



# Natasha Bowdoin

## thornappleflower

Roswell Museum and Art Center - April 12-June 2, 2013

ROSSELL ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM



*Garden Plot*  
2013, site-specific  
installation, gouache,  
acrylic and pencil on cut  
paper and latex acrylic  
on wall, 10' x 28' x 1'



The opportunity for language and literature to be experienced apart from our ingrained expectations is an idea I would like to recover in my work. I see myself as a scribe of sorts, though an unorthodox one, freeing language from its traditional systems of description and classification. I create paper constructions and installations that incorporate layered and interwoven transcriptions from a variety of literary sources. I use writing to make pictures of words, breaking apart and reconfiguring these iconic texts into free flowing rhythms, allowing new stories and secret meanings to form as the original texts fracture. Language is an organic material to me. I allow these works to grow instinctually in efforts to gain a new understanding of the unpredictable presence words might manifest.

My current exhibition at the RMAC is a celebration of the natural world, in all its wonder and vibrance, and the authors who recognized so beautifully what it has to offer. Using various texts that champion nature - from Emerson's 1836 essay *Nature* to 1960s beat poet Gary Snyder's *The Back Country* collection - I have created my own version of flora and fauna to inhabit the RMAC. *Garden Plot*, a new site-specific installation composed of wall painting and cut paper, transforms the space from gallery to garden. This ever-changing arrangement of drawn and painted transcriptions will live on to be assembled into new formations with every new environment it comes to grow in. This constant dissolution and reformation of the drawings allows the piece to transform over time, resisting any one fixed state.

The remaining works in *thornappleflower* (a turn of phrase taken from Gary Snyder's poem *For Plants*) represent two smaller series I developed while here in Roswell. *The Book of Nature* series of works on paper - transcriptions of Emerson's text - draw from the concept of the "Book of Nature". This school of thought, dating back to late antiquity, declared "nature" a most elegant book. If read and observed properly, the book would reveal the intentions of its author(s) to the reader. *The Flowers for Henry* series is an homage to nature as well, but also to an artist of great influence to me, Henry Darger. Darger (1892-1973), one of the most significant self-taught artists of the 20th century, was a reclusive artist and writer who worked behind the closed doors of his Chicago apartment to create a truly vast and fantastical world. Using portions of Darger's autobiographical text and flower patterns taken from Darger's own watercolors, I have created a series of blooms in his honor.





Natasha Bowdoin (b. 1981) was born and raised in the woods and water of West Kennebunk and Kennebunkport, ME. She received her BA from Brandeis University, Waltham, MA in visual arts and classical studies and her MFA from Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia in painting. She also completed studies in painting at the Slade School of Art in London. In addition to the RAIR Program, Bowdoin has completed residencies at the Core Program, Museum of Fine Arts Houston and the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art in Omaha, NE. She has exhibited nationally and internationally including shows at Monya Rowe Gallery, New York; Extraspazio, Rome, Italy; the University of Texas Visual Arts Center, Austin; The Cue Arts Foundation, New York; and the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, NC. She now lives in Houston, TX where she works as an Assistant Professor in Painting and Drawing at Rice University. [www.natashabowdoin.com](http://www.natashabowdoin.com)



**Front:** detail, *Of the garden*, 2013, gouache, ink, and pencil on cut paper, 28" x 28" x 4"  
**Left:** *Untitled 2 (Book of Nature)*, 2013, gouache and ink on paper, 37" x 57"

*photos in this brochure by Kelly Berrones*

The Roswell Artist-in-Residence Program was established in 1967 to provide professional studio artists with the unique opportunity to concentrate on their work in a supportive, collegial environment for periods of up to one year. This "gift of time" allows artists to work without distraction in an effort to break new ground and focus on individual goals. The Roswell Artist-in-Residence Program serves as a contemporary counterpoint to the traditional arts of the southwest, reinforces the Program's interest in strengthening the vitality of art in New Mexico and has been a catalyst in broadening community understanding of modern art.

The Gift of Time is provided by the Roswell Artist-in-Residence Fdn.  
P.O. Box 1, Roswell, NM 88202  
[www.rair.org](http://www.rair.org)

