

THE RESONANCES: *IN NATURE WE TRUST*

Featuring artwork by Audrey Anastasi, Peggy Bates,
Klay-James Eno, Gregg Evans, Nancy Friedemann-Sanchez, Elsie Kagan,
Joanne Lobotsky, Karen Marston, Jessie McCloskey, Leah Oates
Walter O'Neill, Nolan Preece, and Janell Turner

The first in a series of online group exhibitions that explore themes of timeless portent and societal impact. *THE RESONANCES* reaches down into the depths of humankind's relationship to the varieties of creative expression to plumb the possibilities for meaning. In a time of great divisiveness, it's the role of art to connect us to what's essential to life: inspiration from sources that feed and inspire everyone.

Nature has been a subject in art for hundreds of years. The Impressionists in particular elevated scenes of nature into heroic depictions in which humanity was forever mired. The role of nature as the origin of the human race and as an alternative to progress, to industry, and to the constraints of modern society, enters into all of these works. Yet is also a tangent subject to so many more issues and creative contexts. Each of the artists of "In Nature We Trust" has a different approach to nature as a theme or motif, and each stakes their own claim for originality.

Audrey Frank Anastasi explores the forest as a primordial site where myth and storytelling emerge. She treats all forms real or imagined as symbolic structures comparable to abstractions. Our early experiences in such places were the origin of perception in which a life deeper and grander than our own made a strong effect upon both the senses and our idea of what constituted reality. As civilized societies grew and became more self-involved, the natural environment became a passive background. It remained "the wilderness" as science had yet to catch up with knowledge about animal and plant life. It was easier to think of it as a mythical place devoid of human rationality.

Peggy Bates has always taken her inspiration from water. The deep forces that drive bodies of water, from oceans to rivers, and even to puddles, are wrought up in the element of water itself, which feeds the

land and provides access to a different world within ours that has its own rules. Bates has likewise desiccated her practice to the manipulation of a single medium—acrylic paint, which in its viscous composition, manifests like water. Looking at her paintings are like gazing down into a deep pool to see all the currents at once.

Klay-James Enos is a plein-air painter par excellence. His works on view here are an exploration of the imperfection of the painterly scene. They juxtapose beauty with decay or place ideas of depiction at the service of contrapuntion, in which the direct object is never clear.

Gregg Evans is a photographer who lives in the wood, so the presence of nature is both expedient and interesting. Evans describes “a certain stillness in the sense of chronology one gets when they’re out in the woods, where time starts to collapse. Like there’s a visible history surrounding me, and I’m also part of that history. Trees shed their leaves, animals and plants die, new animals and plants are born. Something has been there before me, and something will be there after me. That’s something that I find really freeing when I’m making pictures, and is what attracts me to photographing and exploring nature within my work.” Alternatively, Evans is interested in the things we do with nature, the ruins we create, the objects we forget on our hike, the crappy footpaths we leave behind over time. He finds the footprint humans are leaving on the world both fascinating and terrifying –humans have created an indelible mark in the geologic record. That question of what we leave behind and how will future civilizations interpret it is something Evans thinks about all the time, and what comes out in the best of his images.

Nancy Friedemann-Sanchez uses Colombian colonial botanical illustrations to explore the invisible paths of cultural memory born from exile. The taxonomic cataloguing of the new world was no mere scientific endeavor, meant to exemplify the value and beauty of new lands, but a means of identifying for future use the properties inherent in local flora for colonial domination. Her work presents a historical palimpsest of cultural memory in the context of trans-cultural experiences.

Elsie Kagan explores the contradictions of beauty, the limitations of perspective, and rising climate anxiety. She examines how cultural and

historical context shapes our understanding of the natural world. Her gestural oil paintings are informed by historical references, direct observation, and AI prompts. That process involves photographing the works, feeding them into AI systems, and using the responses to create sets of smaller paintings on tinted plaster.

