

HOW WE
HOLD THE
WEATHER

HEATHER BIRD HARRIS

APRIL 2026
WELCH GALLERY, GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

How We Hold the Weather investigates how human and more-than-human life holds time during climate change, or fails to. Drawing from three years of field research, the work connects the oldest living tree in Atlanta to the eroding coastline of the artist's childhood home, searching for lessons on becoming fit to place. Clay, plant-based inks, carbon, wildflowers, water, and tree rings become primary sources, revealing how porous, entangled matter reflects the space-time conditions they inhabit.

Across the four seasons of one year, the exhibition traces temporal instability—the loss of a system's rhythmic consistency—as patterns break, environmental cues are missed, and relationships fall out of sync.



photograph by Harrison Wayne

It Will Be Different (Summer, Georgia), 2025

“Over the past year, Harris has been working on a series of paintings that trace the material rhythms of Georgia’s four seasons. Painted outdoors in a changing climate, the natural materials and the site participate in the artwork’s becoming, as the weather, pollen, and windfall settle onto canvas over the textured ground. Once dried and complete, the painting will continue to change as plant-based inks respond to sunlight, reflecting the life cycles of their materials. Eventually, what will remain are the green and ochre clays, brown tannins, and the ghost-like shapes made by the plants’ presence, as records of life’s brevity held in the timescale of the land.”

- EC Flammig, Curator

HEATHER BIRD HARRIS



It Will Be Different (Summer, Georgia), 2025

clay watercolors, pokeberry, mulberry, yaupon, and logwood inks, and crayon on cotton canvas, fallen oak tree, local wildflowers

