

Bountiful Blooms

Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum showcases three decades of Dyana Hesson's botanical creations. By Sarah Gianelli



Dyana Hesson has been painting larger-than-life florals for more than 30 years and, in recent years, has narrowed her focus to the native plants of her home-state of Arizona. Now, Tucson's Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is showcasing roughly 40 paintings that span the artist's passion for the botanical beauty of the Southwest and beyond.

Wild Arizona: Native Arizona Plants and Places will be on view in the museum's Ironwood Gallery from October 4 through December 7. An artist talk followed by a reception will take place on opening day from 1 to 4 p.m.

Hesson scouts her subjects on hikes, off-road jeep adventures, and restoration projects, chasing elusive blooms around the state with the seasons. Although she didn't start out with conservation in mind, she, like many who become more intimate with the natural world, began to think about the importance of protecting

it. "Maybe the more I capture these wild places, the more people will be inclined to take care of them," Hesson says. "You really can't effect change unless you are educated and you have a personal experience to share. And that's what I'm doing—sharing my personal experience in the wild with my collectors."

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum recognizes art's capacity to advance conservation efforts. Jennifer Lindquist, curator of the museum's art institute, says, "Dyana Hesson exemplifies the important role artists play in conservation by creating emotional and visual connections to the natural world that inspire a desire to protect it. Her vivid, detailed botanical paintings highlight Arizona's native plants and landscapes, allowing viewers to experience the beauty of these often-overlooked characters of the desert ecosystem. Her paintings inspire a deep appreciation for the resilience and unique-





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ness of Arizona's flora, sparking curiosity and instilling a sense of responsibility for its preservation."

Hesson allows for poetic license when creating her vibrant, highly-detailed and clean depictions of the flora and landscapes of the desert Southwest. Flowers and blooms often float disconnected from their surroundings—for Hesson it is about capturing the sights and smells that she experienced while standing in the very spot that inspired the piece.

Hesson's retrospective features new works alongside rarely seen paintings from private collections, culminating in the most comprehensive showcase of her life's work. Not only is *Wild Arizona* a visual celebration of the beauty and diversity of the Southwest, it is an invitation to join the artist in her lifelong adventure to preserve its wildness.

Hesson is represented by Bonner David Galleries, of Scottsdale, Arizona and New York; Manitou Galleries in Santa Fe; and Madaras Gallery in Tucson. Her work has

also been featured in *Arizona Highways* magazine and is held in both public and private collections. ●

1
Dyana Hesson flower hunting in the Superstition Mountains of Arizona. Courtesy the artist.

2
Home is Where the Heart Is, Circle of Milkweed Vine, Red Mountain, AZ, 2025, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Courtesy the artist.

3
Arizona Pinwheels, Mexican Poppies and Desert Dandelion, 2025, oil on canvas, 28 x 22 in. Available at Bonner David Galleries.

4
Arizona Cornucopia, Sacred Datura and Hackberry Emperor, Salt River, AZ, 2021, oil on canvas, 73 x 48 in. Collection of Thom and Katie Slack.

WILD ARIZONA: NATIVE ARIZONA PLANTS AND PLACES

October 4-December 7, 2025

Ironwood Gallery, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
2021 N. Kinney Road, Tucson, AZ 85743
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