

INTO THE FOREST

The text "INTO THE FOREST" is rendered in a stylized, hand-drawn font. The letters are a dark olive green with a thin brown outline. The letter 'I' is replaced by a tree trunk that branches out to the left, with several green leaves. The letter 'O' is a simple circle. The word "THE" is in a simple, blocky font. The letter 'F' is replaced by a globe of the Earth, with a tree branch and leaves wrapped around it. The letter 'R' is a simple blocky letter. The letter 'E' is a simple blocky letter. The letter 'S' is a simple blocky letter. The letter 'T' is replaced by a tree trunk that branches out to the right, with several green leaves.

# THE STORY OF Into The Forest...

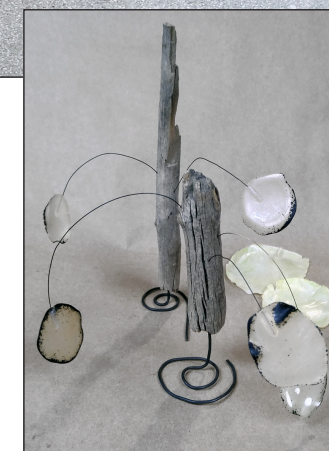
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IMAGINE YOURSELF AT 9000 FEET IN COLORADO, in a small valley amid groves of aspen trees nestled in the Rocky Mountains. Because of their unique stem structure, the aspen leaves “quake” with just the slightest breeze, producing the sound and shadows of fluttering butterfly wings. In this valley, in August 2015, we—Laura Tabakman, Emily Squires Levine and Julie Eakes—came together at a polymer clay retreat. During our time there, Laura and Emily collaborated on a project, inspired by the aspens. The result was translucent leaves on thin wire attached to a small aspen branch. Over the course of the next year, that small collaboration grew into an installation project with plans of showing it in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. *Into the Forest: Early Growth* was exhibited in September 2016 at the Park Towne Apartments Gallery in Philadelphia with the support of InLiquid, a local arts organization.

Laura and Emily secured the Spinning Plate Gallery in Pittsburgh, where Julie joined the project. With it came the challenge of how to inhabit a significantly larger space. Inspired by the turnout and success of other collaborative international projects of which we had been a part, we put out a worldwide call to all polymer clay artists and enthusiasts. We hoped that, by encouraging the creation of organic elements, contributors would be inspired by their environments, geography, cultures, life events and imaginations. By setting this challenge, we also hoped to unify the polymer clay community in a way never before done and expose this amazing medium to a wider audience.

The result is *Into The Forest*, the first international collaborative polymer clay installation of its kind. This catalog is a showcase of the amazing scope and versatility of polymer clay creations, and, at the same time, a thankful recognition of all who hiked the forest with us. While not every piece of work could be represented here, a sample of work by every artist is.



INTO THE FOREST: EARLY GROWTH  
AT PARK TOWNE APARTMENTS GALLERY



EMILY SQUIRES LEVINE AND  
LAURA TABAKMAN'S FIRST  
COLLABORATION (7" TALL)

## Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: November 2017

What began as a two-person, collaborative art project became the foundation of an amazing global community—a community of over 300 polymer clay artists and crafters, from Argentina to Indonesia, to Australia and the United Kingdom; from beginners to professionals, everyone's work equally cherished and combined in one setting. A community including inmates of the Ohio Reformatory for Women who created a butterfly bush lacking the most basic of tools; a group of Nepalese women who contributed indigenous flowers; a fifth grade class from New Mexico working together to sculpt luna moths; groups of friends getting together to make forest elements and sisters living in different states meeting online to work together. And all along, a vibrant online group of over 1400 members was sharing ideas, inspiration, work in progress, tutorials and encouragement.

The project morphed, it stopped being about our vision, our artistic approach, our sensibility. Rather, it has become about bringing diverse people and groups together, hearing their voices and sharing them with visitors and the larger world. Individual pieces no doubt expressed their creators. Yet when combined with their companions, single voices joined together to create a visual “song” greater than the sum of the parts. It has also been about our community of installation volunteers, adding their voices as they helped to create the Forest, and about visitors finding themselves circling the Forest repeatedly, seeing something new on each pass, being pulled in to take a closer look and marvel at the versatility of our medium. All together, we created more than a beautiful art installation, we created an amazing Global Community.