40 x 60 in

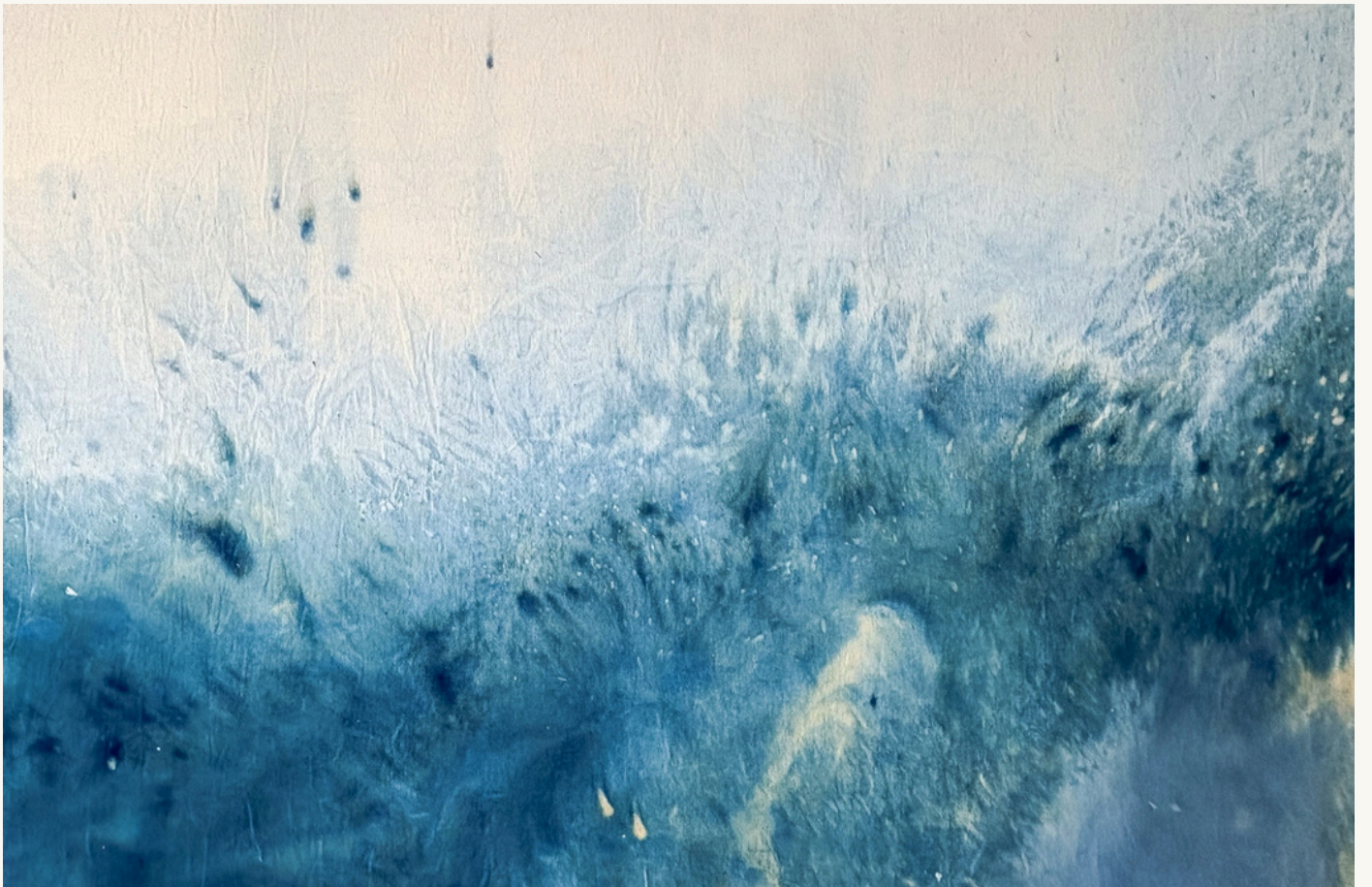




Water Film (Summer, Georgia), 2025

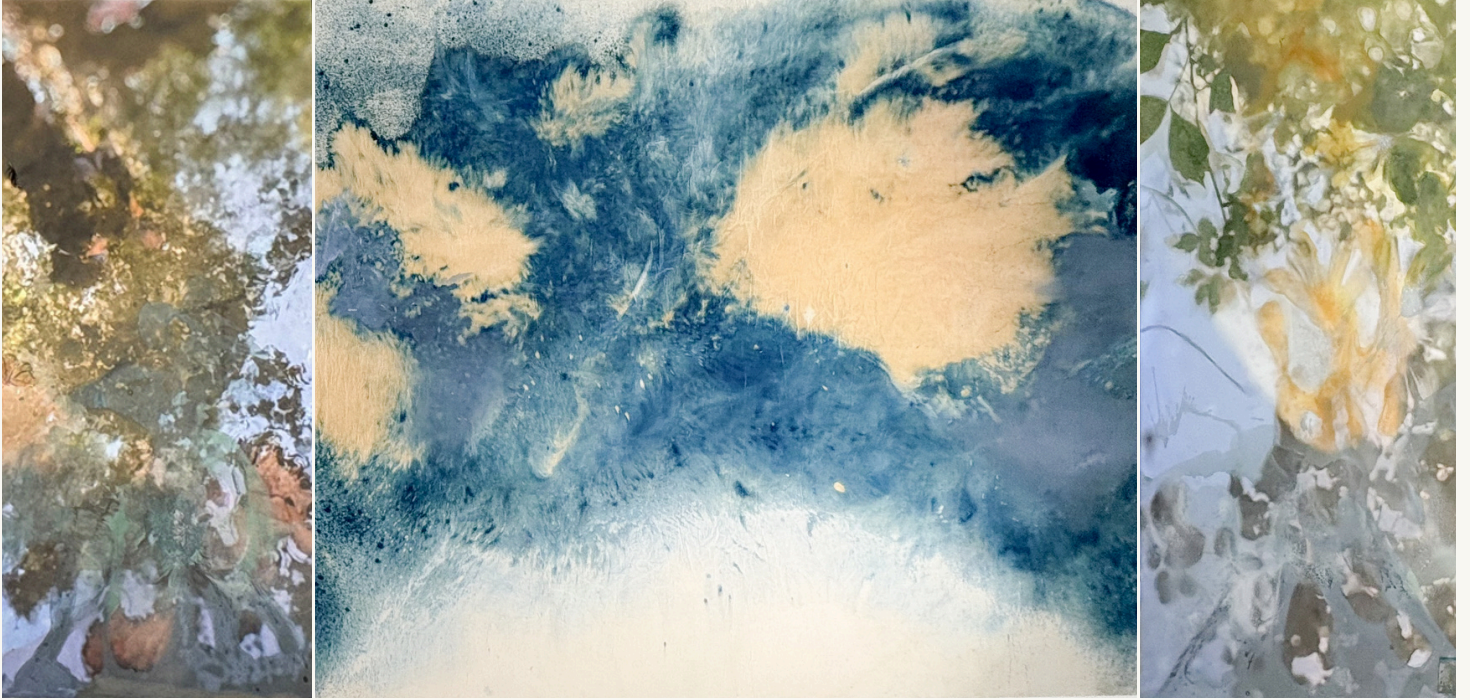
wet cyanotype on canvas, indigo and clay watercolor paints over film still on stretched paper
sealed with beeswax

60 x 132 in.



