inspired by PAAC's summer exhibitions, will encourage children and parents to see the gardens around them in new ways. Design your garden, create a sculpture for your garden, and learn all about abstraction. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Activities are appropriate for children ages 5 and up.

- **Preschool Family Day (in the Garden)** - August 5, 2007 (Sunday) / 2:00-4:00 p.m. / Free

Young children are encouraged to learn about the beauty of the garden through art adventures including creative, hands-on projects on butterflies, flowers and trees. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Activities are appropriate for children 18 months - 5 years.

- **Art Explorers Backpack**

The exhibit-related Art Explorers Backpack for children ages 5-12 is filled with Art Discovery Cards and dazzling art supplies. Fee: \$40.00 / For information: 650.329.2366.

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The Palo Alto Art Center (founded 1971) is a nationally acclaimed, regional visual art center whose exhibition program focuses on documenting - and celebrating - the art and artists of the San Francisco Bay Area. The Center's mission is to foster creative process and thought by forging a greater appreciation and understanding of the visual arts through exhibitions, studio experiences, and related educational programs. The Palo Alto Art Center, Division of Arts and Culture, City of Palo Alto, is funded in part by support from the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation and the Arts Council Silicon Valley, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara and the California Arts Council. The Center is open to the public without charge from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday; 1:00-5:00 p.m. Sunday; and 7:00-10:00 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday. The Center is located at 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303. For further information: Phone: 650.329.2366 / Email: artcenter@cityofpaloalto.org / Website: www.cityofpaloalto.org.