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The Native Trees of Canada

Leanne Shapton



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A bold reinterpretation of a century-old book

While shopping in the used-book store the Monkey's Paw in Toronto, Leanne Shapton happened upon a 1956 edition of the government reference book *The Native Trees of Canada*, originally published in 1917 by the Canadian Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Most people might simply view the book as a dry cataloging of a banal subject; Shapton, however, saw beauty in the technical details and was inspired to create her own interpretation of *The Native Trees of Canada*.

Shapton distills each image into its simplest form, using vivid colors in lush ink and house paint. She takes the otherwise complex objects of trees, pinecones, and seeds and strips them down into bold, almost abstract shapes and colors: the water birch is represented as two pulsating red bulbs contrasted against a gray backdrop; the eastern white pine is represented by a close-up of its cone against a radiant summer sky.

The author of *Was She Pretty*? and *Important Artifacts and Personal Property from the Collection of Lenore Doolan and Harold Morris, Including Books, Street Fashion, and Jewelry*, Shapton puts forth yet another entirely new facet of her creative artistry.

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