Details, *Water Film (Summer, Georgia)* (2025)

HEATHER BIRD HARRIS



alternative installation, *Water Film (Summer, Georgia)*, 2025
60 x 132 in.



Detail, *Water Film (Summer, Georgia)* (2025)



A Time of Endings (Fall, Georgia), 2025

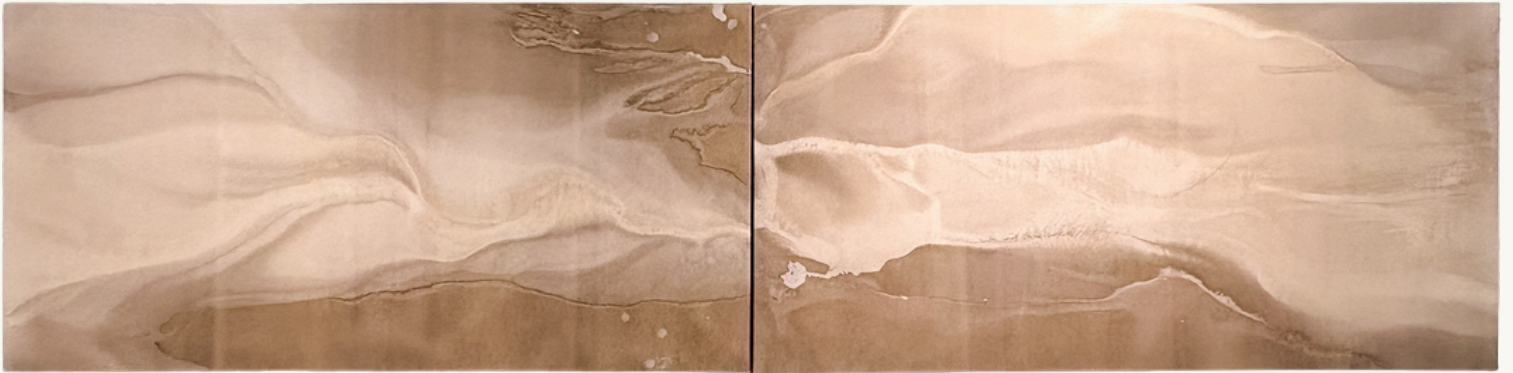
clay and tree carbon watercolor and walnut ink over tree carbon screenprint, wet cyanotype
toned in walnut and clay on canvas
108 x 60 in., variable



Detail, *A Time of Endings (Fall, Georgia)*, 2025



Installation view, *A Time of Endings (Fall, Georgia)*, 2025



Vernalization (Winter, Georgia), 2026

ice cyanotype toned in acorn ink on stretched paper, sealed with beeswax
30 x 144 in.





Vernalization (Winter, Georgia), 2026

ice cyanotype toned in acorn ink on stretched paper, sealed with beeswax



alternative installation, *Vernalization (Winter, Georgia)*, 2026
60 x 132 in.

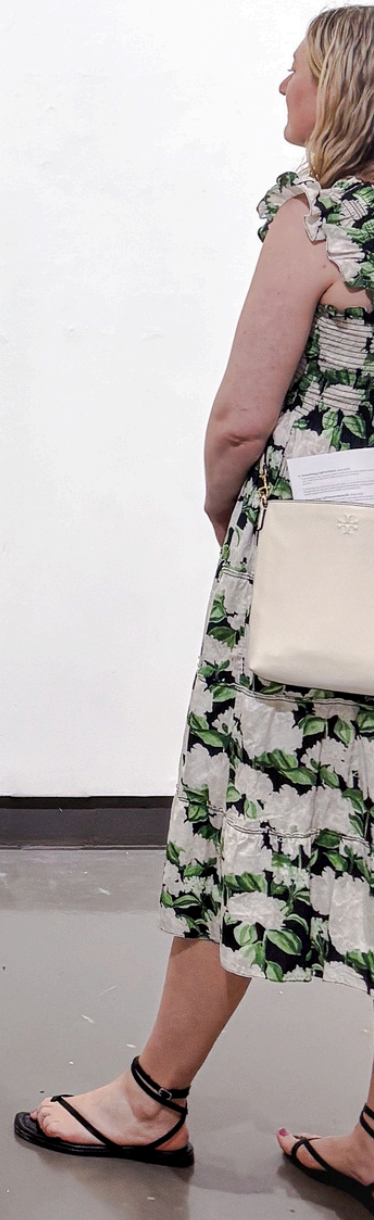


Wildflower Phenology (Spring, Georgia), 2026

clay, ochre, and indigo watercolors, watercolor paint, oil pastel flowers by Hazel Harris (6),
and pollen on canvas

64 x 96 in.







