

NEW ENGLAND LITERARY NEWS/BOSTON GLOBE

An exhibit that combines books and nature

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Susan Kapuscinski Gaylord's "Chambered Congruity" appears at an exhibit at the Arnold Arboretum.

Books of life and living

We know the shape of a book: a spine and binding, covers, front and back, the pages fluttering in between. An exhibit of artists' books at the Arnold Arboretum showcases the range of possibilities for the shape of books to take. The in-out folds of accordion; pages like petals opening in a flower; a cover made of a nest of seeds. In "The Nature of Art/The Art of Nature" fourteen members of New England Book Artists translated their individual idea of nature into the form of a book. Stephanie Stigliano's "Mead & Moonshine" brings to mind the hexagonal beeswax caverns of a beehive, as well as middle school cootie catchers; its patchwork panels show pollinators and blooms, a honeyed sense of relationship and action. In Susan Kapuscinski Gaylord's "Chambered Congruity," the textured pages of a book sit nestled in a swell of pods from a sweet gum tree, a spiky nest that somehow also resembles a cloud. Lily pads spill from their box on umbilical strands, waterlilies bloom, and a sense of attachment and float comes from Rebecca Goodale's "Nymphaea Ieibergii, Pygmy Waterlily." The browns and grays in James Reid-Cunningham's "Ashes" suggest the late stages of a bonfire, and its upward lift speaks to rising smoke. The piece captures the mothy, post-fire feel. The exhibit will be on view at the Arboretum's Hunnewell Visitor Center through September 5. For more information, visit arboretum.harvard.edu.