LOOKING AT photography artist Susan Hockaday’s works, one is readily drawn into the artist’s vibrant world. Soft petaled flowers, weathered branches, polished stones and shells blend with man-made objects conjuring the innocence of childhood ‘eye spy’ books. Yet, upon closer inspection, a menacing struggle disrupts the ostensibly harmonious scene. Plastic containers, twisted bits of rope and nets slowly entwine and strangle their organic counterparts. The fiery red and black background against which many of the objects are set further heightens the conflict and conjures an apocalyptic vision. It is impossible to walk away from Hockaday’s work. The images leave an indelible imprint as does the message they convey. Climate change and its fundamental threat to the environment infuses the work with an urgency that can’t be ignored. Yet, all is not lost. The stage may set and the battle underway, but the outcome remains undecided. The artist describes the ‘unbearable beauty of the plants’ and devilishly delights in revealing that some of the flowers incorporated into the imagery are not passive but predatory. In other words, they are warriors ready to fight. As climate change impacts our world, it is time for all of us to react similarly to the careless wake of plastic and other debris left behind as we journey through our wondrous world.

On behalf of the Drumthwacket Foundation, I would like to thank Susan Hockaday for generously sharing her work and Robyn Brenner, Curator and Executive Director of the Foundation for bringing Susan’s work to Drumthwacket.

Tammy Murphy
First Lady
A 501c3 non-profit, non-partisan organization, the Drumthwacket Foundation serves to inspire pride in and enhance civic awareness of Drumthwacket, the official New Jersey governor’s residence and a nationally landmarked historic site. The Foundation’s overarching mandate is to restore and conserve the property, while offering educational and cultural programs that recognize the rich diversity of New Jersey’s communities and residents.

THE DRUMTHWACKET FOUNDATION
54 Stockton Street, Princeton, NJ
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GYRE SERIES: CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECT

Photographs by Susan Hockaday

SEPTEMBER 12 – NOVEMBER 14, 2018
Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold
The blood-dashed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

The Second Coming
W.B. Yeats, 1919

GYRE SERIES: CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECT

This series of Digital C Prints is the most recent work in the Climate Change Project that I began about 15 years ago. My entry into the complex phenomenon of climate change has been to highlight the interaction between trash on the planet and elements of nature. I regard plastic as the most visible sign of the vast changes that are overtaking the earth. For me, plastic IS climate change. Not only does the process that creates plastic release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, but plastic itself has become a major pollutant. It is now present in every corner of the globe. Plastic has entered the biological chain and is present in all the waterways and oceans, and all landmasses of the planet. It degrades very slowly into tiny specks and molecules that ultimately occupy space in animals and man. It has invaded every part of life on earth.

These photographs bring together in one space the hostile presence of plastic detritus and familiar bits of nature. Leaves, flowers, wood, shells, bones and stones are intertwined with all kinds of plastic trash. The strangely beautiful net bags, beach plastic and ropes, household litter, and plastic food boxes have been gathered from several countries and scattered through these pictures. Black and vivid colors add to the tension as does the almost unbearable beauty of the plants.

Susan Hockaday

( Front) Garden | Digital C Print, Ed 1/20, 30 x 40 inches
Zucchini Leaves | Digital C Print, Ed 1/20, 30 x 36.5 inches

Artichoke Leaf | Digital C Print, Ed 1/20, 22 x 31.5 inches

Net Bags | Digital C Print, Ed 1/20, 30" x 39 inches
Collection | Digital C Print, Ed 2/20, 22" x 22 inches

Crab Boxes | Digital C Print, Ed 1/20, 30 x 33.5 inches
Monkshood Flowers | Digital C Print, Ed 1/20, 30 x 35.25 inches

Beachwood | Digital C Print, Ed 1/20, 22" x 30.5 inches

Moose Bones | Digital C Print, Ed 1/20, 22 x 28 inches