The Timekeepers, 2026

coal monotype and tree carbon screenprint made with windfall from the oldest living tree in Atlanta; Frozen cyanotype toned in acorn ink; Clay screenprint and clay watercolor, on stretched paper over cradled panel.

Triptych, 30 x 72 in each.



How We Hold Time, or Fail To, 2025-2026

“Drawing on chronobiology, Harris’s triptych explores how living beings perceive and maintain time. The work focuses on Atlanta’s oldest living tree, a white oak in Deepdene Park, whose rings show that it began growing in 1725. Together, the three images offer complementary views from the perspective of the tree that reflect the ways time is held and coordinated in nature: cellularly, environmentally, and through each other.

The first image shows the tree’s internal rhythms, where each cell acts as an internal clock supporting and guiding the life of the whole. In this oak, the annual rings that mark seasonal cycles are scrambled, a condition called “temporal instability” caused by climate change and excess atmospheric carbon. In other words, the tree has lost track of time. The print is made from carbon collected from windfall branches at the base of the tree, transformed in fire, ground into pigment, and combined with ancient coal, linking present-day and ancient photosynthesis.

The second image captures environmental rhythms using a cyanotype toned with acorn ink, recording sunlight, the presence of water, winter cold, and ice crystal patterns. Created with multi-colored clays, the third image depicts the interspecies entanglement that underpins all ecological systems and seasonal cycles. Across the triptych, Harris considers how time is kept internally, environmentally, and ecologically—and what it means when these rhythms are disrupted.”

- Curator EC Flammig







Temporal Instability, 2026

tree carbon screenprint, beach coal watercolor on canvas

72 x 72 in



Temporal Instability, 2026

Temporal Instability (2026) features two tree cores, both cored in 2011 yet revealing divergent cellular experiences of time within the shared geography of Deepdene and Fernbank Forests. A white oak planted in 1952 maintains seasonal rhythm, while Atlanta's oldest living tree (1725) has grown without fall/winter rings since 1984, a drought year across the American Southeast. Printed in carbon from the elder tree's windfall and overlaid with a plume of 300-million-year-old coal gathered from the eroding beach of the artist's childhood home, the work materially binds present and ancient photosynthesis—pointing to how excess fossilized carbon in the atmosphere disrupts ecological rhythms.



Details, *Temporal Instability* (2026)



Installation of *Chronobiology (30)* (2025-2026)
Swan Coach House Gallery, February 2026

***Chronobiology (38)*, 2025-2026**

Atlanta clay and weathering rind watercolor and walnut ink; Coal screenprint and cyanotype toned in acorn ink; Deepdene clay screenprint, on cotton canvas. Artist frames made from a fallen red oak tree in Atlanta.

Triptych, 48 x 61 in each.





Chronobiology (38), 2025-2026

“This triptych explores how the artist is “holding time” this year through three interconnected works that reflect the ways time is held and coordinated in nature: cellularly, environmentally, and through each other. The first, crafted from clay, weathering rind, and walnut in an abstract form evoking a fallopian tube, reflects internal timekeeping, drawing material and symbolic connections between clay, blood, and motherhood. The second piece extends outward, combining coal and sunlight to reference the artist’s coastal childhood environment. Harris embeds images of her children playing along the eroding shoreline, linking personal memory with geological time.

The third work, made from Georgia clay, shows children peering beneath a massive fallen tree in Deepdene Park. This image engages with themes of erosion and growth, and suggests even collapse can generate new life. Across the triptych, Harris weaves personal, ecological, and temporal perspectives, demonstrating that rhythms of time are interconnected. The presence of children and use of natural materials conveys that life persists, and perhaps even grows, from moments of disruption.”

- EC Flamming, Curator





Deatil, *Chronobiology (30)* (2025-2026)
Coal screenprint and cyanotype toned in acorn ink on cotton canvas.



Deatil, *Chronobiology (30)* (2025-2026)
Artist frames made from a fallen red oak tree in Atlanta.

