

## Field of Vision:

## Artists Explore Place

Approaches to representing place are as varied as the artists that create them—involving detailed observations, emotional responses, abstract elements and the imagination. Reactions to the environment are mediated through personal experiences as well as through social and cultural frameworks.



(above)  
**Jolynn Krystosek**, *Untitled*, 2008  
Wax and wood,  
21 x 18 x 2 1/2 inches  
Collection of the Artist  
Photo courtesy of the Artist

(below)  
**Sarah Hood**, *Birch Tree Ring*, 2010  
Sterling silver, model railroad  
landscape materials, and wood  
3 1/2 x 2 x 2 inches  
Collection of the Artist  
Photo: Douglas Yaple

**Field of Vision** features the work of nine emerging and established artists who are creating tangible responses to the intangible ideas evoked by a "place." They combine time consuming and laborious processes—such as quilling and cutting paper into floral, plant, and decorative forms, carving wax flowers, or granulating gold—with both atmospheric and intimate views of the environment. The spaces these artists address are not always specified; they could be a seascape or cloud formation, garden path or mountain horizon, manicured landscape or wild nature.

**Lauren Fensterstock** (Maine) cuts and quills black paper into compositions that reference the manipulated landscapes of formal gardens and the architectural quality of floral forms and grasslands. Her intent is to draw attention to the tension between human beings and nature—that we can simultaneously nurture it and attempt to control it. The paper, formed into elaborate decorative curlicues that resemble petals and flowers or cut into blades and leaves, is offset by charcoal—a reference to earth. Additionally, our view of nature is mediated by a reflective surface that throws emphasis back on the "viewer" and reinforces the hand of the human in the natural world.

Using model railroad elements as the "jewels" for silver neckpieces and rings, **Sarah Hood** (Washington) creates adornment that suggests life-size landscapes in miniature form. Rather than the typical formula—where human bodies occupy sections of earth—Hood creates a context where trees and bushes take up space on a wearer's body. Her interest in combining the natural world with jewelry has been ongoing as she has used actual leaves, seeds and pods in her work for years. Hood turned to the artificial model railroad trees and bushes because they have the potential to create an illusion, and therefore, encourage contemplation.

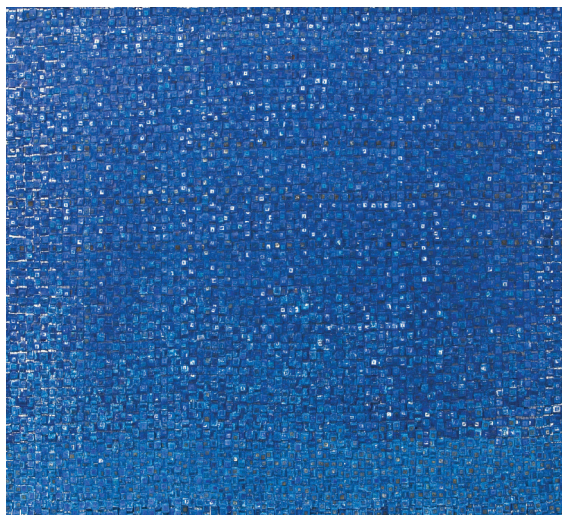
Drawn to wax for the way it interacts with light and for its metaphorical associations with decay, corporeality, and fragility, **Jolynn Krystosek** (New York) creates exquisitely carved wax wall pieces. Her works simultaneously evoke historical still life paintings, botanical illustrations and cameo pendants. Her opulent bouquets suggest a quiet mortality, their temporal nature connecting to the life cycles of all organic things, including human beings. Krystosek also plays on the sheer enchantment of the material, drawing viewers into a conversation about the connection between humans and nature.

Arranged in shapes that evoke architectural ornamentation, **Beverly Penn's** (Texas) cast bronze weeds subtly remind us again of that connection. The use of organic forms to design ornamentation has a long, multicultural history. Penn's manipulation of elements drawn from the landscape (weeds are gathered from commercial construction sites and cast in bronze) has been practiced for centuries. Here, however, she uses it as a part of a complex investigation into how we mediate nature.