Julie, Emily and Laura



### INSTALLATION VOLUNTEERS

Sherri Roberts	Stephie Thompson Jaquay
Mary Townner	Desha Jaramaz
Leslie Polinko	Penny Mateer
Trisha Gallatin	Donnie Day Pomeroy
Carolyn Carson	Branco Jaramaz
Rae Gold	Danny Altschuler
Michelle Browne	Bobbi Hons
Denise Graham	Brent Ruka
Judy Manion	Collen Rush
Delli Spears	Norman Beck
Jan Pini	Lisa Haabestad
Rebecca Watkins	Kirsti Adkins
Ann Taymans	Connie Donaldson
Jane Ogren	Randy Pearson
Leslie Golum	



# ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

**W**HEN THE THREE OF US GOT TOGETHER and decided to issue the call for contributions, we had no idea where it would lead. We were hoping to have 30 to 50 artists respond. Instead we have been overwhelmed by the generosity of more than 300 contributors from 37 states in the U.S. and 26 countries!

Then something magical happened, an effect transcending even these amazing contributions. It was the emotional impact this collaboration had on us and on our contributors as individuals, as members of a community, or even as members of the world. This project helped allay fears among novices about not being 'good enough,' brought pride to those who took on and met the challenge, and shared the joy of being part of something bigger.

**Here are some notes we received from a few of our participants:**

Claire Fairweather of New Zealand was influenced by her local culture: "This is my small contribution to *Into The Forest*, as there was nothing so far from New Zealand, and I felt it was important for New Zealand to be part of this international polymer clay collaboration project. These heart-shaped leaves, with Maori-style pattern on the surface, bring a little love to the *Into The Forest* project all the way from New Zealand."

Dakotah Flannery of Texas was happy to be tackling something new: "Those of you who are sculptors, I am sure, may not be impressed. I, however, am over the moon! I am not a sculptor. Until I started playing with tree bark about ten weeks ago."

Cynthia Tinapple of Ohio shared on her Polymer Clay Daily: "This butterfly bush is a group project from the polymer clay students at the Ohio Reformatory for Women for the *Into The Forest* exhibit. The clay came from generous artists who were de-stashing....They created 27' of big hole beads that were slipped onto brass rods and inserted

into a wooden base made by my husband. The brass rods couldn't be taken into the facility so we had to visualize the piece and assemble it at home...."

Marji Purcell of Illinois reminded us of the healing power of creativity: "As you've seen from my Facebook posts, participating in this collaborative exhibit brought me great joy. The sudden death of a friend and the grey days of Chicago winter were weighing heavily on my soul. This week of studio time, working with spring greens, was just the prescription I needed to get a new burst of energy and motivation."

Rita Hammock of Michigan responded: "Thank you for the opportunity to participate in such a wonderful collaboration. This project came to me at a time when the hands just had to make, to help the brain relax."