How We Hold the Weather

Bridget Gilchrist
and Heather Bird Harris

Flute

This page contains the musical score for the Flute part of the piece 'How We Hold the Weather'. It features 15 staves of music in 4/4 time. The score begins with a series of rests, followed by a melodic line that enters in the 11th measure. The music is characterized by a steady, rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with some dynamic markings such as *mp* and *f*. The piece concludes with a final melodic phrase in the 15th measure.

How We Hold the Weather

Bridget Gilchrist
and Heather Bird Harris

Bass Flute

This page contains the musical score for the Bass Flute part of the piece 'How We Hold the Weather'. It features 15 staves of music in 4/4 time. The score begins with a melodic line that enters in the 1st measure. The music is characterized by a steady, rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with some dynamic markings such as *mp* and *f*. The piece concludes with a final melodic phrase in the 15th measure.

How We Hold the Weather, 2025-2026

Composed and performed by Bridget Gilchrist and Heather Bird Harris

Two channel sound recording, and sheet music on paper

Duration: 3:43

How We Hold the Weather (2025–2026) translates dendrochronological time into sound. Beginning in 4/4, the bass flute, performed by the artist’s mother, tracks the steady, seasonal rhythm of Atlanta’s oldest oak, while the flute, played by the artist, enters as the younger tree. The two briefly harmonize before the bass flute slips out of meter into atemporal phrasing, mirroring the elder tree’s loss of seasonal dormancy following the 1984 drought. The closing resolution gestures toward the possibility of re-synchronization and recovery from temporal instability.