**Beverly Penn**, *Topo I*, 2007, Bronze, 24 x 60 x 3 1/2 inches  
Courtesy of Lisa Sette Gallery, Scottsdale; dberman Gallery, Austin;  
McMurtrey Gallery, Houston, Photo: Christopher Zaleski

**Racine Art Museum**  
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**Olga de Amaral**, *Montana Azul* 22, 2005  
Cotton, linen, gesso, acrylic paint, and parchment  
53 x 57 x 1/2 inches  
Piece and image courtesy of Bellas Artes Gallery, Santa Fe

*"I have a spiritual connection to Colombia; I don't even want to think about it intellectually."*  
– Olga de Amaral

The natural and cultural landscapes of Colombia inform the textile works of **Olga de Amaral** (Colombia). She manipulates fiber, metallic leaf and other materials into woven wall hangings with patterns that suggest natural topographies and phenomena. Their colors relate to memory and metaphor. For example, blue relates to the artist's recollection of painted stucco walls in her native Colombia, while gold suggests "power, pain, patriotism and mysticism." She blends emotion with memories of and admiration for her homeland. Strips of fiber and cotton as well as gold and silver leaf suggest rivers, waterfalls, sunrises and curves of the earth.

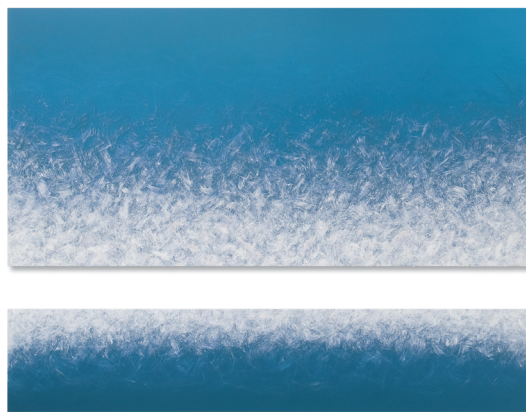
**Nicole Chesney** (Rhode Island) explores the luminous qualities of air and water as she creates poetic works using oil paint and glass. Chesney's "images" evoke horizon lines, shadows and light reflections that are so atmospheric they seem impossible to contain in a finite

format. Underscoring her knowledge of the metaphorical qualities of light and space as well as the practical possibilities of glass, Chesney responds to the writings of French philosopher Gaston Bachelard who rhapsodized about the emotional qualities of a "profound sky."

The waxed linen and metal works of **Mary Giles** (Minnesota) reference topographical forms and evoke the light and shape of elements in the natural landscape. The reflective qualities of the copper and iron that Giles attaches to interior crevices or exterior surfaces echo the play of sunlight on water while also suggesting textures and layers. Identifying her work as an interpretation and expression of her "concerns about the environment and the human condition," Giles refrains from overt depictions of a landscape. Her work emphasizes form and beauty, and registers as an emotional response to an experienced topography.



**Mary Giles**, *Shadow Profile*, 2001  
Waxed linen, tin, copper, and iron  
22 x 15 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches  
Racine Art Museum, Gift of David and Jacqueline Charak  
Photo: Jon Bolton



**Nicole Chesney**, *Betoken*, 2010  
Oil paint, glass, and aluminum  
31 x 40 x 1 inches  
Collection of the Artist, Photo: Scott Lapham

**Rebecca Hutchinson** (Massachusetts) creates ethereal installations that suggest biomorphic forms, such as flowers and plants. Using paper clay (a type of clay that includes bits of paper that burn out during firing), in combination with other materials such as clay slip, hand cut paper or fibrous threads, Hutchinson explores the "diverse states of existence" in nature. She is concerned with how organisms grow and thrive in changing conditions and how this relates metaphorically to the human condition. The process of constructing her site-related installations involves layers of complexity that also mimic natural states.

**Harold O'Connor** (Colorado) combines natural materials, such as spectrolite and beach pebbles, with time-honored metalsmithing techniques, such as granulation (the coalescence of individual beads into a texture) to create compositions that suggest mountains, streams, rocks and the geography of the land. With a degree in anthropology, O'Connor responds to landscapes and their connection to idea and form. His compositions remind viewers of the awe-inspiring diversity and texture of the earth and embody the essence of place.

The artists of **Field of Vision** create rich and varied compositions inspired by landscape, light and space. These works are substantial without being directly representational. Conceptually, they both depend upon and explore the relationship between human beings and the natural world.