

The background of the cover is a photograph of a dark, highly reflective surface, possibly a wet street or a polished floor. In the upper half, there are two autumn leaves: a smaller yellow one in the center and a larger orange-red one in the top right corner. The surface reflects a blurred cityscape with buildings and streetlights, creating a sense of depth and urban atmosphere.

OMNIPRESENT OR CHANCE

Yvette Gellis

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curated by Molly Enholm

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OMNIPRESENCE OR CHANCE

Curator's Statement

Yvette Gellis operates at the crossroads of the visceral and the intellectual, deftly layering charcoal, paint and collaged imaginary to construct Arcadian scenes of the natural environment. Exquisitely tall trees, interrupted by pools of intoxicating teal-blue, reach beyond view punctuated by hypnotically repetitive patterns of splendid orange poppies and wistfully rust-colored leaves. The landscape recedes into a nearly mystical space dissolving in both light and shadow, while pronounced swaths of impasto paint are physical reminders of the artist's presence. She creates this meditative interpretation of the natural world while traversing the ever-shifting boundaries between representation and abstraction, or, rather, between notions of control and elements of chance. The cyclical motif of the leaf provides Gellis with an imagistic structure, surpassing traditional tropes to represent not the ephemeral, but the omnipresent. The walls of the gallery quietly dissolve behind the complex assemblage of canvases, panels and Plexiglas that projects into the physical realm occupied by the viewer. A departure from traditional notions of the landscape, there is no implied narrative here, no defined relationship between humanity and the environment created by the artist and presented to the viewer. Instead, Gellis offers a space to inhabit and meditate upon the notions of chance, choice and the omnipresence of nature.

—Molly Enholm

About Molly Enholm

Molly Enholm is a notable contemporary art critic, editor, practicing artist and art historian active in the Los Angeles art scene. She has contributed to several publication as a freelance editor and contributor, including *Fabrik*, *ArtScene*, *Hi-Fructose*, *TheArtStory.org*, *Art + Cake*, *Visual Art Source* and served for nearly a decade as managing editor of *art ltd.*, a contemporary art publication covering the West Coast and surrounding regions. Ms. Enholm teaches art history and theory courses at California State University Northridge, Laguna College of Art + Design, and Moorpark College. Among her freelance projects, she is the founder of the art news and social media aggregator *Art Cites*. In 2019, Ms. Enholm curated the innovative, multi-disciplinary exhibition, "Yvette Gellis: Omnipresence or Chance," to open the fall season at the CSUN West Gallery.



OMNIPRESENCE OR CHANCE

Artist Statement

It started with one leaf. It was late morning, before the winds picked up and I was entering my studio from the street. As I put my key in the door, I looked down and there on the doorstep, so perfectly placed as if it had just landed, was a beautiful orange-colored leaf vibrating with a powerful energy. It was as if this leaf, this inanimate object, was speaking directly to me. "I am here with you," the words echoed in my mind, "Yes, I am here with you now." I picked it up and held it, looking at this delicate object in my hands. It was so beautiful, a combination of red and orange tones unusual for this particular time of year, as Fall was long past. I immediately recognized that this leaf didn't belong to any of the trees nearby. So, I walked down the alley looking, nothing. Then, I walked the other direction to the back alley, nothing there either. I began to feel suspicious. No one I knew in the area would leave a leaf like that for me, so where did it come from? I was puzzled, yet struck by the possibility of a connection, it seemed as if the leaf was waiting for me. I brought the leaf inside my studio and set it in a very special spot where I could easily gaze at its beauty. It felt inextricably profound - in this simple leaf I sensed a divine gesture.

Later that month, I sat meditating on a bench in the tranquil 9/11 Memorial Park on Pepperdine's campus in the Malibu Hills overlooking the ocean. It was very clean as if someone had recently swept the area. When I opened my eyes and leaned over to pick up my bag, there next to me was a perfectly placed Sycamore leaf. I felt that this leaf that had fallen and landed so perfectly next to me was not just a chance falling of any leaf, but something more deeply personal and spiritual connecting me to the landscape.

