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Nature printing: Merging plants, art, and well-being

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## NATURE AND HEALTH

EMERGING KNOWLEDGE INFORMS NEW POLICY DIRECTIONS

NOOSHIN RAZANI, MD, MPH, GUEST EDITOR

# Nature printing: Merging plants, art, and well-being

**Latifat Apatira, MD, MPH**

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For as long as I can recall, I have been in awe of plants—I admire their beauty, color, intricacy, diversity, and functionality. As an artist, I celebrate botany through “nature printing,” an ancient printmaking technique used to produce life-sized, detailed images of plants. Centuries ago, nature printing was a functional tool used by physicians and botanists to document plants for study. Now, nature printing is a means of creative expression. To make the prints, I apply black ink onto a freshly picked plant. I then transfer the plant’s impression by placing the inked sample between two sheets of paper and rub the paper’s surface by hand. The process typically limits the repeated use of a plant, so each print is spontaneous and unique. Energy is then infused into each piece with watercolor.

The printing process is quite meditative. When the inked plant is lifted, I am always astonished by the intricacies of pattern and venation revealed, to the point I now see the extraordinary in every “ordinary” leaf and flower. Along with being an artist, I’m also a physician and connecting with nature and creating art, beautifully complement my personal mission of cultivating holistic well-being. Like the structure of a flower, wholeness consists of multiple elements, such as calmness, curiosity, rooted gratitude, and appreciation for the wonders of nature.

With my art, I hope to encourage others to cultivate a deeper awareness of the hundreds of plants that we all see every day, but perhaps do not perceive. I like to believe that nature printing can be an antidote for “plant blindness”—a term to describe the inability to notice the plants in one’s

own environment. Plant blindness is a highly problematic phenomenon, especially among those living in urban areas. It leads to an apathy towards the thousands of plants that play essential, indispensable roles in human lives and planetary affairs. My prints advocate for attuning one's "plant vision"—to not just look, but see. I invite viewers of the artwork to be inquisitive and ponder the depth of their own personal connection to plants and the natural world.

**Latifat Apatira** is a mixed-media artist, a plant enthusiast, and a physician specialized in Occupational and Environmental Medicine. Her nature prints have been displayed at several exhibitions throughout California, including the San Francisco Botanical Garden's Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture. The plants featured in Latifat's artwork are California native and naturalized, and come from the roadsides and fence rows of the Bay Area, her own humble garden, and the lands of friends and neighbors. More of her work can be found at [www.titilayola.com](http://www.titilayola.com) and on Instagram @titilayola.

*A gallery of full-page images of the artwork below begins on the following page.*





Bottlebrush  
Callistemon sp.  
fabfat Apatira



California Buckeye  
*Aesculus californica*  
Lafayette Spalding



*Ceanothus* sp.  
Fatimah Jitilayo Cepitiro



California Poppy  
*Eschscholzia californica*  
2/2019

Coast redwood.  
*Sequoia sempervirens*  
גזית אפריים







- 1. Coyote mint  
*Monardella villosa*
- 2. Indian paintbrush  
*Castilleja* sp.
- 3. Bush monkey flower  
*Mimulus aurantiacus*
- 4. Queen Ann's lace  
*Daucus carota*

Plate 33 - Sahjat Apatina  
7/2018



Evening Primrose  
*Oenothera biennis*  
Plate 48 - Jalifat Apatina  
8/2018



Plate 4  
Latifat Apatira 5/2013

Lavender  
*Lavendula angustifolia*



Lupine  
Lupine sp.  
fatfat (patik)



Warrior's plume  
*Pedicularis densiflora*  
Miner's lettuce  
*Claytonia perfoliata*  
fahfat (*Apatim*)



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Designed by Laurie Frasier • [lauriefrasier.com](http://lauriefrasier.com)



### On the cover of this issue

Family exploring tidepools at Cabrillo National Monument, California. | [GEDAPIX](#)

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