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MUSEUM
AT URSINUS COLLEGE

June 15, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
The Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art Presents *Universal Nature*:
A Major Mid-Career Survey of Rebecca Rutstein

Collegeville, PA — The Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College is proud to present *Universal Nature*, the most comprehensive solo exhibition to date of Philadelphia-based artist Rebecca Rutstein. This mid-career survey brings together large-scale paintings, sculpture, video, textile, and new works inspired by scientific expeditions at sea and in the Arctic, offering an expansive view of Rutstein's multidisciplinary practice over the past 10–15 years..

At the heart of the exhibition is *Flow*, a monumental suspended sculpture composed of hundreds of nickel-plated steel discs that shift and shimmer in response to air currents. Installed just above eye level in the Museum's Main Gallery atrium, *Flow* immerses viewers in a dynamic visualization of the invisible systems that connect life on Earth. Drawing on Rutstein's ongoing collaborations with scientists studying hydrothermal vents on the ocean floor, the work reflects the vast dispersal of trace elements—such as iron—through ocean currents, linking deep-sea ecosystems to the production of oxygen essential to human life.

Rutstein's work reveals a world in which boundaries dissolve: between micro and macro, organism and environment, and art and science. Monumental paintings such as *Brine Forest* and *Shape Shifter*, alongside the suspended installation *Flow*, transform hidden natural systems into immersive encounters that make the invisible visible.

A new body of work developed during a 2026 expedition to Greenland further extends this inquiry. Created in dialogue with microbiologist Jody Deming and collaborators from the Ocean Memory Project, these paintings explore the hidden architecture of Arctic sea ice—its shifting, brine-filled channels and the microbial life they sustain. Drawing on field research that included ice coring, microscopy, and experiments using sea ice brine as an artistic medium, Rutstein captures the fragile, dynamic processes unfolding within these rapidly changing environments. At a moment when climate change increasingly reshapes the environments she studies, Rutstein's work offers a powerful visual language for understanding humanity's place within larger ecological systems.

Universal Nature is accompanied by the first monograph dedicated to Rutstein's work, marking a significant contribution to contemporary art scholarship. The publication features a newly commissioned essay by art historian Laura Turner Igoe, the Gerry and Marguerite Lenfest Chief Curator at the Michener Art Museum; an interview with Philadelphia gallerist Bridgette Mayer; and an introduction by National Magazine Award-winning journalist Susan Casey.

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Through its scope and ambition, *Universal Nature* demonstrates Rutstein's position as a leading voice in contemporary art, one whose work bridges disciplines to illuminate the profound interconnectedness of our world. The exhibition ultimately calls for a deeper awareness of these relationships—and a renewed sense of responsibility to protect the fragile systems upon which all life depends.

A public reception will be held on **Thursday, September 17, from 6:00–8:00 pm**, and is free and open to all. Additional public programs connected to the exhibition will be announced later this summer.

Exhibition Dates: June 16 - November 24, 2026

Location: The Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art, Ursinus College
601 E. Main St., Collegeville, PA 19426

Contact: Lauren McCardel, Executive Director
Email: lmccardel@ursinus.edu | Phone: 610-409-3406