This began happening regularly - always the same scenario - a leaf appears, one that feels as if set there specifically for me. I started to anticipate these leaves and would catch myself looking for them - is that one, is that one there for me? I started to question whether I might be projecting and began to doubt everything I had experienced. I must be mad, or going insane? And then, it would happen again in some unexpected way. In time, the doubts passed, I came to understand that the depth of this experience was beyond any one leaf, as each leaf became connected to every leaf. Each leaf felt like a joyous flirtation with the Universe, a cosmic romance.

As one leaf soon became many leaves, I thought again of their origins. Once connected to branches of trees from throughout Los Angeles and far beyond, rising from the soil, their roots forming underground networks. From there, my mind raced, considering the complex network of communities, of cities, of countries covering the entire planet that all somehow connected back to that one tiny leaf found at the door of my studio. At that moment, I realized that these leaves were so much more than the tangible objects I could see, but reminders of something infinitely more precious - the human soul - and the connection between all living things on the planet.

The unexpected way this simple leaf entered my life led me to create a body of work that reflects my experience of all that is good and harmonious in this world. That simple choice to pick up a leaf, to embrace the connectivity of nature, that perchance we might move inexorably away from disharmony toward an understanding of universal love. To know there is infinite good in the world, despite the existence of evil, and its omnipresence is, for me, embodied by these simple gestures, by seeing one leaf, one gift, at a time - representing a universal connection. Each leaf then becomes an altar, each leaf is proof of eternal love.

—Yvette Gellis

Detail: Copper Leaf in Refuge 2019
Oil, acrylic, graphite and paper collage on canvas
82 x 112 inches

