

Artist at Pine Needles Residency

The Artist at Pine Needles Residency is a competitive program sponsored by the St. Croix Watershed Research Station*, a division of the Science Museum of Minnesota. The focus of the residency is on environmental and natural history topics and the complex connection between art, the natural world, and the sciences. With the goal of enhancing scientific understanding through art, Pine Needles artists spend two to four weeks at the historic James Taylor Dunn Pine Needles cabin, immersing themselves in the pristine environment surrounding the cabin located just north of Marine on St. Croix.

Since 2001, the Artist at Pine Needles program has hosted over 50 artists and writers who have sought to further develop the connection between the arts and sciences and pass that understanding on to the community. In this unique program, each resident is invited to interact with the scientific staff at the research station during their stay to further expand the intersection of art and science.

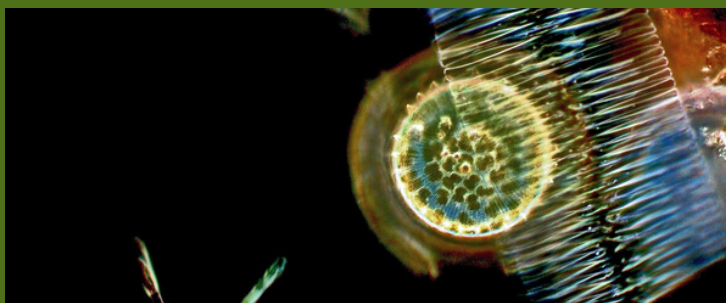
*"The St. Croix Watershed Research Station is an environmental research facility that seeks to better understand humanity's relationship with our most precious resource. They study how land use, climate change, atmospheric deposition and other factors affect watersheds, thus informing policy, management and contributing to the scientific understanding of our priceless aquatic systems around the world." For more information visit: www.smm.org/scwrs.

The Gallery

The purpose of the Stillwater Public Library Gallery is to provide education through exhibits and displays; to increase community involvement in the library; and to provide an enjoyable environment for the library's users.

For more information about the gallery, contact Keri Goeltl, kgoeltl@ci.stillwater.mn.us.

Stillwater Public Library
224 Third St N
Stillwater, MN 55082
651-275-4338
stillwaterlibrary.org



Water, White Pines, & Wildflowers

SARAH LILJA
ARTIST AT PINE NEEDLES

In the Gallery:
August–September 2021

Artist Reception:
Tuesday, September 14, 2021
5:30 – 7:30 PM



Artist Bio

I am an emerging artist and a self-taught photographer, based in Lake Elmo, Minnesota. I have always been a creative person but I came to photography late – it wasn't until about five years ago that I became serious about it. Since then, taking pictures has been an integral part of my exploration of the world. I love being outdoors and observing what is going on around me. I often see things that others don't notice and I really enjoy using my camera to document and explore unique perspectives and anomalous subjects. My goal is to make photographs that draw the viewer's attention to unseen details, vibrant colors, and distinctive compositions that surround us in the natural world.

I exhibit both locally and nationally, most recently at Las Laguna Gallery in Laguna Beach, California, BlackBox Gallery in Portland, Oregon, AZ Gallery in St. Paul, Minnesota, and ArtReach St. Croix Gallery in Stillwater, Minnesota.

Artist Statement

In May, I spent three weeks as the artist in residence at Pine Needles, a historic cabin on the banks of the St. Croix River.

I scheduled my residency in early May so that I could photograph the new spring growth as it unfurled from the cold leaf-littered ground after a long Minnesota winter. Our state is home to many species of ephemeral flowers which in only a few weeks' time each spring grow, bloom, and then fade away and disappear. Being able to photograph these beautiful but short-lived wildflowers was a joy.

I also spent a lot of time exploring the quality of light across the land at Pine Needles. Shooting from dawn to dusk, I was able to take photographs of the same subject multiple times over many days. In studying these images between shoots I could see how different qualities of light and composition dramatically changed the way the subject looked across changing conditions. Two images in this exhibition, Wild Ginger Bud and Nodding Trillium, show how I used the angle of sunlight, at different times of the day, to bring out details and create drama in the photographs.

A highlight of the residency was the opportunity to spend time at the St. Croix Watershed Research Center in their laboratory and interacting with a number of their research scientists. These conversations, and photographing the scientists as they worked, helped me to think more deeply about how science and art intersect and to investigate that intersection in my photographs. I particularly enjoyed photographing diatoms, which are single-celled algae with biologically produced glass skeletons. As you can see in the photographs, the beauty of diatoms, invisible without science (a microscope), is a perfect example of the intersection of art and science.

The Artist at Pine Needles Residency was an exceptional experience for me as an emerging artist. Spending three weeks in the peace and beauty of this property allowed me to intensely focus on my artistic process and to explore many wonderful photo opportunities. I hope the photographs on exhibit here will inspire your wonder and curiosity about the important science work of the St. Croix Watershed Research Station and the special beauty of the St. Croix River Valley. I encourage everyone to get outside and explore for yourselves how science and art come together in the natural world that surrounds us here in the St. Croix Valley.

To Purchase Photographs

Contact Sarah Lilja with inquiries at Sarahsarahlilja.photography.

Sarah's photographs are available in many sizes, both framed and unframed. If you like an image on display but want a different size, Sarah can probably accommodate your wishes.

You can see more of Sarah's work on her website at SarahLilja.photography and on Instagram at [sarah_lilja_photography](https://www.instagram.com/sarah_lilja_photography).

