

Hannah O'Neil, T00238337

Title: Using art to explore gardener-garden relationships

Introduction and Objectives/hypotheses:

The aim of this directed studies is to use botanical illustration as means of exploring the relationship between 12 gardens, the vascular plant species they contain, and their gardeners. Art and illustration have long held an important place in botany for the purposes of documentation (NEACŞU, 2022). Due to botany's current concern with plant blindness, art including botanical elements and themes is being explored as "a way to draw attention to plants as subject matter" (Sachdev, 2019, p. 272). Plant blindness is defined as "the inability to see or notice the plants in one's own environment" (Wandersee and Schussler, as cited in Nyberg et al., 2019, p. 213). This lack of plant awareness may have negative environmental impacts, as biology students can develop a less fulsome understanding of the environment, and how to protect it (Pany et al., 2019). The current changes in technology have caused a shift where botanical art is utilized as a tool for knowledge mobilization, to "[generate] environmental awareness" (NEACŞU, 2022, p. 27).

In addition, botanical art is increasingly used to tell a story, rather than solely documenting plants (NEACŞU, 2022). Botanical illustration in the style of illustrated journals can be used as a practice to "cultivate care between people and place" (Baldwin, 2018, p. 76) and increase connection between humans and nature, something that is especially important in an era of increasing disconnect between humans and nature. The disconnect between humans and nature can have negative impacts on the conservation of species and ecosystems (Baldwin, 2018). This directed study will utilize a combination of botanical illustration and illustrated journal techniques to create art pieces that showcase and celebrate the relationships between plants and people that are found in urban gardens. This directed studies will use the field data, the botanical specimens and interviews that I collected July-August 2024. The art created will be an exploration into the use of various artistic, biological, and geographic methods to examine and understand gardens as complex socio-cultural phenomena that need to be explained by more than quantitative methods and measurements.

Overall, the objective of this directed studies is to create 13 art pieces (potentially including botanical illustrations, mapping, and cyanotypes) that tell explore story of the gardens and the gardeners that inspired them. In addition, this directed studies will also identify potential exhibit spaces for this work.

Timeline:

- Sept 4-30: Explore botanical illustration and cyanotype techniques, consider design possibilities integrating botanical specimens, interview notes, and watercolours.
- Oct 1- Nov 30: Produce artwork; explore exhibit possibilities.
- Dec 1-15: Write artist's statement and reflective analysis of artistic process; finalize artwork.
- Spring 2025: Present poster regarding work at Science undergraduate poster session

Literature cited:

Baldwin, L. K. (2018). Drawing care: The illustrated journal's "path to place." *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 18(1), 75–93.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15313220.2017.1404723>

NEACȘU, I. (2022). On Contemporary Botanical Art. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov, Series IV: Philology & Cultural Studies*, 15, 25–34.

<https://doi.org/10.31926/but.pcs.2022.64.15.3.2>

Nyberg, E., Hipkiss, A. M., & Sanders, D. (2019). Plants to the fore: Noticing plants in designed environments. *PLANTS, PEOPLE, PLANET*, 1(3), 212–220.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/ppp3.40>

Pany, P., Lörnitzo, A., Auleitner, L., Heidinger, C., Lampert, P., & Kiehn, M. (2019). Using students' interest in useful plants to encourage plant vision in the classroom.

PLANTS, PEOPLE, PLANET, 1(3), 261–270. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ppp3.43>

Sachdev, G. (2019). Engaging with plants in an urban environment through street art and design. *PLANTS, PEOPLE, PLANET*, 1(3), 271–289.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/ppp3.10055>