The Elegance of the Universe; A Thing of Beauty

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STEPHANIE MIROCHA

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Introduction

From the beauty of a starling murmuration swirling through the sky, to the underlying structure of the universe as described through mathematical and physical formulae, the world around us is full of wonder, possibility, and elegance. This art series invites you to enter a doorway into feeling the presence, power and joy of connection to life all around us.

- we are inextricably connected to nature just as we physically consist of the same atoms and elements described through science; and
- we are inextricably connected to each other, necessary to encouraging the flourishing of our birthright: purpose, fulfillment and happiness. This often involves a journey toward appreciation of and maybe even a re-connection to nature, to ourselves and to each other.

Themes expressed encompass specific science concepts such as the Fibonacci sequence, fractals, string theory and warped spacetime.

Artist Statement

Working in several media allows me to express themes in various formats. Each media speaks in a different way and tells a different kind of story, for what a watercolor expresses may tell the story differently than the same subject created in oil. In addition, what begins as a simple sketch on paper does not always end up exactly as first imagined, another source of perpetual interest and excitement for me as an artist.

This series includes structural innovations. For example, in the art piece, Slope; Taking the Plunge, the art in 3D falls vertically through a horizontal frame. Stranded II, Starling Murmuration has the art taking place mostly outside of the frame. Sometimes the Veil is Thin presents a double-sided triptych. Other pieces such as Times Squared and Red Herring have holes cut through their substrates.

In its creation and construction, I have come to accept, welcome (mostly!) and even look forward to the wonderfully active process required with this series in figuring out how to form, describe and bring into being each artwork seen first in my head as it moves through my heart and emerges from my hands as an object of emotion and beauty released into the world.

Thank you for visiting.

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:

Its loveliness increases; it will never

Pass into nothingness; but still will keep

A bower quiet for us, and a sleep

Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing...

John Keats (excerpt from *Endymion*)

Art Catalogue

Works are listed in alphabetical order.

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Baby Turtle

Life Journey



Oil on hardboard, 18"x24", 2022.

As we travel through this beautiful world, we sometimes may see in the big picture the journey opening before us — a search for meaning no matter where we find ourselves along the way.

Whether quietly looking within, or outwardly participating in discovering our life's purpose, this process is sacred work.

Baseball Atoms

Moon Shot



Oil on hardboard, 18"x24", 2021.

In memory of one of baseball's all-time greatest players, "Hammerin' Hank", Hank (Henry) Aaron.

The hands on, somewhat painstaking experience of painting every one of those baseball atoms each with a shadow and life of its own was deeply immersive. These "baseball atoms" are little pieces that make up a whole encompassing everything about baseball to me: peanut hawkers, shells beneath the seats, beer, the leather getting whacked off the ball from a single or double, and the soaring feeling watching a homerun (moon shot) go out of the park.

Buckeye Unfolding



Watercolor on paper, 20"x28", 2021.

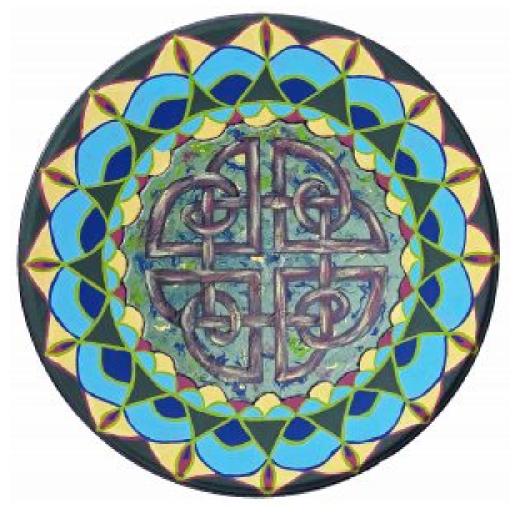
Buds open up into glorious profusion of leaf and flower in Springtime's synchronized eloquence — the inspiration for this close-up. Zoom in. Zoom out. Either way, the calculation is the same, capturing nature's unified elegance.

> To see a World in a Grain of Sand And a Heaven in a Wildflower, Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand And Eternity in an hour.

> > William Blake

Celtic Knot Mandala

Inner Strength

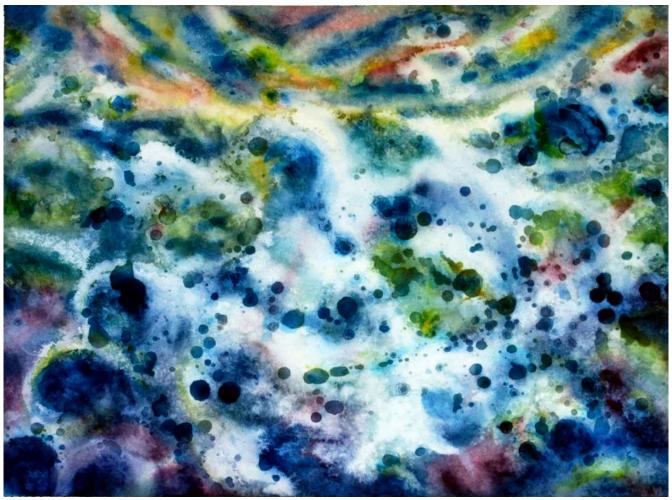


Acryl gouache on glass plate, 14" diameter, 2021.

