



RANDY TWADDLE

Back to the Garden

October 19 – December 28, 2024

For Immediate Release - Holly Johnson Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of Randy Twaddle: Back to the Garden, an exhibition of recent work on paper by the celebrated Texas artist. An opening reception for the artist will be held on Saturday, October 19th, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The exhibition continues through Saturday, December 28th.

Because of its beauty and potential for symbolism, Flora has long been a primary subject matter of still life painting, often as an allegory of mortality. In Randy Twaddle's drawings, the flora depicted have been dead long enough to be largely devoid of color and the uniform morphology of a living plant, akin to those found in an herbarium. The figures in the drawings – stems, seed pods, vines – are drawn in charcoal, and though smudges from the artist's hands are occasionally apparent, the medium is largely controlled. The grounds comprise poured coffee, an application more vulnerable to chance and gravity. The grounds work as backdrops or in some cases appear almost as shadows. In these drawings, Twaddle merges the objectivity of the herbarium with the visual and conceptual power of the still life to express a personal perspective coming to terms with the inevitability of death.

Twaddle writes about Back to the Garden — “Four years ago I moved from a loft apartment in Houston's midtown to a house on forty acres outside Hempstead, Texas to run The John Fairey Garden, an internationally recognized botanic garden and cultural landscape created by artist and plant explorer, John Gaston Fairey.

The Garden and nursery take up roughly fifteen acres of the property, the rest is a mix of meadows and woods through which a spring-fed creek meanders. The move reintroduced me to an environment with which I am familiar; growing up in rural Missouri I spent countless hours outdoors, fishing, rock hunting, and exploring the woods, creeks, and rivers near my home.

My understanding of beauty was formed against that backdrop. For the first twenty years of my life I had little opportunity to apply it. Then, on the first day of class during my sophomore year in college, a professor said, 'I will teach you jewelry making techniques and their relationship to balance in nature.'

Forty seven years later, I consider it good fortune to spend most of my days in the type of wonderland that nurtured my worldview; this time not as an innocent child but as a sixty-seven year old man making an effort to embrace the fact I'm much closer to my end than my beginning.

Toward the end of my mother's hospice care, skin draped the bones of her fingers like a negligee. Its murky translucence enthralled me with a pull conventional beauty seldom possesses.

While alive and healthy, a plant's leaves are virtually identical; death then bestows upon each an idiosyncratic elegance. I think of these drawings as a petition whispered to the universe that a peculiar elegance might someday preside over my own transformation."

Randy Twaddle, born in 1957 in Elmo, Missouri received a Bachelor of Fine Art degree from Northwest Missouri State University (1980) and a Master of Fine Art degree from the University of Houston (1996). He is currently the Executive Director of The John Fairey Garden Conservation Foundation in Hempstead, Texas. He co-founded and founded the branding and communications firms, ttweak, and Small Town, respectively. Twaddle has maintained a multi-disciplinary visual art practice for forty one years including drawings, paintings, prints, sculpture, textile design, rug design, graphic design, and musical and spoken performance.

Since the early 1980's his work has been exhibited throughout Texas, as well as in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, and New York. He has been the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, a Cultural Arts Council of Houston Harris County Artist Award, an Award in the Visual Arts, and an Arch and Anne Giles Kimbrough Award from the Dallas Museum of Art.

His work is in the permanent collections of Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts; Archer M. Huntington Gallery, University of Texas, Austin, Texas; Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas; Frito-Lay, Inc., Dallas, Texas; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, Texas; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, Louisiana; The SBC Collection of Twentieth Century American Art, San Antonio, Texas; The University of Houston, Houston, Texas; and Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

Holly Johnson Gallery is located at 1845 East Levee Street #100 in the Dallas Design District. Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. The gallery is a founding member of CADD - Contemporary Art Dealers of Dallas. For information please call 214-369-0169, or email info@hollyjohnsongallery.com, or visit www.hollyjohnsongallery.com.