



**BRANDYWINE  
RIVER MUSEUM  
OF ART**

**EXHIBITION AT THE BRANDYWINE EXPLORES SUBLIME NATURE IN CONTEMPORARY ART THROUGH  
ICONIC WORKS BY SUCH NOTABLE ARTISTS AS PATRICK JACOBS, MAYA LIN, ROXY PAINE,  
DIANA THATER, AND DUSTIN YELLIN, AMONG OTHERS**

*ARTIST KATHLEEN VANCE WILL ALSO CREATE A COMMISSIONED WORK BASED ON THE BRANDYWINE RIVER,  
CONNECTING THE MUSEUM'S NATURAL SURROUNDINGS WITH THE GALLERY EXPERIENCE*

***NATURAL WONDERS: THE SUBLIME IN CONTEMPORARY ART*  
ON VIEW JUNE 23 THROUGH OCTOBER 21, 2018**

**Chadds Ford, PA, May 1, 2018** — This summer the Brandywine River Museum of Art will present *Natural Wonders: The Sublime in Contemporary Art*, a landmark exhibition featuring 13 major American artists whose work investigates our relationship with nature—exploring both its beauty and its capacity to inspire awe and fear. Organized by the Brandywine with guest curator Suzanne Ramljak, *Natural Wonders* will include the museum debut of Diana Thater's *Road to Hana* series, which captures in a multi-screen video wall the fantastical "painted forest" of rainbow eucalyptus on the Hawaiian island of Maui, as well as the North American premiere of Mark Tribe's *New Nature* series of 4K videos drawn from wilderness preserves in the United States. On view June 23 through October 21, the exhibition also features work by Suzanne Anker, Lauren Fensterstock, Patrick Jacobs, Maya Lin, Roxy Paine, Miljohn Ruperto & Ulrik Heltoft, Jennifer Trask, T.J. Wilcox, and Dustin Yellin.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Brandywine has commissioned a site-specific piece by Kathleen Vance: a 35-foot-long recreation of a segment of the Brandywine River—complete with flowing water—in the Museum's atrium. Known for her *Traveling Landscape* series of works that engage viewers in exploring the changing topography of natural waterways, Vance conducted research on the Brandywine River's history and shoreline as a prelude to developing her piece. Her commission offers visitors the rare opportunity to see her work within view of the very body of water that inspired it. With the river visible through the Museum's floor-to-ceiling windows, the installation directly stages the interplay of artifice and nature at the core of the exhibition.

"The history of American art in the Brandywine region, in many ways, is the history of artists exploring the power and beauty of nature," said Thomas Padon, the James H. Duff Director of the Brandywine River Museum of Art. "With *Natural Wonders*, visitors will have an opportunity to experience contemporary perspectives on this subject, with works of art that challenge and confront our presumptions of nature. This exhibition will have particular resonance here, as the Brandywine River Museum of Art is located in a bucolic setting in which nature becomes an integral part of the visitor experience."

Through some 40 works, the artists featured in *Natural Wonders* explore the intersection between the natural and artificial realms and the wild and cultivated. In their work questions are raised about our strained relationship with the natural world: from species extinction, to the loss of open space, to the prevalence of GMOs and the increase in designer breeding of both plants and animals. Artists such as Maya Lin, Roxy Paine, Dustin Yellin and Diana Thater present works in the exhibition that engage with such ecological concerns, a crucial but less widely known aspect of their artistic practice. Other works enlist sophisticated technologies and techniques—from 3D printing and lenticular prints, to advanced 4K digital cinema—to capture and convey nature’s formidable powers. Patrick Jacobs’ intricate, three-dimensional dioramas, which often focus on fungi and weeds, invoke the beauty that can be found in organic life that is often perceived as undesirable or dangerous. Likewise Jennifer Trask’s sculptures encourage the viewer to ponder the relationship between mortality and fertility, as she uses animal bones as source material for her detailed carvings of plants and flowers.

“Our idea of the sublime in nature has been largely shaped by Edmund Burke’s 1757 treatise, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*,” said Suzanne Ramljak, the exhibition’s curator. “Burke identified seven unnerving aspects of the sublime—including darkness, obscurity, privation, and magnificence—and these features can be found in the interpretations of nature in this exhibition. The selected works are also alluring, arousing the mixed emotion of delight and dread that is a hallmark of sublime experience.”

*Natural Wonders: The Sublime in Contemporary Art* will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with an introductory essay by Ramljak and an incisive conversation between artists Mark Dion and Alexis Rockman, whose works have long explored the human impact on nature, and who address art’s role in the face of environmental threats. Published by Rizzoli, the catalogue will also include statements by the featured artists, providing further insight into the sources and connections to nature in their art.

#### **About the Brandywine River Museum of Art:**

The Brandywine River Museum of Art features an outstanding collection of American art housed in a 19th-century mill building with a dramatic steel and glass addition overlooking the banks of the Brandywine. The Museum is open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (except Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day), and is located on Route 1 in Chadds Ford, PA. Admission is \$18 for adults, \$15 for seniors ages 65 and over, \$6 for students and children ages 6 and up; free for children 5 and younger and Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art members. Guided tours of the Andrew Wyeth Studio, N. C. Wyeth House & Studio, and the Kuerner Farm—all National Historic Landmarks—are available daily (for an additional fee) from April 4 through November 18; advance reservations are recommended. For more information, call 610.388.2700 or visit [brandywinemuseum.org](http://brandywinemuseum.org). The Museum is one of the two programs of the Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art.

#### **About the Brandywine Conservancy:**

The Brandywine Conservancy protects water, conserves land, and engages communities. The

Conservancy uses a multi-faceted approach to conservation. Staff work with private landowners who wish to see their lands protected forever, and provide innovative community planning services to municipalities and other governmental agencies. The Conservancy currently holds 483 conservation and agricultural easements and has facilitated the permanent preservation of more than 64,500 acres of land. The Conservancy is a program of the Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art.

**About the Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art:**

The Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art preserves and promotes the natural and cultural connections between the area's beautiful landscape, historic sites, and important artists. The Conservancy protects the lands throughout the Brandywine Valley, developing new conservation approaches and assuring access to majestic open spaces and dependable water supplies for generations to come. The Museum of Art presents and collects historic and contemporary works of American art, engaging and exciting visitors of all ages through an array of exhibitions and programs. The Brandywine unites the inspiring experiences of art and nature, enhancing the quality of life in its community and among its diverse audiences.

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