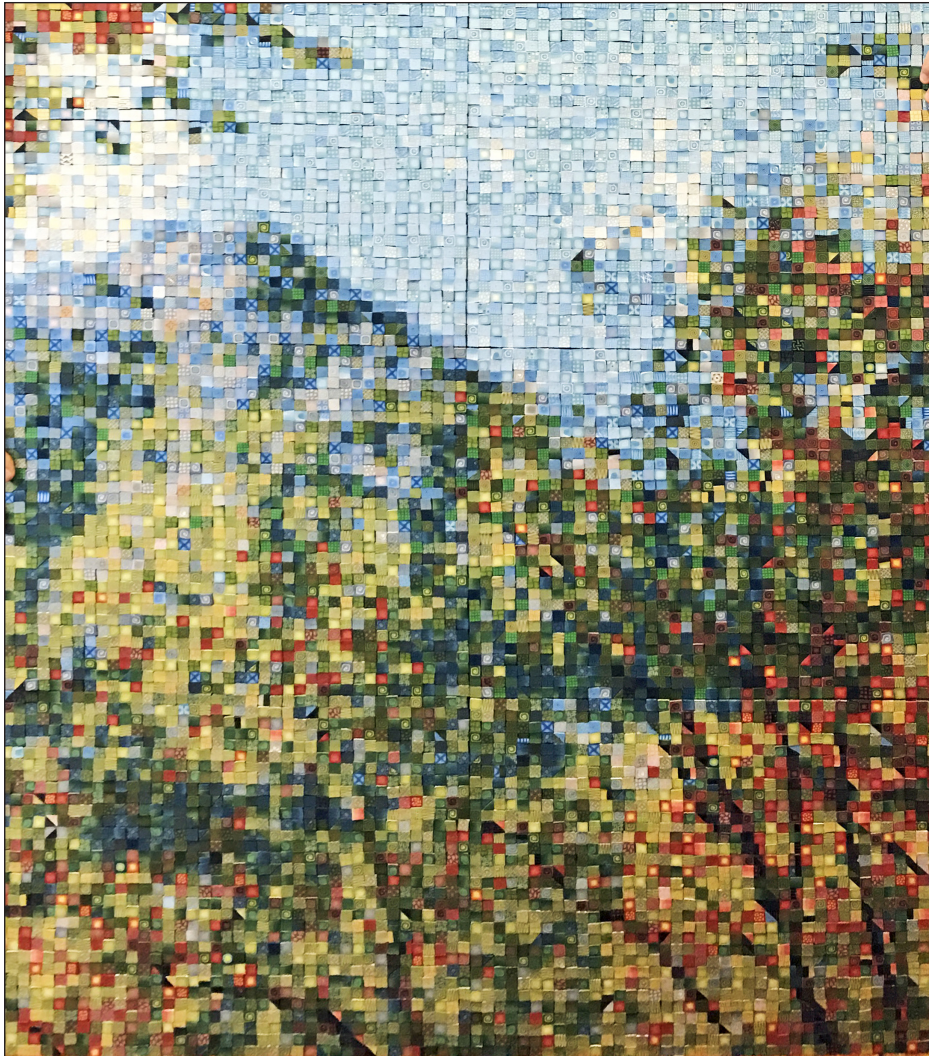
Sonya Girodon of France used this opportunity to push in a another direction: "Withdrawing from everything familiar and letting the unconscious take over. Getting back into a 'primitive' state where judgment does not exist. My bulbs for *Into The Forest* were created while being in this childlike sphere. It was the first time that I had ever made anything this big with polymer clay. I was surprised to see my South African roots spring up once again in these bulbs, as well as a natural rawness and awkwardness. I did not change anything to them to perfect them. They were born from my guts and somehow represent me in their vulnerability and unruly ways."

Stacy Shaffer of Maryland found an inspiring, larger metaphor in our project: "Biodiversity is nature's way of creating a stronger, healthier environment. In a monoculture, single species may be vulnerable, but in a diverse environment, each individual contributes their unique gifts to weave a more vibrant whole. *Into The Forest* represents the diversity of our polymer world, and by extension, speaks to the power and beauty our world can experience by embracing the differences of each individual."



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**ABOUT POLYMER CLAY:** Polymer Clay is a synthetic modeling clay composed of PVC particles combined with a plasticizer and color pigments. Pliable in its uncured state, polymer clay can be blended for endless permutations of color, tone and shade. Shaped, sculpted and molded, it cures to its permanent state in a traditional oven at temperatures between 275° F to 325° F. Once cured, the polymer clay piece becomes hard, durable and will not return to its original state.



JULIE EAKES, INTO THE FOREST MOSAIC (60" x 32")

