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Penelope Gottlieb

Sad but true, much wild life is becoming extinct. But when Penelope Gottlieb learned that plants also are disappearing at a rapid rate, she decided to take on the subject of extinct botanicals. Gottlieb set out to do whatever she could to preserve such plant life. In her pursuit, she discovered that many plants were never drawn or photographed and, at best, their names are now mere footnotes. While she researched, contacted botanists, traveled, and read whatever she could, the most effective channel for her turned out to be through paint, this show is comprised of vibrant, dynamic, abstract, and dramatic depictions of plants, not in the disinterested manner of the scientists, but emotional renderings that capture the wonder of botanical structures, shapes, and designs. Using saturated reds, oranges, and other brilliant colors, each plant shouts to make us look at it- and mourn its loss. Bold leaves, stems, petals, and roots fly, explode, and burst with an energy that embraces the viewer. It also helps that work is often six feet high and five feet wide. Gottlieb's paintings capture the elegance and details of plants; yet, in some cases, she relied on verbal descriptions rather than on an unavailable image. Gottlieb crosses such a line, favoring to create stirring compositions and dramatic arrangements of colors, textures and shapes, and space. While we relish the beauty of each painting, we never lose sight of Gottlieb's mission.



"Potentilla multijuga", 2012
acrylic and ink on panel, 78 x 84"