

The Horticultural Society of New York

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For Immediate Release:

Contemporary Heirlooms: Art from the Hudson Valley Seed Library

December 9 – 23, 2010

Opening Reception: Thursday, December 9th, from 6:30 to 8:00pm

The Horticultural Society of New York is pleased to present *Contemporary Heirlooms: Art from the Hudson Valley Seed Library* as part of its continuing exhibitions program featuring plant-based art.

The exhibition showcases for the first time in New York City original artworks commissioned by the Hudson Valley Seed Library for their unique Art Pack seed collection. Each season, the Seed Library looks for a diverse range of artists to interpret the herbs, flowers and vegetables from their catalog for the designs of their seed packets. The focus this year was on the heirloom varieties currently available through the Seed Library. All sixteen artworks from the 2011 collection will be on view. Drawing from a range of different styles, materials, and experience, *Contemporary Heirlooms* includes works in a variety of mediums, including collage, encaustics, oil, ink, watercolor and digital art by a diverse selection of artists.

The Art Packs were established to celebrate the beauty of heirloom gardening in New York. The collection is part of a long tradition of art in the Hudson Valley, stretching back to the Hudson River School in the 19th Century. In addition to being a vital region for food production, the region continues to be home to many artists. The diversity of the artwork and artists chosen is meant to reflect the genetic and cultural diversity of the varieties offered by the Seed Library and is emblematic of the region.

Founded in 2007 by Ken Greene and Doug Muller, and based in Accord, NY, the Hudson Valley Seed Library aims to create an accessible and affordable source of regionally-adapted seeds that is maintained by a community of caring farmers and gardeners. The Seed Library is member-driven and led by a simple principle: the 700 members receive seeds each spring and then are encouraged to return the seeds from the mature plants in the fall. Sold to the public, the 130 heirloom seeds varieties are divided into two categories: the “Library Packs”, which include seeds grown locally by the Library members; and the “Garden Packs”, which are seeds bought from wholesalers. By 2014, the Seed Library hopes that they will be able to exclusively sell locally grown seed.

The art from the Seed Library collection has been exhibited in various locations throughout the Hudson Valley, including: Kingston Museum of Contemporary Art, Kingston; Roos Arts, Rosendale; Kaaterskill Fine Arts Gallery, Hunter; and the Gardiner Library, Gardiner. The Hudson Valley Seed Library has been featured in *Martha Stewart Living* and Margaret Roach’s blog, *A Way to Garden*. Most recently, *The New York Times* ran a feature article and profile on the Seed Library and their mission to grow, save and share New York’s heirloom varieties.

A Preview Party, hosted by Great Performances & Katchkie Farm, will be held on Thursday, December 9th, from 5:00 to 6:30pm. Signed limited print editions of the original artworks will be for sale during the opening and throughout the exhibition, along with seed packs and framed Art Packs.

The Horticultural Society of New York is the premier resource center for all things horticultural in New York City. Through a broad array of unique educational, vocational, and therapeutic programs, resources and exhibitions, The Hort brings together plant and gardening experts and enthusiasts to share knowledge, exchange information, and take part in activities that enhance environmental and cultural life in New York. The exhibition program combines an innovative curatorial approach with a unique gallery space to showcase emerging and established artists in all media who are inspired by the natural world.

The Gallery at The Horticultural Society of New York is free and open to the public Monday to Friday, from 12 to 6pm. For further information, please visit www.hsny.org or contact Chris Murtha at 212-757-0915 x121 or cmurtha@hsny.org.

For more information about the Hudson Valley Seed Library, please contact Ken Greene at 845-626-4910 or ken@seedlibrary.org.