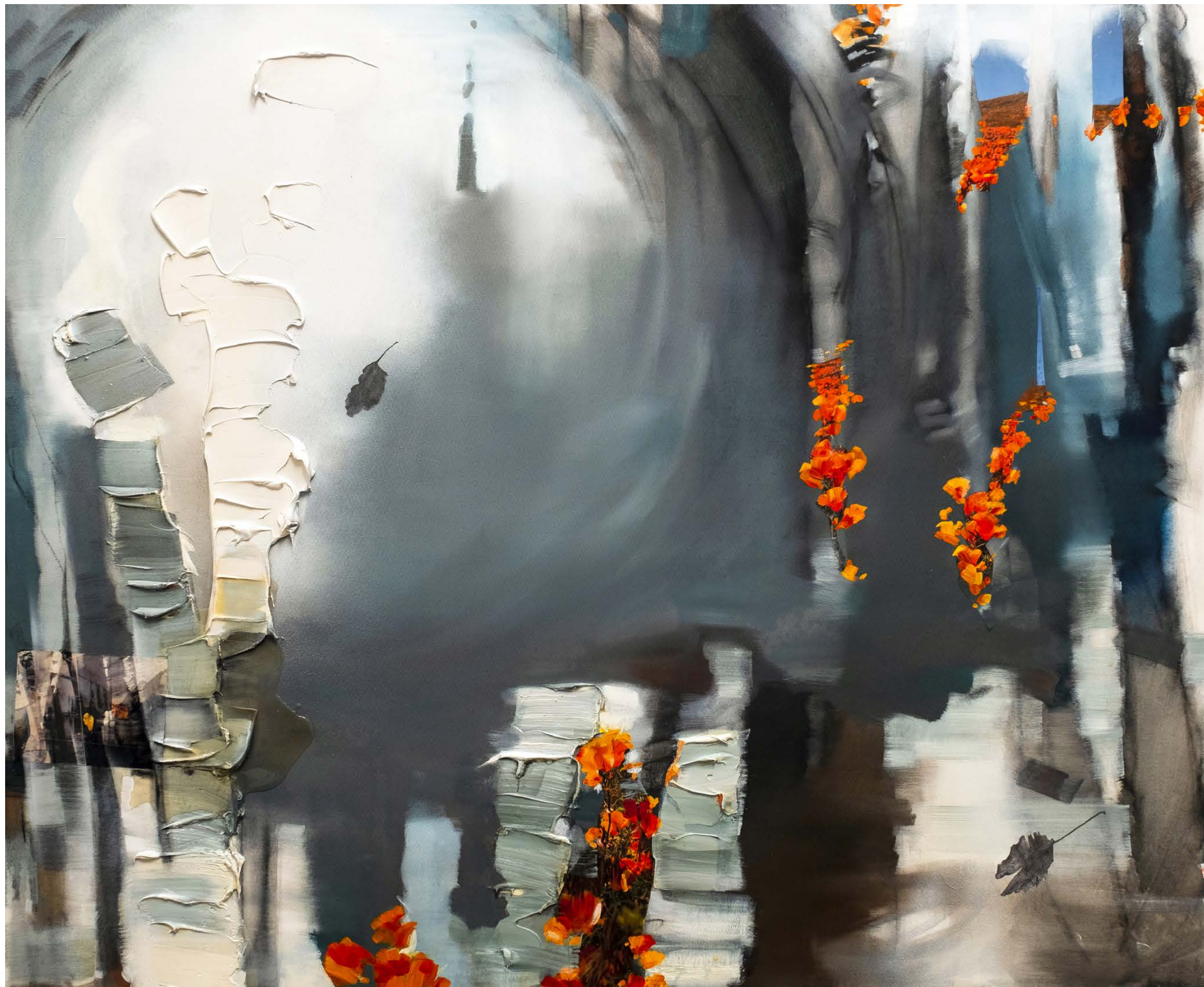


Poppies in Teal Pools, #2 2019
Oil, acrylic, graphite, paper
65 x 80 inches



The First Leaf in plexiglass box, 2019
Background: Installation View Southeast
Mixed media with original leaves
35 feet x 14 feet





Poppies in Teal Pools, #1 2019
Oil, acrylic, graphite, paper
65 x 80 inches



Installation view Northeast, 2019
Mixed media
35 feet x 14 feet





Installation view East, 2019
Oil, acrylic, graphite, wood, mixed media
11 feet x 11 feet



