



Guests wander the gallery and look at various pieces on exhibition. The exhibit, “Climate Conversations: All We Can Save,” is taking place at the Nurture Nature Center in Easton. (Courtesy of Lillian June Robinson)

Female-led art exhibition opens at Nurture Nature Center

BY JULIA
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The art exhibit “Climate Conversations: All We Can Save” at the Nurture Nature Center in Easton, addresses how society can affect change and mend the damage humans have caused to Earth.

The exhibit, which will run until June 30, is the largest to ever come to the Nurture Nature Center. It was created by eight women: Nancy Cohen, Kate Dodd, Elizabeth Barack Fall, Susan Hoffman Fishman, Tracey Easthope, Gina Rafella Furnari and Leslie Sobel.

“A lot of people either can’t get their head around climate change or just don’t understand what it’s about, but they understand better when they’re presented with art,” artist Kate Dodd said. “That’s a way in for people, when science is not a way in.”

Artist Nancy Cohen said although the women working on the project come from different areas in the midwest and east coast, they were able to come together during the pandemic via Zoom to put the project together.

The exhibit was inspired by the book “All We Can Save: Truth, Courage and Solutions for the Climate Crisis,” which contains a collection of essays regarding the effects of climate change.

The group of women, led by Leslie Sobel, gathered throughout 2020 and 2021 to discuss the essays in the book and find the best ways to create art.

According to the Nurture Nature Center’s website, although each artist uses different materials and techniques, the work is unified through the power of storytelling, the importance of community, the interconnectedness of all living beings and the need to hold human beings accountable as equal partners on Earth.

Dodd said her hope for the exhibit is that gradually the messages behind art become part of a culture and change the way people think.

Dodd contributed five pieces to the exhibit, all based on different aspects of the book. She said one of her favorites, “Climbing Threat,” is a three-story installation, composed of water color painted lungs made by her former students that “grow” from a climbing helix.

“I started thinking about my students and how they both have to survive it and they’re the victims of it, but they are also going to be the causes of it,” Dodd said.

Cohen said she focused on two essays in particular for her art, which highlighted the effects of flooding and marshland areas. Cohen used handmade paper and paper pulp to create her drawings, including her 78 x 70 inch piece called “Blue Storm of our Anxieties.”

Cohen said the drawing took her over six months to complete, and was inspired by COVID-19.

“It’s about all of the storms that have been going on,” Cohen said. “The fires, the increasing hurricanes, the flooding ... And, at the same time we’re dealing with so much death related to this

rapidly spreading disease we don't quite understand in the beginning.”

Keri Maxfield, art director of the Nature Nurture Center, said the exhibit features 45 works in total, including a 50-foot-long painting by Susan Hoffman Fishman titled “In the Beginning There Was Only Water” as well as a few surprises. The exhibit is composed of digital prints, sculptures, paintings, digital animations and more that utilize recycled materials as much as possible.

Cohen said while most group shows are organized based on what pieces look good together, this exhibit is special.

“The organizing principle here was that we were all committed to this topic, we had all read and discussed the book, and then made work based on how the book struck us,” Cohen said.

Maxfield said the community response has been one of excitement, curiosity and appreciation

She said the Nurture Nature Center has had college classes, visiting artists, community centers and interested people from large cities flowing into the exhibit since it opened on April 8.

“We broke a record for any opening reception here at 150 plus people, and it placed second in all events,” Maxfield said.

Cohen said the center's third annual Youth Climate Summit will be held April 30, which will hopefully bring even more attraction to the exhibit.

“People were pretty interested in the work,” Cohen said. “It's very diverse, so different things hit different people.”