

## EVERHART MUSEUM

NATURAL HISTORY, SCIENCE & ART

*Kathleen Elliot, May 28 - September 3, 2018*

### ARTISTS STATEMENT

Imaginary botanicals are sculptures made of flame-worked glass. Leaves, fruit, seed pods and flowers are reimagined in new varieties of organic life. Natural forms appear in unexpected colors and in fantastic, new combinations. Through this process, the vocabulary of observed botany becomes a vehicle for personal expression.

These sculptures are made by flame-working, treating glass directly with the flame of a torch. This technique allows the artist to create three-dimensional forms, add color and texture, and then assemble complex structures.

An imaginary botanical may begin either with a general concept or with a fully-formed idea triggered by something in the world: a conversation, a pattern of shadows, or a color combination. At times, an initial idea yields to a completely new direction. For this artist, creating a sculpture is a painstaking, meditative process, often requiring many technical adjustments. A piece may take weeks or months to finish.

Each imaginary botanical has its own story and its own meaning. Works in this series explore a wide range of subjects from female sexuality, to dancers and infants, to the idea of botanical life in alternate realities. Personal growth and development are continuing themes, and a number of pieces have arisen from imagining the emotional phenomena in our lives in botanical imagery.

Cyclones have emerged as recurrent images, but transmuted into both glass and a new species of plant life. No longer destructive and feared, they become gorgeous forms that might grow in a garden, crowned by flowers. The cyclones are a kind of self-portrait – unfolding, growth, becoming – a vortex spinning through life, spiraling upward until it's complete.

What is real? How does one know? By pursuing studies of philosophy, linguistics and alternative spirituality, these two questions form the foundation of my work. I invite viewers to be surprised, to wonder, to question and reconsider, to embrace curiosity and uncertainty, for these are the moments in which we are most alive.

I work in series:

**Natural Botanicals** are three-dimensional trompe l'oeil, in which a brittle manufactured material takes on the appearance of something organic and pliant. They celebrate the beauty of nature and its ability to lift us out of the commotion of everyday life that seems so urgent and important, reminding us we belong to mysteries far greater.

**Imaginary Botanicals** entice us out of the confines of our ordinary realities, into alternate realities where the unexpected can appear.

**Questionable Foods** pokes at us to be responsible for ourselves, to question what we are eating and what we call food, while challenging the food industry's ethical obligations to consumers.

**The Liberty** series addresses moments in life, where we find ourselves trapped in cages, whether imposed upon us or of our own making, from the merely annoying to the painful and horrific. Some of us fortunately find opportunities to pull ourselves out and move into new realities.

**Offerings** are inspired by the teachings and mudras, spiritual hand gestures, of Buddha. This series of work invites us out of the "I want" culture, into the spiritual healing and peace generated through gratitude and generosity.