

?Rooted in Nature? exhibit to feature local artist at museum



Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Mono-based photo artist Jo Thomson joins her passion for the outdoors and traditional photography techniques in a new exhibit at the Museum of Dufferin (MoD).

The exhibit, '?Rooted in Nature,' features a collection of 29 pieces of Thomson's work, described as '?cameraless photographs of botanicals.'

'?With this collection I'm inviting the viewer to focus on the unique form, fragility and translucent qualities of the organic subject matter, and to feel a sense of calm, connection and appreciation of the natural work that surrounds us,?' said artist Jo Thomson. '?Rooted in Nature' will delight both botanical and nature lovers, analogue photographic enthusiasts and contemporary art collectors alike.?'

Thomson grew up near the coast of Devon, England. After completing high school, she went on to study art and earned a bachelor of arts degree in photography. In 2015, Thomson and her husband, Blair, along with their two children, moved from a house in the UK with a tiny urban backyard to a 10-acre forested property in rural Mono.

She said her relocation from urban UK to rural Dufferin County led to a deep appreciation of the natural beauty of her new environment and coincided with a personal creative urge to return to her roots of the manual photographic process.

Thomas began to gather and preserve a collection of foraged botanicals such as leaves, grass and dried flowers, as well as wild bird feathers that she discovered on nature walks, and eventually, she embarked on a period of traditional printing experimentation.

The result of the experimentation has been a collection of cyanotypes, blue-based images that are created using the sun's UV rays, and photograms, black-and-white prints developed using a traditional darkroom.

While both art forms have existed for more than a hundred years and are based on traditional photographic printing methods, Thomson's pieces of work involve no camera or negative.

The collection of cyanotypes and photograms are inspired by the 19th Century botanical studies of photographer and botanist Anna Atkins and the early darkroom studies of pioneering photographer Man Ray.

Thomson exhibit 'Rooted in Nature' will be on display in the 4th floor Silo Gallery at the Museum of Dufferin until Oct. 21.