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# Artists show how N.H. seasons are changing in Plymouth exhibition

New Hampshire Public Radio | By **Laura Bratton**, **Julia Furukawa**

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A range of classical and contemporary artists are on display at the Museum of the White Mountains in Plymouth for an exhibit called **Watching the Seasons Change**. The exhibition shows how seasons have historically looked in New Hampshire and how our idea of seasons is shifting as the effects of climate change grow more severe.

All Thing Considered host Julia Furukawa spoke with Mihku Paul, a Native American Maliseet poet, writer, visual artist and activist from Maine and a citizen of the Kings Clear First Nation in New Brunswick, Canada. Paul created an original installation for this summer's exhibit called "Tree Nation". The installation features wooden cutouts of New England's six main tree species.

**Julia Furukawa:** So tell us about your installation. How did you come up with the idea for this piece and what was your creative process?



*Mihku Paul.*

Mihku Paul is an artist and activist whose work focuses on identity and the environment.

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**Mihku Paul:** The six trees that I chose for "Tree Nation" are iconic trees all present in the New Hampshire landscape. But they also are trees that for many, many generations have been important to the indigenous peoples of their region. I wanted to ensure that I brought into the exhibit some elements that would prompt people to have a different way of looking at the forest – with this particular exhibit, a tension around sort of old ways of seeing the forests, Western, non-indigenous ways, and then newer ways of seeing the environment and what the already measurable impacts are on those forests in that region from climate change.

**Julia Furukawa:** You made deliberate decisions when creating your piece around language and labeling. Can you tell us how you use language and labeling in your piece to represent larger ideas about culture and the environment?

**Mihku Paul:** I wanted visitors to the exhibit, first off, to experience the appropriate regional indigenous language, and Western Abenaki is the language that would be used in that region. So I chose that, but I chose language to be the earth underfoot as a way of conceptualizing the foundation on which we often understand and experience the world.

**Julia Furukawa:** What for you is the relationship between art and activism?

**Mihku Paul:** I always am striving with my art to include a message. Any kind of artistic expression has great potential as a pathway for change. Science is good, but we need more than science if we're going to care for the planet. I'm hoping that people can understand something very important is happening with the canopy and its beauty and its utility. All of those trees have great utility to us as indigenous peoples in the Northeast. And then they can maybe hold that in their awareness. Or who knows, maybe they will do something to combat climate change, or at least talk about it as an issue with other people.

NH News



**Laura Bratton**

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## Julia Furukawa

Julia Furukawa joined the NHPR team in 2021 as a fellow producing All Things Considered after working as a reporter and editor for The Paris News in Texas and a freelancer for KNKX Public Radio in Seattle.

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Map released: Thurs, July 14, 2022  
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**Intensity**

- Yellow: No data available
- Orange: Moderate drought
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- Dark Red: Extreme drought
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**Notes**

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