



ART REVIEW: Exploring Colors and Life at Intersection of Nature and Science

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by Kelcey Edwards

[William Ris Gallery](#) owner Mary Cantone's sharp eye for installation is everywhere evident in "Seen and Unseen: Paintings & Drawings by Scott McIntire." The 40 works on display in the solo exhibition at the Jamesport, NY venue fill the walls, stacked and nestled into the corners of the small gallery. The net effect is mesmerizing, creating an immersive experience that mimics the layered complexity and pervasiveness of unseen forces featured in [Scott McIntire's](#) work.

McIntire is a leader in the environmentally conscious Sci-Art movement; his oeuvre explores the connections between nature, science, technology and art. In addition to insects, animals, flowers, vines and birds, many of the compositions feature Op-Art inspired depictions of energy fields. Cellular transitions, radio waves, animal sounds, subatomic particles and other elements are represented as concentric circles and radiating lines. The artist layers these graphic elements into his compositions, which read as meditations on the natural, physical and metaphysical world.

One of the most striking aspects of the paintings is the precision of McIntire's renderings of what seems to be a botanical and zoological paradise, and the artworks, frequently titled with the names of the flora and fauna they feature, operate as a sort of field guide. "Is that a canary?" I wondered, standing before one piece. Looking it up I learned it's a Cape May Warbler. Given the photorealistic accuracy of McIntire's representation, this reviewer was made keenly aware of my ornithological shortcomings.



"Cape May Warbler & Budding Iris" by Scott McIntire, 2017. Enamel on Canvas, 30 x 40 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

On a darker note, the series is as much a dialogue about climate change and the ecological impact of development as it is about hidden microcosms in nature. There is no doubt a cautionary tale being told as well, a plea to "tune in," to stay aware and to remember to protect the things that are cherished.

The drawings of cacti and birch trees showcase McIntire's skilled draftsmanship as well, but it's the paintings that are the stars of the show, with their intense water-based enamel pigments and lyrical compositions, as in *Backyard Weeds & Seeds*, where the lines of the uprooted weeds seem to

dance like ribbons within the frame.



“Backyard Weeds and Seeds” by Scott McIntire, 2015. Enamel on canvas, 14 x 36 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

A unique element in many of McIntire’s paintings is the color swatches he includes, which Cantone explained has its roots in his early years working in textiles, where such practice is commonplace. The inclusion of the color swatches forces the viewer to consider the artist’s hand, a presence too easily forgotten given the smooth application of the paint. McIntire’s acknowledgement of the materials he is using also seems to allude to the magic of the creative process: the worlds that can be spun from a restricted palette. It is this kind of magic, it could be argued, that is perhaps also at the heart of McIntire’s sci-art investigation into the relationship between seen and unseen worlds.

With such consistency in the work, it is hard to pick favorites. I found myself particularly drawn to two works that feature vines, *Air 1* and *Air 2*, and another work, *The Tremors of Fracking*, which features a frightened-looking hare outlined by a radiating, golden halo. Though some of the subjects may strike viewers as less appealing, the works that feature magnified insects, such as *Locust Borer Beetle*, are no less compelling than the ones that feature birds and flowers. All of the paintings on view in “Seen and Unseen” are drawn from McIntire’s studies of the flora and fauna of his own backyard.



“Air 1” by Scott McIntire, 2016. Enamel on canvas, 24 x 48 inches. Courtesy of the artist.



“Air 2” by Scott McIntire, 2016. Enamel on canvas, 24 x 48 inches. Courtesy of the artist.



“The Tremors of Fracking” by Scott McIntire, 2017. Enamel on canvas, 48 x 36 inches. Courtesy of the

artist.



“Locus Borer Beetle” by Scott McIntire, 2015.
Enamel on canvas, 24 x 18 inches. Courtesy of the
artist.

On a table at the front of the exhibition, Cantone has included a gem: a small portrait of McIntire painted by his wife, Lori Hollander, who will be featured at William Ris Gallery in an upcoming show. Looking at his almost-smiling face, I imagined him in his backyard, making this body of work, and I was suddenly filled with memories of my own childhood, drunk on life, sitting in a field contemplating the nature of things. Then it dawned on me that this is McIntire’s gift to his audience: this shared and perhaps universal love of secret worlds, teeming with color and life.



Portrait of Scott McIntire by Lori Hollander, 2011. Oil
on canvas, 12 x 9 inches. Courtesy of Scott McIntire.

BASIC FACTS: “Seen and Unseen: Paintings and Drawings by Scott McIntire” is on view April 7 through April 29, 2018 at William Ris Gallery, 1291 Main Road, Jamesport, NY 11947.
www.williamris.com

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