

NEWS RELEASE

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Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences

‘Dornith Doherty: Archiving Eden’ to Open at NAS

WASHINGTON – Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences announces “Dornith Doherty: Archiving Eden.” This photography exhibition by Texas-based artist Dornith Doherty intertwines science and art, showcasing the planet’s botanical diversity through 16 images from seed banks across the world. The exhibition was organized by the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas. It opens Feb. 15 and will remain on view through July 15 at the National Academy of Sciences.

For nearly 10 years, Doherty traveled the world from Australia to Russia photographing seed banks, which are designed to preserve the world’s crops and plants against species loss brought by blight, development, global warming, pests, unexpected change, and war. Long interested in how humans shape the land, Doherty explored seed vaults and the activities of their research scientists. Starting with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas, she visited key facilities across five continents, including the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, just south of the North Pole on the Norwegian island of Spitsbergen. Svalbard, one of more than 1,400 seed banks across the globe, is special because it houses duplicate seeds from other vaults to serve as a backup in case of a natural or man-made disaster. Because of its location, it is better positioned to withstand the potential aftermath of global warming or other man-made global disasters.

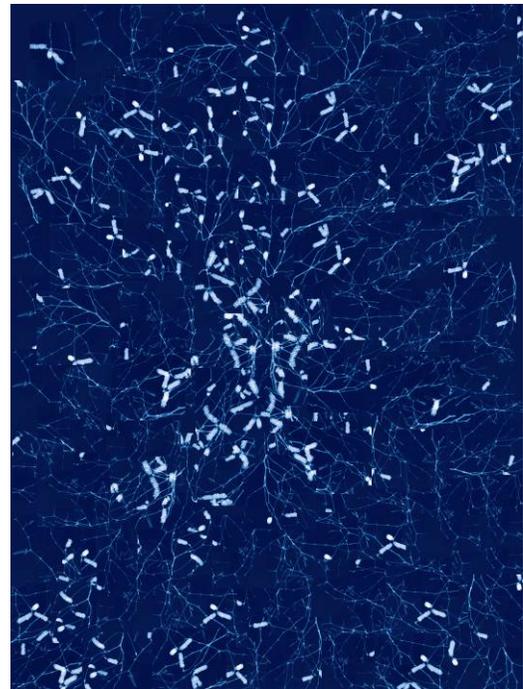
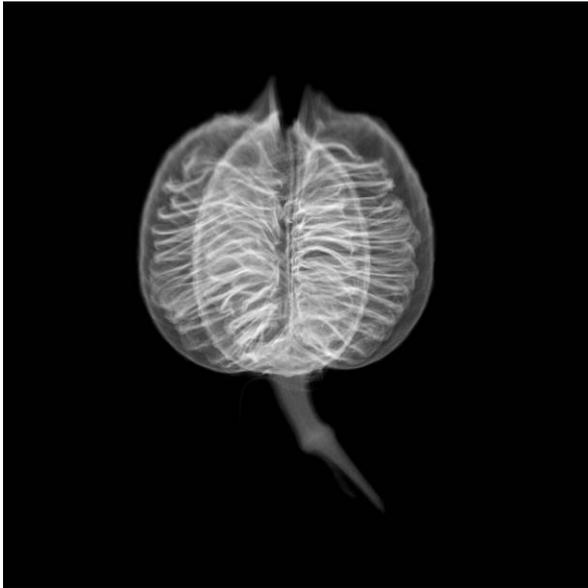
Besides documenting the appearance of these vaults, the artist created X-rays of a wide array of plant seeds and seedlings with the assistance of scientists. Doherty then transformed the X-ray images into poetic odes to protecting the world’s botanical diversity. “The artist used a variety of photographic approaches to create these remarkable images that symbolize biodiversity loss,” said John Rohrbach, exhibition curator and senior curator of photographs at the Amon Carter Museum. “A 7-foot-high lenticular construction showing X-rays of 1,400 ash tree seeds collected by the National Center for Genetic Resource Preservation in Fort Collins, Colorado, reflects the ongoing decimation of ash trees across North America by the ash tree borer. Her array of five banana-seedling clones illustrates scientists’ race to develop a new banana strain to replace our standard grocery store version, which may soon be lost to blight.” Rohrbach says some ecologists suggest that Earth is losing more than 10 animal and plant species each day, and he hopes viewers will ponder the plight of plants across the globe and in their own backyards.

“The exhibition asks us to consider the ongoing work of scientists and volunteers who work, far behind the noise of our daily newsfeeds, to protect Earth’s botanical diversity,” Rohrbach said. “It is a call to reflect on the beauty, variety, and most of all, the fragility of our world’s plant life.”

“Dornith Doherty: Archiving Eden” will be on exhibit at the National Academy of Sciences building, 2101 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. The galleries are open weekdays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. A photo ID is required and there is no charge. For more information, visit www.cpnas.org.

Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences sponsors exhibitions, the D.C. Art Science Evening Rendezvous salon, theatrical readings, and other events that explore relationships among the arts and sciences. The National Academy of Sciences is a private, nonprofit institution that recognizes achievement in science by election to membership, and -- with the National Academy of Engineering and the National Academy of Medicine -- provides science, technology, and health policy advice to the federal government and other organizations. **(Continues on page 2)**

Press images:



Left to right from upper left: *Red Yucca*, 2010, inkjet print, 43.5 x 43.5 inches; *Seed Vault, Kuban Experimental Station, Russia*, 2012, inkjet print, 68 x 60 inches; *Svalbard Global Seed Vault*, 2010, inkjet print, 30 x 40 inches; *Yuma*, 2011, dye coupler lenticular photograph, 60 x 44 inches.

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