The Celtic Shield entwines protectively with no end and no beginning. Mandala meditation draws our focus inward while connecting us outwardly in unity with nature. The shapes linger and scintillate in symmetry within the circle of life, perfectly suited for eyeball, dome of sky, and Cosmos.

Chia Seeds

Life in Motion



Watercolor on paper, 20"x28", 2021.

Extra Dimension

Looking Within



oil, acrylic with shale on hardboard, 24x36x1, 2022.

How to wrap one's head around the concept of an extra dimension beyond our familiar length, width and height! That naturally closed doorway perhaps can open through meditative vision, intuition and imagination.

Fandom

Air and Light



Mixed media: Acrylic, paper, leaves, and seashells, 12"x12"x2", 2022.

Seashells roll in and out on the surf. Objects surge and mingle, exploding upwards in joyful spurts of water, air and light.

Five Square

Ancient Symbols



Acrylic and wood on hardboard, 12"x12", 2022.

Clockwise left to right:

The Borromean Rings (strength in unity) Single spiral (ancient sun symbol) Triple spiral (moving through cycles) Yin-yang (duality co-existing in harmony)

Flying Glass Saucers



Acrylic on hardboard, 24"x24", 2022.

Grate! Mandala

Emerging and Expanding



Acrylic gouache on hardboard, 16"x16", 2022.

Released as if through a portal into the light, a doorway to endless potential opens.

Grate!

Peeling Back the Layers



Acrylic media and metal on hardboard, 24"x36"x2", 2022.

Hidden talents, passion and gifts lie beneath the surface, waiting to be explored, uncovered and brought into the light. What are they? The road to find out requires both active participation and inner contemplation.

Hidden Multi Dimensions

Rolled Up



unifying all the forces, forms and matter in the Universe: the Theory of Everything. The catch is there has to be several more dimensions than the 3 we're used to for the math to work. The idea is that vibrating strings exist in rolled up multiple dimensions always in motion. They can mesh, join, and split apart with ease wherever there is an open end as they spread their energy force of gravity by way of hitting other rolled dimensions.

Some theoretical physicists propose string theory as

The silk membranes (tube-shaped jackets) provide a barrier or partial closure, but where they're left open, the spirals easily nestle in and among each other, coiling together in spacetime.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You

can view them online here:

https://mlpp.pressbooks.pub/ eleganceoftheuniverse/?p=105#video-105-1

Habotai silk, acrylic spray paint and plastic, 14"x8"x8", 2019. Hand dyed silk using Arashi shibori technique.

Hidden Painting Reflection

Art Mirror



Glass mirror, acrylic and wood, 12"x12", 2021.

Playing with the perspective theme, from the point on an axis where one person is looking there most likely are other perspectives presenting other views, sometimes hidden and unexpectedly arriving from another locus and focus. There are other ways of perceiving as well as revealing.

Though your fingers can reach inside and feel the brushstrokes on the underside of the black frame, you're unable to view this painting of bougainvillea flowers directly, only as a reflection.

Icy Comet of Becoming

Transformation



Watercolor on hardboard, 24"x36", 2022.

As physicists slowly unravel the elegant intricacies of M-Theory, or Theory of Everything, ideas are continually erupting from the fabric of the cosmos. Creativity constantly pulls in waves of new thinking washing into consciousness. Ancient Greek, pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus said, "Change is the only constant in life", pointing out that you can't step into the same river twice.

Indeed, change does seem to be the only constant as we grow, and evolve and become.

Light and Waves

Circle Rainbow



Acrylic media on aluminum composite, 40" x 30".

Photons act as both wave and particle. Carrying electromagnetic force, particles of light energy are always in motion moving at the speed of light and leaving an invisible field behind them interacting with other particles, transferring energy or being created. Pretty good for something with no mass! As white light passes through prisms (such as raindrops) it splits to form colors depending on their wavelengths.

Particle physicists have proposed a model where particles moving through quantum gravitational fields, (i.e., quantum spacetime) sense different versions of of the underlying structural continuum composed of length, width, height and time. Analogous to the rainbow colors, they show how particles that differ in terms of their energy interact with quantum spacetime differently as well. This means that the structure of spacetime sensed by individual particles differs dependent on the particle's energy.

Indeed, everything is connected through energy.

Lightway and Lamppost Sentinel



Lightway: watercolor on aquaboard, 24×30 inches, 2018. Lamppost Sentinel: found materials, 8x1x1 feet, 2018.

Line Spring Delicate

Rain Shower



Acryic on hardboard, 30×24, 2018

Love Ties

Connections



Acrylic media on hardboard, 18"x18", 2022.

Our connections to each other scintillate on various levels (time, experiences, random chance) in wider scopes than we may realize. They are definitely complicated. Some lines weave like roots through time creating intricate paths, memories and attachments. Others remain or become detached.

