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Jones, Michelle. "Cumberland show looks to spring". *The Tennessean*. February 27, 2014.

Cumberland Gallery's current show is breathtakingly beautiful. Carrie McGee's hanging acrylic sculptures and Jeri Eisenberg's botanic photos fill the space with color and translucence in a harbinger of spring. Their show also is a feminine counterpoint to the gallery's masculine January show.

The show remains on view through April 5.

McGee's work includes several pendant-like pieces made using chemical processes, as well as a quartet of small paintings on canvas.

"We both work a lot with internal luminance, and the translucency is a major component of my work and it obviously is also for Carrie," Eisenberg said from her home in upstate New York.



Under the Norway Maple, No. 6, 2013
Archival pigment ink on Kozo paper infused with encaustic

Eisenberg's photographs are of flowering trees and other natural subjects; this group is the spring "chapter" of "*A Sojourn in Seasons*" series. (Eisenberg jokes that Carol Stein chose the images "hoping to convince everyone that spring would arrive again.")

Summer greens, winter whites and a fall chapter featuring sugar maples round out the series, along with an earlier block of black-and-white images.

Close to home

Most of Eisenberg's photographs are shot near her home, including "Among the Cattails," a lawn-level view of the cattails and other vegetation shot slightly out of focus to the point of lyrical abstraction, bright, green stripes on a soft, white background.

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The image stretches across four strips of fibrous Japanese Kozo paper, with the pieces hanging freely from an acrylic and wire suspension system Eisenberg devised to allow light to pass through the paper and cast shadows onto the wall.

The paper also rustles a bit when people walk past, adding another dimension to the work.

“She’s smart to connect the materials and the way they react with the room,” gallery manager Jennifer Knowles-McQuiston said. “They make noise and crackle and become fragile.”

Blast from the past

For Eisenberg the sound and the play of light also simulates what first led her to the project—something glimpsed when using one of the oldest photographic methods.

Eisenberg had transformed an empty storefront into a camera obscura, and when she noticed the interplay of light through trees lining the street, she became fascinated with “out-of-focus, abstracted images” of trees projected onto the wall of her camera.

She began working with black-and-white film and a pinhole camera, then she used color slides with the pinhole camera. Now she uses an “unfocused” digital camera to capture the kinds of soft images — buds on red dogwoods or star magnolias, for example — in this show.

Eisenberg shoots on overcast days for a bright white background, aiming her camera skyward. This allows her to capture images such as “Under the Norway Maple, No. 6,” a photogram-like view of overlapping green leaves, some nearly transparent, some darker.

“That tree has the palest, most parchment-like leaves I’ve ever seen,” Eisenberg said. “They’re very light, pale, pale green for most of it, and then there are passages of dark green.”

Capturing nature in this manner has a “metaphorical meaning about what you can hold onto, what you can’t hold onto, the temporality of all of life,” Eisenberg said.