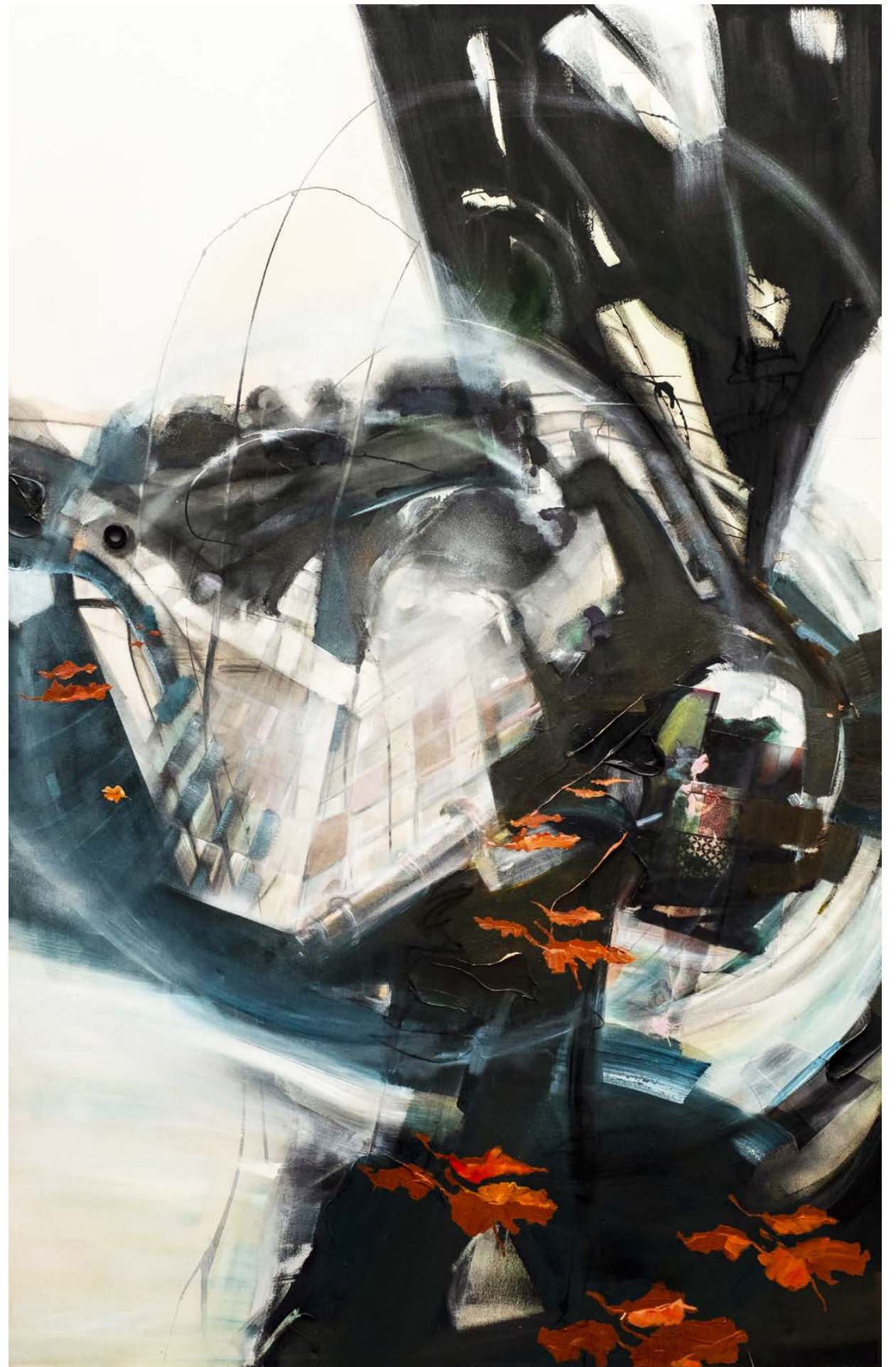


Sacred Leaves in Gold 2019
Oil, acrylic, graphite and paper collage on canvas
65 x 80 inches





The Vortex 2019
Oil, acrylic, graphite and paper collage on canvas
102 x 66" inches





Detail: Original Sacred Leaves in Plexiglass Box
 Detail: Sacred Leaves in Copper
 Oil, acrylic, graphite on canvas 2019

Installation view North, 2019
 Mixed media
 35 x 15 feet







Copper Leaf in Refuge 2019
Oil, acrylic, graphite and paper collage on
canvas
82 x 112 inches



Detail: Poppies in Teal Pools # 2 2019
Oil and plexiglass
24 x 11 inches

Poppies in Teal Pools #2 2019
Oil, graphite, acrylic on canvas with plexiglass panels
65 x 80 inches





Detail: Omnipresence or Chance 2019
Oil, graphite on paper
107 x 111 inches

Installation view South, 2019
Mixed media
35 x 15 feet





Installation view South, 2019
Mixed media
35 x 15 feet







American artist Yvette Gellis lives and works in Los Angeles, California. After attending UCLA and Art Center College of Design in Pasadena CA, she received her M.F.A. in 2008 from Claremont Graduate University. Born and raised in the Chicago area, the vast open terrain in contrast to the urban sprawl sets up structures for painting that echo or reiterate the impermanent and mutable states depicted in her work. Or put another way, her painting is not simply static, an illusion or picture of an event, but allows for participation in the event itself. While ever conscious of historical precedents, she strives to expand upon the boundaries of painting.

