

Arkansas Champion Trees: An Artist's Journey

Drawings by Linda Williams Palmer

Organized for Travel by the Arkansas Committee of the

National Museum of Women in the Arts

Available from September 2012 – December 2014

EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION

Arkansas Champion Trees: an Artist's Journey is an opportunity for your community to view an art exhibit that ably references history and science as well as an appreciation for natural resources. This drawing exhibition is distinctive in its potential for visually engaging people with excellent art work, encouraging multi-generational conversations, inspiring further research and study, and illustrating how people and organizations work together to preserve significant icons.

The exhibit includes eighteen large colored-pencil drawings of champion trees accompanied by detail drawings of foliage, documentary photographs of depicted trees, and informative text panels that share the artist's perspective and help connect viewers to the information related to the champion tree topic. The colored pencil drawings demonstrate the best of the medium, one that is in wide-spread use in Arkansas schools. These large-scale interpretations give evidence of the nuance and sophistication that can be appreciated, aspired to, and achieved.

At first glance, Linda W. Palmer's subtle yet complex depictions of Arkansas' champion trees resemble oversized botanical drawings. While the artist is attentive to genus and species, the drawings exceed the demands of scientific illustration. Palmers' ultimate goal was to interpret each champion according to the season of observation, location, historic context and human connection. She interprets each tree as a distinctive botanical example and as a witness to the events that have surrounded it. From this rich duality, Linda has drawn inspiration to imbue each drawing with singular specificity that implies much more than a identifiable tree, albeit a champion.

For example, *The Cherry Bark Oak* (Philips County, Lexa) (triptych: 30 ¼"H x 38 ½"W) is rendered in celebratory fall colors, with a mix of suggested and highly detailed foliage that connotes the passing of the seasons. The *Sugar Maple* (Civil War Cemetery, Washington County, Fayetteville) (60"H x 38 ¼"W), stands in the foreground, all weather beaten trunk in winter, with only shadows of its branches amidst the cemetery headstones as evidence of its champion crown. The *White Oak, or Council Oak* (Yell County, Dardanelle) (54"H X 40"W) is a stately testament of healthy longevity in summer sun and shade, and is interpreted with the bronze plaque recently placed to commemorate its importance within the context of Arkansas' territorial history.

Refer to *Exhibition Statistics*, the *List of Work* and the *Tour Schedule* for more information. The exhibit website is www.ChampionTreesExhibit.com . Forward any questions to Project Manager Barbara Satterfield to bring *Arkansas Champion Trees: an Artist's Journey* to your community.