

LAWTON MULL

PAIR OF MOSS FOLLIES BY LAWTON MULL



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2017

gilt wood, organic materials, oil painting on canvas

73" high x 63" wide x 8" deep

\$35,000

This pair of original works by Lawton Mull incorporate two Gothic Revival tapestry frames; several varieties of preserved mosses, lichens and bracket fungi; and remnants of an Italian early 18th century oil painting. The organic matter seems to be overtaking the man-made, spilling beyond the boundaries of the carved and gilt frame and gradually covering the figures in the painting: Venus, Adonis, and two black-haired dogs panting in suspense.

Lawton was a professional gardener for a time, and is always looking to the woods for inspiration. She wanted to draw the viewer into the forest with her, to a twilight and quiet place. In 18th century English and French gardens, a folly was a faux building, such as a Roman or Chinese temple or a ruined abbey, evoking another time and place, often symbolizing Classical virtues.

The 19th century frames once housed tapestries from the Cathedral of

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Bayeux in the collection of Preston Pope Satterwhite, who then bequeathed them to the Speed Art Museum of Louisville, Kentucky. They were deaccessioned by the museum and became a part of the Lawton Mull inventory (sans the tapestries). They have not recently been restored. Lawton and Mull, who have a reverence for the ideals of wabi-sabi, felt that the fresh and elemental timelessness of the mosses beside the apparent age of the carved wood, its faded gilding and other imperfections, could be a testament to impermanence.

The painting is an 18th century oil on canvas, probably Italian, clearly inspired by Titian's Venus and Adonis. The twisting figures disappearing into the moss lent the entire decorative work a certain intrigue and intimacy.

All parts of the decorative work are unique and were assembled by hand, by Cordelia Lawton and Patrick Mull, in their Long Island City design studio.