Her most recent work centers on water as both subject and metaphor, exploring its capacity to be transparent, reflective, placid, violent, life-giving, and destructive. Her landscapes occupy a space between abstraction and representation, retaining suggestive elements of nature while challenging conventions of depth and gravity. These invented landscapes don't depict real places but emerge from human-digital collaboration, improvisation, and memory, investigating how painting can create an elusive sense of truth. This work explores the tension between material mark-making and spatial illusion—where a brushstroke exists both as itself and as droplets splashing from the ocean's surface. (Artist's Statement)

Joanne Lobotsky interprets nature not as a passive subject but an active, living force—vivid, unpredictable, and endlessly transforming. It carries both rhythm and chaos, order and dissolution, speaking in patterns of growth, decay, and renewal. Nature in her work is not observed but felt: vibrant, dreamlike, overwhelming in its beauty. Signs of human presence, when included, are small, overwhelmed by a force that is at once structured and chaotic, intimate and immense, but still able to be observed and felt. Nature is a stranger we are nonetheless part of. This is how the artist has always experienced nature, no matter the setting -- whether the farm and forests she grew up in and have now returned to in the same Hudson Valley or the Rocky Mountains of Colorado where she lived for a while and the many other magical, special places she visited in the world. Of course, human destruction of the environment is never far from her mind, and she often uses “unnatural” or vivid colors in recognition of this harm. Lobotsky's aim is to evoke a direct emotional response, inviting viewers to connect with the work on a visceral level, rather than through intellectual or culturally mediated interpretations. (Artist's Statement)

Jessie McCloskey describes landscape painting as the cornerstone of his painting practice. “I feel it keeps my eyes open as painter, to color, form, clarity and surprise. And also I love making little, complete worlds to go into. I place to calm myself, I place where I want to be. I love medieval paintings mostly for the little windows that look out on an idyllic landscape, I always want to go there, be there. I try to paint what I think is for me the most fascinating aspect of a painting which is whenever I look at them they appear exactly the same and yet completely different. I believe paintings never reflect the mood of the viewer, but alter it, and give it back, changed. That's the mystery of landscape paintings and I never get enough of that paradox.”

Karen Marston paints landscapes to bear witness to both the impacts of climate change and the formidable power and beauty of nature. The sublime, an essential through line, connects these to my exploration of the disquieting gravity of ecological disasters. The interrelation of natural and manmade phenomena crystallized for me in 2010 when two concurrent explosions created mirror image columns of smoke—one rising from the burning oil-rig in the Gulf of Mexico, the other from a volcano erupting in Iceland. Since then I've pursued two corresponding bodies of work. The first, natural catastrophes—the escalation of forest fires, hurricanes and tornadoes, the melting arctic and bleaching coral reefs. The second, landscapes immersed in the striking beauty of unscathed nature. Historically, I'm influenced by the majestic drama of Turner and Church, the luminous spirituality of Heade and Kensett. My observation is also informed by pervasive news images of ever intensifying natural disasters and existential threats. I am deeply focused on the environmental paradox of beauty and destruction, the struggle between the inescapable power of nature and the hubris of the human desire to control it.

Leah Oates on her Transitory Space series: “The Transitory Space series deals with urban and natural locations that are transforming due to the passage of time, altered natural conditions and a continual human imprint. In everyone and in everything there are daily changes and this

series articulates fluctuation in the photographic image and captures movement through time and space. Transitory spaces have a messy human energy that is perpetually in the present yet continually altering. They are endlessly interesting, alive places where there is a great deal of beauty and fragility. They are temporary monuments to the ephemeral nature of existence.”

Nolan Preece has referred to his work as chemical painting, and he has adapted techniques from photography’s infancy and invented his own new methods for creating images. In his chemigrams, the artist works with resists and photographic chemicals for developing and fixing the image to achieve a wide range of complex, fascinating effects, which are then digitally enhanced. They move as if of their own volition to form imaginal domains and virtual vistas, which shift from fluid to concrete, are abstract yet enigmatically charged.

Jannell Turner says of her work: “Formally and philosophically, my oil paintings explore the concept of nature as a gateway to understanding a greater reality, with multiple dimensions nested within one another. In depicting botanical life that is alternately sensuous and phenomenological, I aim to challenge prior assumptions about the vacuity represented by mere beauty in nature. In some paintings, I depict a macroverse, blown up and extended to show structure, while at the same time describing what it means to see as a plant and move toward sunlight. My paintings of leaves are not meant to identify and aggrandize the leaves themselves, but to depict the light and the shapes dramatized in the interval of aesthetic recognition, creating either cold light with warm shadows, or vice versa, with the leaves actually stretching the light; and multiple dimensions reuniting as the narrated event returns to its representation. “