Ms. Gellis has exhibited nationally and internationally including: The Pasadena Museum of California Art / The Landesgalerie Museum for Modern and Contemporary Art, Linz, Austria / Villenau La Grande, St. Jacques Eglise, Dival, France / The Torrance Art Museum, California / Soulangh Cultural Park and Museum, Tainan / The East-Gate Museum, Cao Shan Dong Men Art Museum, Yangmingshan, Taipei, Taiwan / Los Angeles International Airport, LA Department of Cultural Affairs / Fellows of Contemporary Art, LA / West Art Gallery, California State University, Northridge, CA / Cerritos College Art Gallery, CA / The 18th Street Arts Center in Santa Monica and Pasadena City College, California in tandem with Elliott Hundley 2021.

Among her many reviews, most notable are; The San Francisco Chronicle, The Los Angeles Times, The Huffington Post Arts, Square Cylinder, Art in America Magazine, LA Weekly, Art LTD, Art & Cake, Artillery Magazine, Taipei Times, ART Week LA and Art Scene LA. Gellis has been awarded artist residencies with exhibitions in Taiwan, France, Austria, Arizona, and the 18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica.

LIMINAL SPACES

This dynamic exhibition *Liminal Spaces*, manifesting a deeper, hidden rhythm of life was the pulse and heartbeat that propelled Gellis to create *Omnipresence or Chance*. Here Gellis combines the flatness of abstraction with perspectival figuration in a deliberate effort to confound a sense of space. The site-specificity of her installations, whether indoors or outdoors, challenge traditional ways of viewing painting or experiencing the landscape, or an interior architectural space. Transgressing these traditional boundaries of the medium, Gellis references the effects of these historically defined spaces to provoke the unsettling sense of space with also the insertion of cut fragments, thick paint and collaged elements to rupture the notion that a frame can contain the landscape or an architectural interior experience.

Gellis creates metaphors for imbalance and imminent devastation, thrusting the viewer into an imperiled environment. What results implies a contest between humanity and nature: "There is something beyond the physical world where thoughts transmute into "things" objects, formations in literal space and time."

Liminal spaces, Light 2018
Oil, Acrylic, Graphite, Original Photo Paper
112 x 82 inches





Liminal Embrace, 2018
Oil, Acrylic, Original Photo
90 x 72 inches





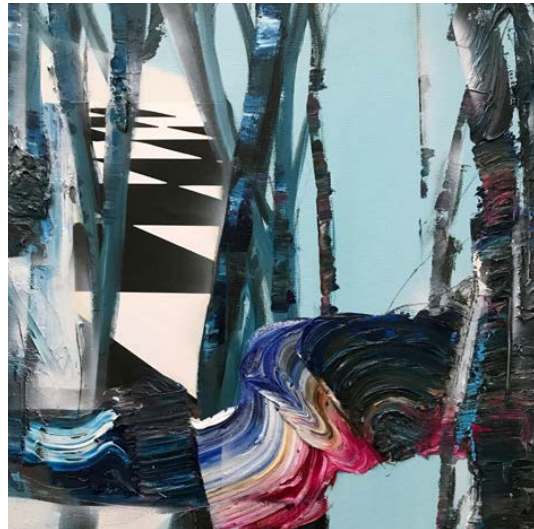
Breaking Point, Amping House #2 2018
Oil, Acrylic, Graphite, Original Photos
60 x 36 inches



Breaking Point, Amping House #1 2018
Oil, Acrylic, Graphite, Original Photos
60 x 36 inches

Liminal spaces, Dark 2018
Oil, Acrylic, graphite, Wood Wedge with Vinyl Print on Ramp
112 x 82 inches





Mini, Liminal Blue #1 2018
Oil, Acrylic, Graphite, Original Photo Paper
18 x 18 inches



Mini, Liminal Blue #2 2018
Oil, Acrylic, Graphite, Original Photo Paper
18 x 18 inches

Liminal Embrace, 2018
Oil, Acrylic, Original Photo, Polyurethane Foam
90 x 72 inches







Yvette Gellis & Molly Enholm

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