Exhibit ponders Mother Nature’s feelings, condition

Every year the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at the State University of New York at New Paltz exhibits the work of Hudson Valley artists. For this year’s exhibition, museum Director Sara Pasti invited Linda Weintraub to curate the exhibit. Weintraub challenged artists to submit work that sends messages to Mother Nature and to “envision Her current state and create an offering that reflects their feelings and Her condition.” “These exhibitions were developed to support the work of emerging artists who live and work in the region,” Pasti said. “Whenever artists ask me how to introduce their work to regional curators and collectors, I encourage them to submit work to our annual ‘Hudson Valley Artists’ exhibition.”

More than 230 artists responded to the call for art. The exhibit presents the work of 42 artistic visions using paintings, installations, multimedia and assemblage, among the mix. In the excellent accompanying gallery guide, Weintraub said the “artworks express gratitude, apologies, prayers, empathy and much more.”

Leslie Pelino’s assemblage, “Miss Galaxy,” acts as sentry to the exhibit and is created from things we toss in the trash.

“Working with fabrics and objects that have served other lives reflects a nostalgia that becomes ingrained in the sculpture’s identity, both preserving bygone days and a renewal of purpose,” Pelino said.

Claire Lambe’s installation features white origami paper cranes that swirl down from the ceiling. She is asking others in community include their wishes on a paper crane and add it to the installation.

Laura Soles also invites visitors to the exhibit to leave a message for Mother Nature and has supplied three boxes filled with sand, shells and water, and a feather to “write directly on the materials” that Mother Nature created. Daniel Mack’s installation “Anima” shows Mother Nature as not only “Dear, s/he is fierce, willful, indifferent and hostile.” His installation includes totems carved from bark, wood and found objects. Raquel Rabinovich exhibits her “River Library,” utilizing river mud as a drawing medium. Her artworks quietly convey the water flowing over paper, gathering information, and making a statement on ancestral memories and the future of humanity. Karl Volk exhibits “A Face of Nature: Forgive and You Heal.” The portrait of a totemlike figure gazes at the viewer — hopefully forgiving all the transgressions against Mother Nature.

The exhibit has included many artists’ demonstrations and performances since opening in June. Coming up on Aug. 25, don’t miss the free gallery talk with Weintraub at 2 p.m., followed at 3 p.m. by Mary Anne Davis’s “Mala Meal,” a ceremonial meal prepared by hand with local foods. “Dear Mother Nature: Hudson Valley Artists 2012” is on exhibit through Nov. 4 at the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at SUNY New Paltz.

*Linda Marston-Reid is the president of the Dutchess County Arts Council. The column appears every other week in Enjoy! Contact her at 845-454-3222 or lmr@artsmidhudson.org.*
Installation view of “Dear Mother Nature: Hudson Valley Artists 2012” at the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at SUNY New Paltz. Works shown, from left, are by Ellen Levy, Sherry Williams, Meadow, Leila Goldthwaite, Claire Lambe, Ilse Schreiber-Noll and Susan Quasha. BOB WAGNER


LESLIE PELINO