# INTO THE FOREST

November 10 – December 3, 2017

Spinning Plate Gallery

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



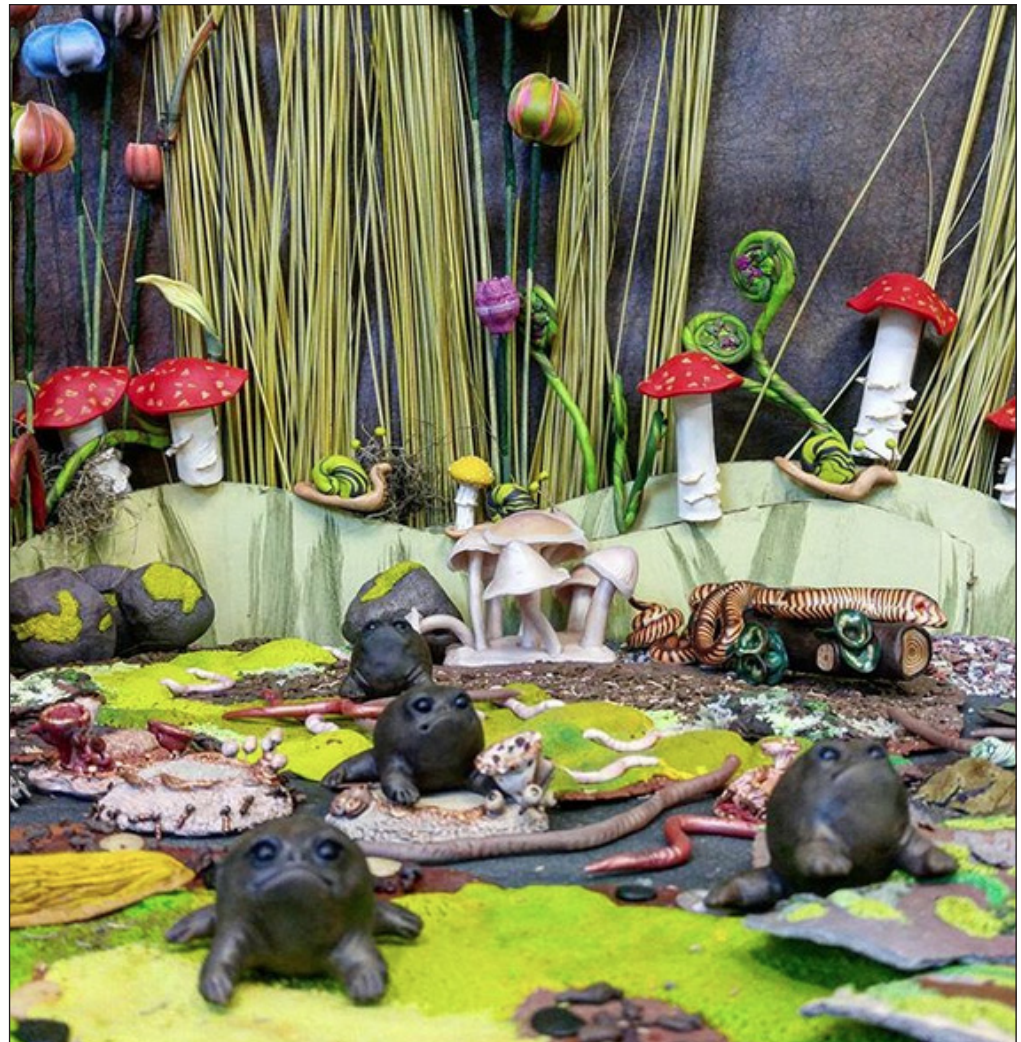
This exhibition was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.



We wish to thank Polyform for their support via a generous contribution of polymer clay.



