

Selected Catalogue & Review Excerpts

Moss, Leaves, Thoughts and Vegetables (catalogue essay)

Some Words Around Nature

By Bill Arning

“... Janet Pihlblad, whose subject is, in one sense, nature, but more accurately the way we understand nature. ...Pihlblad’s subject then is not nature in itself, but rather our uneasy history of negotiating our place within its realm knowing that all the tools we have, our language, reason, will not grant us anything like an objective, outside perspective. All we can do as humans,...is to try to understand the many ways in which our intellects allow us to actually commune with nature as well as the ways in which thinking about nature interferes with a direct experience of it... and remember that in looking at nature we are also looking at ourselves.”

Picture/Image/Word (catalogue essay)

By Jonathan Goodman

“Janet Pihlblad’s words on leaves literally use nature as a backdrop for human intention. The innate beauty of the leaf forms only substantiates the abstract power, bordering here on the visionary, with which the artist invests her words and sentences. Her texts, mostly single words, register emotions and parts of the body as self-evidently meaningful; against the ground of oak and maple leaves, they enact a surprisingly physical presence, for all their conceptual ramification. This means that Pihlblad has successfully devised a text write large, in which language takes on a worldly permanence by virtue of its place among processes defined neither by the hand nor by intellect. Intelligence becomes a continuation of nature, rather than a stance in opposition to it.”

New Art Examiner

“...And Everything Nice”

By Cynthia Morgan

“...Janet’s Pihlblad’s Nature Study is an upright, moss-lined sarcophagus cut directly into the gallery wall, flanked by a similarly scaled, stylized petaled flower... s marrying maids recite, something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue (as in melancholy). Yet there is more humor than cynicism, more eloquence than deconstruction.”

(continued next page)

www.wburg.com.

In Review: Sculpture at Flipside

by Rachel Youens

At once magical Janet Pihlblad's 'Windows' offer the most direct encounter with the idea of concealment yet the physicality of these works, moss or grass covered windows renders a weighted mass into which one can enter a dream state. Her card, which quotes Henry David Thoreau, alludes to the convergence of mind and eye as the road to seeing."

Pitch Weekly

Art Out of Sorts

By Charles Cowdrick

"Janet Pihlblad's Family Tree Series is a group of fallen leaves in old frames that represent her genealogy. She has carefully cut out the centers of the leaves, like a stencil, names of relatives. One example is made from a large leaf with the word, 'Bertha' cut out of it. Two smaller, but similar leaves contain the cut-out, 'and the twins'. 'Landscape for Novalis' is a grid of 21 large, individually framed leaves. Each leaf becomes the stencil of one word: Terror, Passion, Fury, Angst, Mirth and so on. Pihlblad's yoking of leaf to emotion literally imprints the self upon nature, an updated naming that etches the biblical injunction to name and claim ownership over the natural world."

Review

Art on the Margins of Brooklyn

by Jennifer Dalton

"...Janet Pihlblad exhibits large dried leaves in shapes which vaguely resemble bodily organs, mounted between sheets of plexiglas, leaning on a shelf. Etched out of the leaves are the words of the referenced organs. For instance, two small leaves connected to a larger leaf below them are labeled by having the words ovary and uterus etched into them, leaving the veins of the leaves intact, webbing through the open spaces of the letters. Though these words reference the interconnectedness among biological entities as diverse as plants and humans, it's the austere beauty of the objects which is most compelling."