



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Native Plant Trust Announces Mushroom Modulations by Christine Southworth, First in New Visiting Artist Program

May 25, 2023

Media Contact: Bess Paupeck, Director of Public Programs, bpaupeck@NativePlantTrust.org
508.877.7630 x3302

(Framingham, MA) Native Plant Trust, the nation's first plant conservation organization and the only one solely focused on New England's native plants, announces its first Visiting Artist Presentation: **Mushroom Modulations**, taking place June 3 at 8 pm at Garden in the Woods.

The artist, Christine Southworth, is a Lexington, MA-based multi-media composer whose work primarily involves nature. Her new work for Native Plant Trust is an immersive performance incorporating music and photographs and video of mushrooms and fungi growing at Garden in the Woods and around Middlesex County. The electrical currents given off by mycelium networks are thought to be used as communication between different fungal fruiting bodies. Surrounded by her images of mushroom colonies growing and fading throughout the seasons, she will make music by "listening" to slight electrical variations in live colonies she has grown via electrodes placed on different parts of the fruiting growth and converted to sound.

"I'm absolutely delighted to be the Inaugural Artist in Residence at Garden in the Woods," notes Southworth. "Making and presenting art in such a setting is a dream come true. Last summer I visited Garden in the Woods for the very first time and went back many times during the fall to photograph mushrooms on the trails. The amazing thing about Garden in the Woods is it's kept wild through meticulous maintenance and its visitors actually stay on the paths, which allows not only plants but also fungi, lichens, and moss to grow freely. The combinations of mushrooms I found, thriving together, were unlike any I've seen before in the area." About the current project, Southworth adds: "I decided to make this into a multimedia piece, having read several articles and papers about mushroom communication. I built the "Mush Room" this year, a 3-walled room made of shoji screens which I am using as projection screens. My photos surround me as I sit in the room, with mushrooms I've grown and fallen logs covered in mushrooms from the forest, and using biofeedback devices hooked up to an analog synthesizer, I perform the mushrooms. Each time I

play them it sounds different, and at Garden in the Woods this June, I am very excited to be able to perform them for the public for the very first time.”

Christine Southworth is a composer and video artist based in Lexington, Massachusetts, dedicated to creating art born from a cross-pollination of sonic and visual ideas inspired by intersections of technology and art, nature and machines, and music from cultures around the world. She received a B.S. from MIT in 2002 in Mathematics and an M.A. in Computer Music & Multimedia Composition from Brown University in 2006. She has been a member of MIT-based Gamelan Galak Tika since 1999 and has composed several pieces for the group and performed at venues including Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall.

The new Visiting Artist Program at Native Plant Trust invites local artists to explore their art while working among the plants at Garden in the Woods and Native Plant Trust sanctuaries across New England.

For more information and to register, please visit www.NativePlantTrust.org.

ABOUT NATIVE PLANT TRUST

Native Plant Trust is the nation’s first plant conservation organization and the only one solely focused on New England’s native plants. We save native plants in the wild, grow them for gardens and restorations, and educate others on their value and use. We are based at Garden in the Woods, a renowned native plant botanic garden that attracts visitors from all over the world. From this flagship property in Framingham, Massachusetts, 30 staff and many of our 2,00000 trained volunteers work throughout New England each year to monitor and protect rare and endangered plants, collect and preserve seeds to ensure biological diversity, detect and control invasive species, conduct research, and offer a range of educational programs. Native Plant Trust also operates a nursery at Nasami Farm in western Massachusetts and manages six sanctuaries in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont that are open to the public. Native Plant Trust is among the first organizations worldwide to receive Advanced Conservation Practitioner accreditation by London-based Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), which included an endorsement by an International Advisory Council representing six continents. Please visit www.NativePlantTrust.org.

###