

[Art](#) [Reviews](#)

## Holly Lane's Elegiac Shrines to the Natural World

The artist evokes a keen awareness of the threats facing the environment by honoring it through opulent, reliquary-style frames and delicate paintings.



John Seed 1 hour ago



Holly Lane, "Companions, The Three Graces" (2021), acrylic and carved wood, 24 x 16 1/4 x 4 7/8 inches (~61 x 41.3 x 12.4 cm) (photo by Patrick Tregenza, courtesy the artist and Winfield Gallery; all other photos John Seed/*Hyperallergic*)

LOS GATOS, Calif. — As carved, gilded, and decorated frames fell out of fashion in the mid-20th century, another idea took hold: Modern paintings just needed a simple strip of molding around the edge. Such hand-crafted frames, besides being expensive, screamed “antique.” When artist Holly Lane was an undergraduate painting student at San Jose State University in the mid-

1980s, she found herself **observing** that according to mid-century principles, “A good frame was to be inconspicuous.”

In response, Lane has spent nearly four decades exploring and exploiting the possibilities of reliquary-style frames echoing **early Christian carvings** and marginalia. In her art — which hybridizes painting and sculpture — everything works together to create shrines to the natural world and honor its sanctity. At the entrance of Lane’s show in Los Gatos is the piece that gives the exhibition its name: “Not Enough Time to Love the World” (2022). It presents an image of bubbles, a symbol of ephemerality. Directly above, carved into the frame, is a winged hourglass that evokes the passage of time hovering beneath an arch symbolizing the span of our lives. In concert, these images tell us that the contemplation of nature is now increasingly charged by a keen awareness of the threats it faces.



Holly Lane, “Not Enough Time to Love the World” (2022), acrylic and carved wood, 13 x 11 x 3 3/4 inches (~33 x 27.9 x 9.5 cm)

The artist created “After the Storm” (2012), one of the more personal pieces in the show, when a forced move brought her to a new location outside the city. Its intricate crown signals triumph after trouble and the scenes revealed in its side portals — including a starry sky, a duck on books, and two dogs fighting over underwear — add wonderment and gentle humor.

Another work, “Gentle Muse” (2010), honors trees and their function as fuel, shade, construction materials, and pharmaceuticals. The Gothic-style side carvings of its frame recall the architecture



of churches and are complimented by cylindrical apothecary jars. The central image of the tree, executed with graphite on mylar, has an elegiac quality that works in concert with the reliquary character of the frame.

Through her exploration of framing, Lane has invented new ways to present a secular sacred with nature at its center. Her art, with its intertwined symbols and images, invites a deeper contemplation of nature's place and meaning in a time of environmental crisis.



Holly Lane, "After the Storm" (2012), acrylic and carved wood, 33 x 39 x 9 inches (~83.8 x 99 x 22.9 cm)



Holly Lane "Gentle Muse" (2010), graphite on matte mylar and carved wood, 22 x 31 1/2 x 6 1/2 inches (~55.9 x 80 x 16.5 cm)

**Holly Lane—Not Enough Time to Love the World** *continues at the New Museum Los Gatos through January 12, 2025. The exhibition was curated by Helaine Glick.*

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