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Joshua Tree National Park Announces Art Exhibition

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK, Twentynine Palms, California - A multimedia art exhibition by ecologist and Joshua Tree National Park artist-in-residence Dr. Juniper Harrower, will open on Friday, October 18th, as the inaugural show at the new Black Rock Art Gallery located in Joshua Tree National Park. *A Joshua Tree Love Story* is a multimedia exhibition based on Harrower's research on Joshua trees and their symbiotic relationships with pollinating moths and root fungi. Unique abstract paintings of the soil landscapes frame windows into the unseen and complex world of underground Joshua tree root and soil fungi relationships.

These paintings become backdrops for a stop motion animation which follows Harrower and her young son on a research expedition through the park. The animation draws on her recent scientific discoveries. It incorporates magical realism to uncover the hidden world of desert species interactions while sharing her deep love for the desert. In this story we learn about the delicate balance between the trees and their only pollinators – a tiny moth species - and then we dive underground to explore the fascinating world of Joshua tree soil fungi by peeking inside of the trees' root cells. The impacts of these relationships and the potential outcomes on Joshua tree survival are detailed in a new science publication by Harrower in the journal *Ecosphere*, and also covered by National Geographic.

This animation will be screened and accompanied by diorama sets that resemble the park, miniature props, and delicate hand sculpted and water-colored masks for each of the animated dolls.

The exhibition also features examples from Harrower's project "HeyJtree", an interactive and "mock" online dating site. This concept allows participants to "meet" and interact with Joshua trees from her field sites in the park through an interactive website that features anthropomorphized profile descriptions for each tree silhouette, along with music videos of the trees by invited artists. Each tree's ecological findings are displayed, including directions for a scavenger hunt to visit each tree and a place to send love letters to your favorite tree.

A Joshua Tree Love Story opens from 6:00-8:00 pm on Friday October 18th and will run through January 20, 2020.

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