How We Hold the Weather, 2025-2026

Two channel film

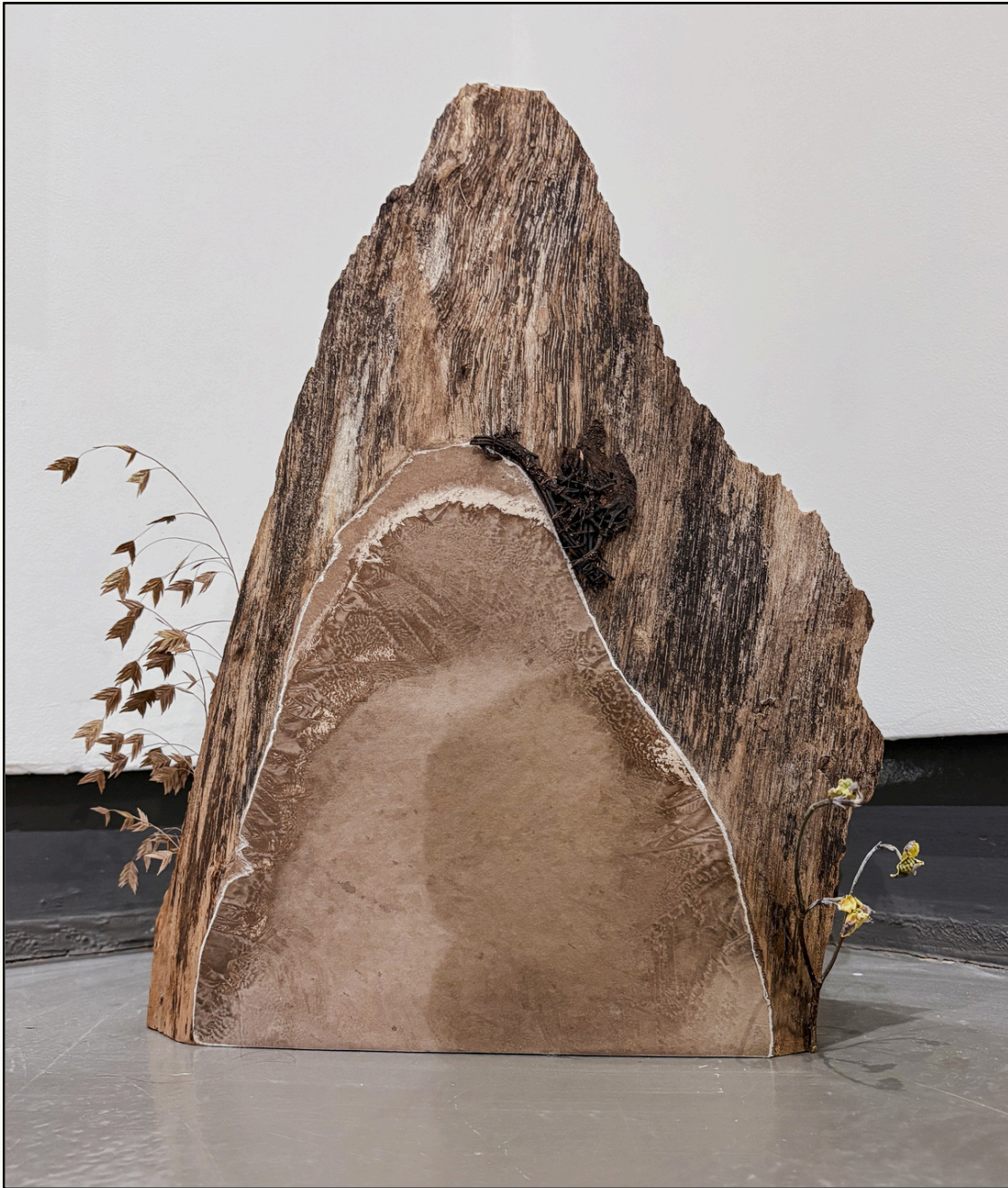
Duration: 5:43 and 5:44

How We Hold the Weather (2025–2026) looks to the healthiest forest and the oldest living tree in Atlanta for lessons on how life endures in the place where the artist is raising her children. Understanding “survival of the fittest” as a popularized misinterpretation of Darwin’s original theory “survival of the fit,” the film proposes that relational learning and intimate attention might help us become more ‘fit to place’ amid rapidly changing conditions. The two channels, offset by one second, gradually fall out of sync over the course of the exhibition, mirroring the impact of climate collapse on ecosystem phenology.



Deep Freeze at Dusk (Winter, Georgia), 2026

ice cyanotype toned in acorn ink on stretched paper, sealed with beeswax
30 x 72 in.



Nurse Log I, 2026

wet cyanotype toned in acorn ink, forest finds mounted with decomposable rice glue
on fallen tree chunk from Atlanta

14 x 20 x 4 in. variable



Nurse Log I, 2026

weathering rind watercolor on paper, forest finds mounted with decomposable rice glue
on tree struck by lightning in Atlanta

12 x 7 x 4 in. variable



Nurse Log III, 2026

wet cyanotype toned in acorn ink, forest finds mounted with decomposable rice glue on fallen tree chunk from Atlanta

10 x 5 x 3 in. variable



Vessel for Re-membering, 2026

clay and scent of wet soil and burnt wood

3 x 2 in.

Vessel for Re-membering activates smell as a form of temporal and ecological recall, releasing the scent of wet soil and burnt wood. Smell is often the fastest route to memory; it collapses time, returning the body to places it has known before language. This particular scent evokes both regeneration and destruction, holding the contradiction at the center of ecological grief. Rather than illustrating memory, the work asks the body to re-member for itself.

HEATHER BIRD HARRIS





composting an empire, 2026

Leaf, clay and tree carbon watercolor, light box
4 x 6 inches



Heather Bird Harris is an artist, education leader, and independent curator. Her interdisciplinary practice bridges critical ecology and reparative history, drawing from communal and more-than-human archives. Through painting, social practice, film, and, more broadly, curation, writing, and teaching, her work brings together alternative ways of knowing that make emergence, cooperation, and systems change more possible.

Harris holds a B.A. in Art History from Skidmore College, an M.A. in Education Leadership from Columbia University, and an MFA in Painting from Georgia State University. Recent exhibitions include *NADA Curates*, New Mexico State University Museum, *Tiger Strikes Asteroid* (Greenville, SC), Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, LA), *Stoveworks* (Chattanooga, TN), *SITE* (Atlanta, GA), and apexart's *Plastic, the New Coal* at the Descendants Project (Vacherie, LA). Recent projects include *Resonancia Naturale* with musicians and ecologists at Arizona State University and *Hope Springs Eternal* in collaboration with activist group RISE St. James.

Harris's practice has been featured in *Burnaway*, *ART PAPERS*, *Garden & Gun*, *ArtsATL*, and *NPR* and her writing has appeared in *Brink Literary Journal*, *ART PAPERS*, *ArtsATL*, *Burnaway*, and *Scalawag*. She is the recipient of fellowships at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies (Hudson Valley, NY), The Hambidge Center (Rabun Gap, GA), and the Art & Social Justice Fellowship at Emory University (Atlanta, GA). Harris lives in Atlanta with her partner and their two children.