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For Immediate Release

Idoline Duke – The Trees of Life

ARC Fine Art is pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition, *Idoline Duke – The Trees of Life*. Opening on Thursday, October 12th with an artist's reception from 5- 8pm, *The Trees of Life* will be on view at 3113 Bronson Road in Fairfield, CT until November 12th.

ARC Fine Art has represented Idoline for nearly fifteen years and this exhibition will be the artist's second solo exhibition at its Fairfield gallery.

Like many artists, during the recent pandemic Idoline turned inward and probed deeply into a new subject – the tree of life. Having focused her art career largely on the examination of flora and fauna, Idoline was poised to tackle such a nature-rich symbol.

Inspiring artists and artisans around the globe for millennia, the tree of life is a central archetype for various theologies, philosophies and mythological traditions. It has symbolized the connection of Earth to heaven, the pathways to spiritual illumination, and universally depicts the aspirational peaceful coexistence of all creatures and beings.

Over the last three years, Idoline has created nearly twenty works with her unique interpretation of this iconic symbol. Seen together for the first time, these large-scale paintings on paper, one soaring nearly eight feet high, offer a captivating display of elegant draftsmanship.

The series includes brilliantly colored watercolors on paper while others are white India ink graphically silhouetted on dark backgrounds, revealing the artist's inspiration from the Northern European art of paper cutting, or



Scherenschnitte, as well as Otomi embroidery from Mexico. All but one work (*Tree of Life – Mandala*) are oriented vertically like boundless trees that the viewer experiences on an intimate human scale. Idoline often frames her trees within an ogee archway, adding reverence, as if creating a portal into a more spiritual realm.

In addition to the more obvious nods to Christianity (white lilies, serpents, discarded apples and man's footprints at the base of the trees), Idoline also references Egyptian mythology (the eye of Horus – the protector) and Jewish mysticism (the interconnected spheres serving as the background tree structure). Evident also are symbols of animal totemism like the owl and hawk, representing the balance of female and male energies. Two of the featured works, titled *Sea of Life*, illustrate a fantastical aquatic underworld yet are firmly rooted with a central tree structure.

Idoline writes about this recent series:

Making art is my greatest form of escapism. Although often hard work, it is for me like a portal into another world where I envision a better place than where we are. Whether working on an abstract landscape, the details of an intricate leaf, or on a fantastical tree of life, I get to be in that place of beauty for as long as I'm painting.

Of course, I didn't invent the tree of life. It's a ubiquitous symbol in art, religion and mythologies throughout the ages, but commonly an evocative reminder that we're all after the same thing, harmony within ourselves, harmony with each other, and the recognition that we are all connected and part of something much greater than ourselves.

The gallery is open by appointment only. To schedule a viewing or for additional information, please contact the gallery at infoarcfineart@gmail.com or 203 895 9595.