

Lawre Stone - *Artist Statement*

My work combines natural imagery and the language of abstraction in otherworldly landscapes that explore environmental issues and the relationship between interior worlds and outer experience. The process begins with a series of preliminary ink sketches, followed by the application of thin layers of acrylic on canvas to construct an atmospheric foundation, gradually building depth and mood. Transitioning to oil paint and employing vivid, gestural strokes, I craft a dynamic space where bold flora takes form. The resulting images, almost archetypal organic forms, transcend mere depictions of individual plants, instead capturing the unseen essence of the vegetal world.

My hybrid plant forms, a fusion of observation and imagination, neither entirely real nor fictional, evoke a sense of transformation and perseverance. I depend on the plant world as a subject, refuge, and inspiration. Many of my larger-than-life plant forms refer to invasive or displaced species thriving in our local environment without natural predators or climate indicators to impede their growth. As sentient beings, plants are in constant, contiguous, and contingent interaction with the world.

The paintings and drawings shown here all relate to the botanicals in the Voynich Manuscript, a late 15th c. medieval codex. This enigmatic book contains over 100 unidentified botanical drawings, accompanied by an indecipherable text. Like my drawings, the images in the Voynich seem familiar, yet these fanciful plants cannot be attributed to a specific genus or species. As I work, I ponder the potential unrecognizability of our contemporary landscape due to climate change. This compels me to empathize with aspects of the natural world through color, image, shape, and gesture. My work is a contemplation of the environment's adaptation to human intervention, encapsulating a dystopian beauty- the profound impact of our actions and nature's enduring resilience.