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NEWS

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Denver-Area Artist Explores Relationship between Forests and Wildfires to Benefit Colorado Bark Beetle Mitigation Fund

Denver – Denver-based artist Anna Kaye has always felt a strong connection with nature, and she has decided to act on that connection for the benefit of Colorado’s forests. On Thursday, Sept. 10, Kaye’s “Apparition” exhibition will open at the Sandra Phillips Gallery in the Santa Fe Art District in Denver. Kaye will donate 10 percent of the proceeds generated from the sale of her art to the Colorado Bark Beetle Mitigation Fund.

Established by the 2008 Colorado General Assembly through the passage of House Bill 1318, the fund is managed by the Colorado State Forest Service, an outreach agency of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University. The purpose of the fund is to allow the public to make voluntary donations that can be used to treat beetle-infested state-owned lands.

“Protection and conservation of the environment has always been important to me; in this way, my passion for art is a vehicle for this cause,” Kaye says. “When living in Colorado, the landscape is a part of our daily lives. The mountains can be seen from all vantage points, which I see as a metaphor of how nature is a part of who we are.”

Apparition is a series of charcoal, graphite and watercolor drawings that explore the relationship between western coniferous forests and wildfires. The exhibition features flames entangled with organic matter on the forest floor, charred trees covered in a thick mist and Colorado wildflowers emerging from scorched landscapes such as the 2002 Hayman Fire near Deckers and the 2008 fire on the north side of Green Mountain.

“We are both honored and humbled that Anna has chosen to donate a portion of the sales proceeds from her exhibition to the Colorado Bark Beetle Mitigation Fund,” said Jeff Jahnke, state forester and director of the Colorado State Forest Service. “Anna is a gifted artist and philanthropist, and a genuine steward of Colorado’s forests, and we are sincerely touched by her generosity and support.”

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Apparition emphasizes fire as a natural impetus for change and regeneration. In the early twentieth century, people were frightened by the destructiveness of wildfire and campaigned to suppress it. Through years of research, many biologists and foresters have discovered that wildfires are actually necessary to create healthier forests that promote the prevention of insect and disease infestations, provide space for new growth and foster species diversity.

A visiting assistant professor at Metro State College, Kaye has undergraduate degrees in geology and fine art from Skidmore College, and a master of fine arts degree from Washington University in St. Louis, Mo. She and her husband, David Geier, have lived in the metro-Denver area for five years and are avid outdoor recreationists.

The Apparition exhibition opens on Sept. 10 and runs through Oct. 17 at the Sandra Phillips Gallery, 744 Santa Fe Dr., Denver. For more information, contact the gallery at 303.573.5969.

For more information about the Colorado Bark Beetle Mitigation Fund, contact the Colorado State Forest Service at 970.491.6303.

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