

Victoria Mitchell – *Inktricate*

Visual Description

This exhibit is of 25 images by Victoria Mitchell. I will describe 5 of the works. They are arranged on large, freestanding gallery panels covered in a beige carpet-like material. There are four double sided panels, stacked in a line, running north-south. The panel faces also point north-south. The panels are numbered 1 through 8, with 1 being the northernmost panel, 2 being the south facing panel on the rear side of panel 1, and so on, through panel 8 being the southernmost panel. Panels have 3 or 4 images on each. The images are all fairly small-scale and are mounted at eye-level.

Victoria says of her work:

I have had a life-long passion for creating visuals from emotions, inspired by what comes from within. Extensive studies of body structure and kinetics over the years, as both an RMT and yoga teacher, has influenced my painting representations of natural elements. I'm intrigued by the exploration of our environments and finding different ways to communicate the feelings of what I see through painting. Living in the beauty of the BC West Coast lends inspiration to diverse creative endeavours, and there's an abundance of ever-changing elements and settings to explore through painting. Since 2017 I've enjoyed sharing these works in galleries and exhibitions, along with the pleasure of broadening communications with those who connect with what I create.

Panel 1 – Aeonian (11x14 vertical orientation, in a black frame with a visible wood grain)

This black and white ink and graphite drawing is centered on the panel with a pairing of 2 small works on its left and the artist statement on the right. The image has a strong focus on different kinds of lines and is a semi-abstract piece. Overall the main image resembles a bare tree that has a wide trunk and shortish branches, reaching upwards. The trunk and branches are filled in with contour lines which give a sense of bark. The contour lines continue as single lines from the end of each branch, which reach up toward the top of the image, and pass beyond the edge of the paper. Within the trunk and branches of the tree is another image, more fractured and full of open space than the contoured bark areas. This image looks a bit like a figure that is part horse part human, and appears to be dancing, with one leg raised in front of it to the right side of the figure, and the head with its long snout raised. Inside the figure, the lines look a bit like they outline different muscle groups, and there is also a textured line that appears to be a backbone that runs down the length of the legs. The title of the work, Aeonian, means lasting for an immeasurably or indefinitely long period of time (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

Panel 2 – Hourglass (9x11 horizontal orientation in a flat black frame)

This black and white graphite on paper drawing is on the far left of the panel with two images on the right. It shows an hourglass sitting on a flat surface. A small amount of shading surrounds the hourglass on the flat surface to situate it in space. Each side of the hourglass (top and bottom) is 7 sided, and the neck connecting the top and bottom is fairly wide. There is some subtle shading to show the curvature of the hourglass and the light reflecting off of it. There is not much sand inside the hourglass, instead, a bumblebee is trapped in the neck of the hourglass, with the bottom half of its body (with stripes) in the bottom and the top half of its body, including its wings, in the top half of the hourglass. There are some grains of sand dropping from the bee's body, adding to two small piles of sand at the bottom of the hourglass. There are also a few grains of sand around the bee in the top. It is not clear if the bee is struggling to move into the top of the hourglass, or if it is slipping through. It also appears as if the bee could be disintegrating into sand as the lower half of its body is fainter and could be turning into the grains of sand that are dropping to the bottom. The bee is quite detailed with individual hairs visible, and it looks a little squished at the midpoint of the hourglass.

Panel 5 – Dawn (11x8.5, landscape orientation, in a thin, shiny black frame)

The next image is a mixed media drawing with some ink, graphite, and coloured pencil, with muted colours and a restricted colour palette. It is on the far right side on the panel with two other images on the left. In the foreground is the face and head of a person lying down in profile, the top of the head toward the right side of the paper and the neck and body toward the left. While it is clearly a head, it also appears to be a mountain range in silhouette, with the nose, lips, chin, and neck creating peaks and valleys. The features of the face (nose, lips, eyes, chin, etc.) are outlined in contour lines that intersect in a complex type of webbing design. These lines are both black and a dark red. Many of these webbing lines make small cell-like shapes in areas of great detail, which then increase in size to outline larger face areas (like the cheekbones, for example). These webbing lines then also descend straight down toward the bottom of the head, which is also visible as a kind of contour line within the 'mountain scape'. The eyes on the face are outlined, but are not visible as eyeballs – they are either closed or blank. In the background of the face, behind the contour lines, is a horizontal shading in various muted colours from grey-green to yellow to grey.

Behind the head and to the right of it, is a pale yellow shape, which appears to be a golden sphere emerging from behind the mountain. Given the title of the piece, this seems to be sun rising, but also given the contour lines that surround it, it also looks a bit like a face that is emerging from a head scarf. The centre of the sun is very pale, almost white, and with slightly deeper yellow and orange or red toward its edges. The sun's light also touches the tops of the 'mountains' and they seem to glow a bit.

Panel 6 – A Place to Land (8x8, square with a medium brown frame)

The next image is a mixed media (ink, pencil & coloured pencil) drawing that has been coloured in certain areas. It is the middle image of three on the panel. Across the bottom of the image is an open right hand, gently cupped upward, with the creases of the hand visible. The open palm is visible, but the viewpoint is slightly across the whole hand. The thumb is toward the viewer, and at the bottom of the image. The hand seems to rest within a landscape, with shading that resembles grass around the foreground and lines that indicate hills extending from the back of the hand. The hand has been coloured pale peach with green as a shading colour. Above the hand, in the centre of the image, is a bee, flying from left to right. Three legs of the bee are visible, hanging down from its slightly curved body. The bee is black and yellow, with translucent wings visible, and its body is fuzzy with hairs. It seems as if the bee may land on the open hand. Behind the bee is a lightly indicated sky, with some turquoise and pencil shading behind the bee, gently disappearing toward the top of the image.

Panel 7 – Sustainability (8x10, in a thin, shiny black frame)

The final image is a black and white ink line drawing, coloured with pale inks. It is on the far right of the panel with two other images to its left. In it, a mixture of images can be seen. At the centre, are two bare tree silhouettes with similar contour lines to the tree in Aeolian. They are coloured brown. There is a large tree at left and a smaller tree leaning toward the larger one at the right. Their branches somewhat intertwine. Around the edges of both trees' branches is another outline, this one of a type of monster. Its two legs encase the two trees and curl up in spirals from their bases. At the top, the lines form a kind of monster head reaching over and down to the right. The outline of the monster is not a single line, but rather a number of intersecting lines of various widths, with sharp edges, making a pointy-looking, spine-like outline. The monster is coloured pale blue, and the outline is filled in with pale green. All along the outside edge are small houses, their roofs contributing to the creature's spikiness. The houses are pale pinks and browns. The monster's head has a visible snout and eye, but the eye is blank. There is a curl coming off the centre of its head.