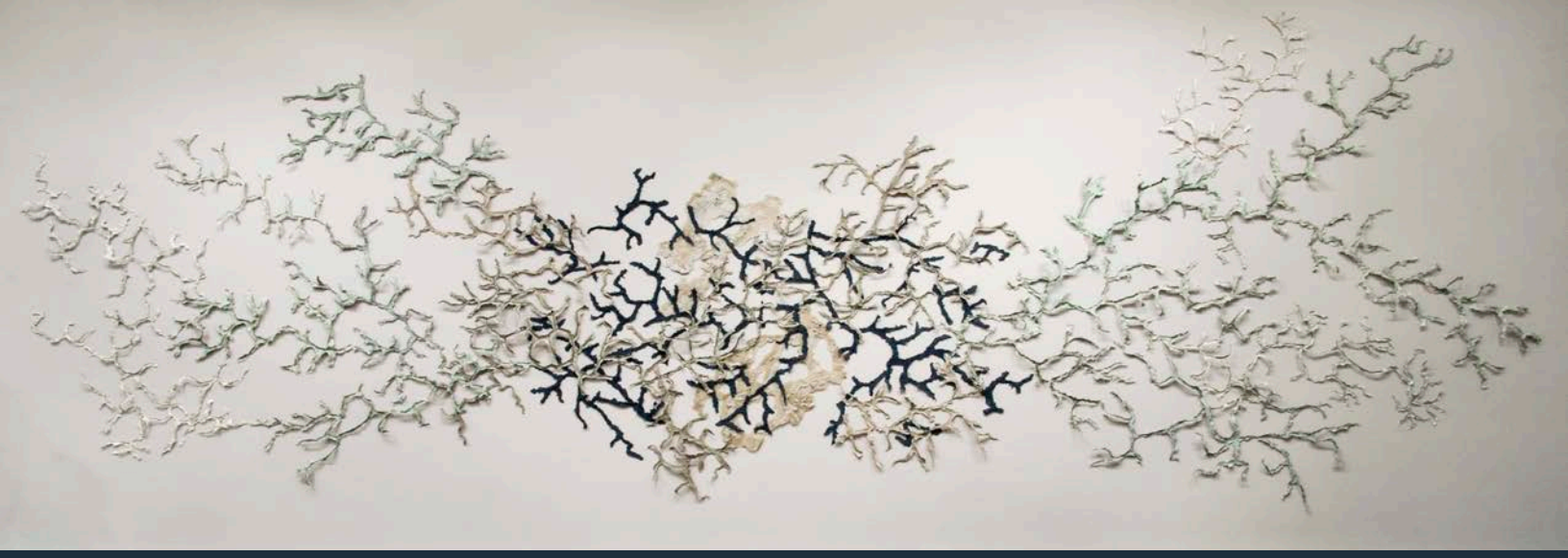


May Babcock and Megan Singleton, detail of *Ebb and Flow II*, 2017, 14 x 20 feet, handmade paper pulp, laser-cut handmade paper (abaca, cotton, Japanese knotweed, *Phragmites australis*, Eurasian watermilfoil, variable milfoil, inflated bladderwort, *Codium fragile*, *Heterosiphonia japonica*). Courtesy of May Babcock.

Waterways and local plants inspire papermaking artists

by **May Babcock and Megan Singleton**

In the summer of 2016, artists May Babcock and Megan Singleton collaborated to create the first of a series of seven installations titled *Ebb and Flow*. Rooted in hand papermaking processes, *Ebb and Flow* is based on research of dendritic waterways and plants found in local landscapes.



May Babcock and Megan Singleton, *Ebb and Flow*, 2016, 12 x 25 feet, handmade paper pulp from Mississippi River mud, abaca, cotton, *American lotus*. Courtesy of Megan Singleton.

The geomorphology and plant ecologies of these landscapes are the inspiration for the installations of handmade paper, in not only how it shapes the gallery space and the viewer's experience of it, but in the imagery and paper pulp used. As both site-specific and place-based installations, unique iterations of *Ebb and Flow* have been installed in both gallery and public spaces across the country, including the St. Louis Lambert International Airport, the Rhode Island State House, and Brown University.

Ebb and Flow II was created for the mural space at the Granoff Center, a Brown University building in Providence, Rhode Island. To reflect the state's ecologies, we based the artwork on the Narragansett Bay watershed and invasive plants. Through the spring season, we visited nine different sites around Narragansett Bay to collect plant fiber to make into pulp for the paper installation. The final plant list represented freshwater, riparian, and marine species. We were especially inspired by red seaweed (*Heterosiphonia japonica*), and the warm-red tones in the final installation are reflective of that. A taxonomy display of the plants collected and used for fiber was also created, and this portion of the installation was intermittently hidden or revealed depending on the sliding wall positioning. Adjacent to the organic line drawings of pulp, one can see the plant silhouette and its common and scientific name. The silhouette shapes are laser-cut from handmade paper sheets made from the plants they depict.

May Babcock is an interdisciplinary artist working in paper, print, and installation, based in Providence, Rhode Island. You can see more of her artwork via www.maybabcock.com and @maybabcock on Instagram. Megan Singleton is an interdisciplinary artist working in paper, sculpture, and installation, based in Saint Louis, Missouri. Her artwork can be viewed on www.megansingleton.com and @missmegansingleton on Instagram. Both artists are community educators and have extensive exhibition records nationally and internationally.



May Babcock and Megan Singleton, *Ebb and Flow II*, 2017, 14 x 20 feet, handmade paper pulp, laser-cut handmade paper (abaca, cotton, Japanese knotweed, *Phragmites australis*, Eurasian watermilfoil, variable milfoil, inflated bladderwort, *Codium fragile*, *Heterosiphonia japonica*). Moveable wall section is to the left of the artwork, and at times conceals the grid of plant silhouettes. Courtesy of May Babcock.