# DEEP IN THE FOREST





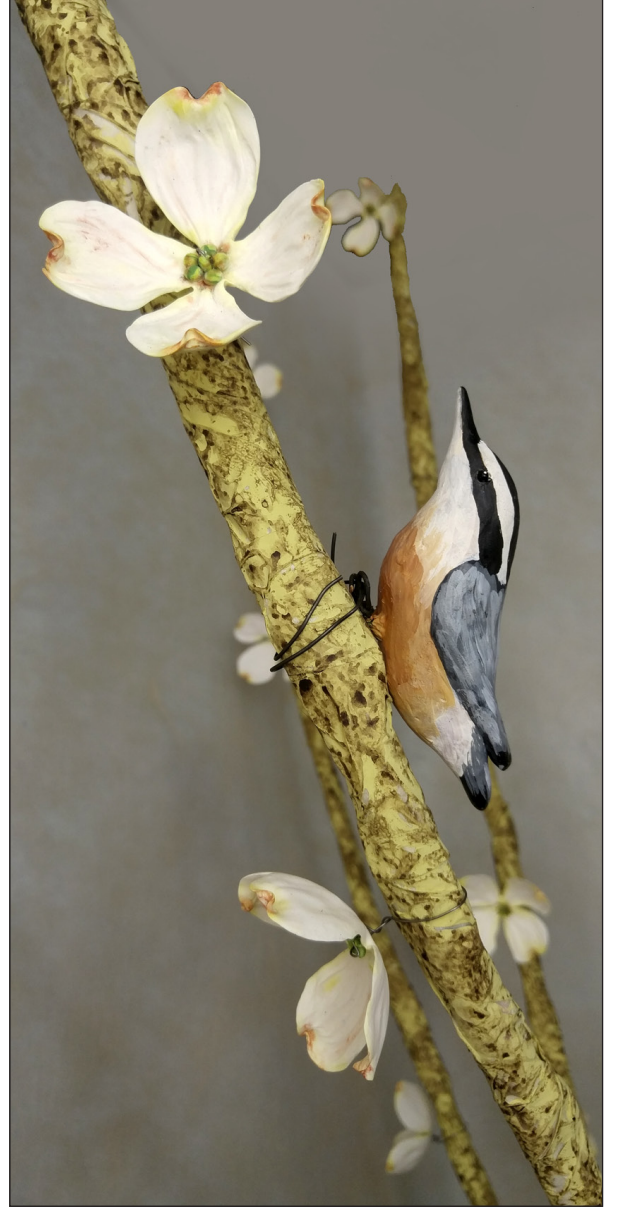


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# THE ASPEN FOREST



# THE AVIARY





# THE MEADOW AND LOLLIPOP TREES







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# THE FLORA & FAUNA

ALL THE ELEMENTS pictured in this book and more are part of the installation. They create a Forest for visitors to walk around in and experience every piece of art sent by each of our contributors. We wish to thank everyone who responded to our call and came through so beautifully!

The pieces came from 27 countries and 37 states in the United States:

**Countries:** Argentina, Australia, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Scotland, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.

**United States:** Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.



# INTO THE FOREST LEAD ARTISTS



## JULIE EAKES

Julie Eakes lives in Charlotte, NC. She has been a polymer clay artist since 2006 and loves exploring its endless possibilities. In the beginning, Julie specialized in face cane and intricate representational caning. She now concentrates her work on one of a kind large portraits, the portraits themselves being comprised of thousands of millefiore cane slices. Julie occasionally puts aside her large pieces to make smaller jewelry pieces.

Julie is an award winning artist, teacher and author. Examples of her work can be found several books and publications. Julie teaches cane-making classes around the world and writes her thoughts and displays her newest work on her blog.

[www.JulieEakes.blogspot.com](http://www.JulieEakes.blogspot.com)

## EMILY SQUIRES LEVINE

Emily is a polymer artist who translates her love of color and pattern into one-of-a-kind 3-dimensional vessels, 2-dimensional wall art and Judaica. Working alone in a home studio, she blends original color palettes from the primary colors, creates and transforms 'canes' using the Italian millefiori technique, and forms her pieces through the juxtaposition of cane slices of contrasting colors, shapes, patterns and open spaces.

Exhibiting at shows, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art Contemporary Craft Show, and at multiple galleries, Emily has received several awards for her work. She has an MBA and worked in the investment advisory industry before pursuing art full-time. Emily lives in Center City Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with her husband.

[www.emilysquireslevine.com](http://www.emilysquireslevine.com)

## LAURA TABAKMAN

Laura Tabakman was born in Argentina, where she and her family lived until moving to the United States. She currently lives and works in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Mostly self-taught, Laura began working with polymer clay in 1995 making jewelry. Her attraction to polymer clay comes from the versatility of the material.

Laura's current work integrates her fiber, photography, and polymer interests into jewelry, digital printing, and three-dimensional mixed-media sculptures and installations. She has been part of the leading teams organizing international exhibitions and community projects including *Fiberart International* exhibitions and the Knit the Bridge project in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

An award-winning studio artist and teacher, her work has been shown in galleries and art exhibitions nationally and internationally, and has been featured in several books and magazines. Laura has been teaching nationally and internationally since 2005.

[www.lauratabakman.com](http://www.lauratabakman.com)