One thing is clear, as we move through the cycles and random existence of everyday life we are held within benign, underlying connective forces of gravity warped spacetime and an all-encompassing love – and there is nothing we can do about it!

May I Light My Taper From Your Flame?



Watercolor on hardboard, 14" x 15", 2022.

Möbius Mobile

Endless Path



Acrylic spray on vinyl and foam, 3" x 14" x 9", 2019.

A Möbius strip or loop, in mathematics, is a surface with only one side. Picture yourself upon this structure floating in space with low gravity allowing you to walk upside down. As you hike, you leave footprints on what seems at first to be both sides of a two-sided surface, but you are actually walking the entire strip without ever crossing over an edge. You're on an endless 3D path which has only one side, one contiguous surface.

Sometimes you might get this "Mobius strip feeling" when life seems to be running you in circles. Or it may connect you to the calming realization of the continuity of life's annual journey through a year of nature's seasons and cycles. As you go along, feel the breeze against your skin, appreciate the changing colors, take note of the various sounds hovering about you, and observe the obstacles you will encounter and how each recedes through time.

Paths through Barriers

The Journey is a Process



Acrylic on hardboard, vinyl and foam, 24" x 30" x 2", 2019.

Planetscape

Home



Acrylic on gessoboard, 16"x20", 2022.

Red Herring

Which Path?



Hand-dyed silk chiffon, plastic tubes, 22"x30"x2", 2022.

Sometimes the journey reaches a dead end, a failed attempt, an unfortunate outcome, and may even lead to

The tube tunnels on the back of this piece show passages and options life presents (and to which the holes in the front of this artwork correspond). Life doesn't let us peek, though. Instead we must forge ahead.



Back of Red Herring; Which Path?

misfortune. Accepting these obstacles and opening oneself to the learning that comes along the way of taking a side passage, the situation's temporariness can soon become apparent. Your choice may have led nowhere, but it also offered opportunities. Turn around and begin again.

You are not alone.

You are loved.

Red Pine Candle

of Love Alight



Watercolor on paper, 13" x 20", 2021.

In botany, a newly forming red pine branchlet is called a candle. A red pine in springtime is covered with male and female candles, something that might really fan the flames of the imagination!

Female strobili (cones) have flowers on the tips of their candles as in this painting which open when ready, waiting to catch the wind-borne pollen from male strobili formed at the base of that year's candles.

How do the male strobili know when to release? Most likely, hormones are felt surging within the tree and also exuded into the air, sensed by all interested parties. Spicy! Wonderful! Joyous! So, the males release their pollen into the wind to disperse onto all the waiting female strobili in the area in an explosion of pollen fireworks, love, and red pine heaven on earth.

It is through this unseen, underlying and everpresent source of attraction that all energy seems to flow, from the smallest molecular particles reaching out to each other, affecting all earth's forms big and small and to which we, in our turn, are connected. Everything is energy!

Samara Arrival

Red Maple Spring Sighting



Watercolor on paper, 14"x10", 2020.

In botany, the one or two-winged seeds of tree species such as elm, ash and maple are called samaras (also known as keys). The two-winged maple fruits spin to the ground like helicopter rotors, a fascinating sight to see as they seek out new ground, fun to gather up again and toss into the wind for another round.

Seaweed



Acrylic on hardboard, 24"x30", 2018.

Slope

Sine Cosine Tangent



Sheet metal, cotton canvas, acrylic and foam. 36"x12"x12", 2019.

Perfectly balanced, this piece rocks gently when touched.

We move through a world of sine, cosine and tangent formulae describing our every motion. Hurtling through space, we live our lives on a tipping point, our coordinates continually changing while connected to every other coordinate in a gloriously alive hive of the Universe.

Depending on our attitude, approach and timing towards events, we create balance, even with outside factors beyond our control. Fill in the equation with an infinite number of possible factors – empty nest, embarking on a new business, a new baby, quitting a job, starting or ending a relationship, applying to college or grad school. At some point we find ourselves at the top of the ski slope requiring a leap of faith in ourselves. The first step is to start down the track — don't look back — taking the plunge to find out.

To let go and then GO!

Sometimes the Veil is Thin

Parallel Universe







Northern Lights II, oil, 12"x12".

on hardboard, hand-dyed silk chiffon, 18"x12"x2", 2022.

Triptych hinges two oil paintings back to back with a silk painting draped in between. Flip the frame between two separate worlds, galaxies — dual orientations.



Hand dyed silk chiffon, 2022.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

https://mlpp.pressbooks.pub/eleganceoftheuniverse/?p=144#oembed-1

Spring Shadows Diptych

Time Motion



Acrylic, watercolor, metal spring, wood, rice paper and birch bark. 27"x12"x2", 2019.

The birch bark on the spring was bent at different angles to trace shadows over time for each panel. The painting on the left depicts shadows in a 360-degree rotation with the object held horizontally. The painting on the right depicts the same, except with the object bent on an angle.

The detritus of time passing is an endlessly changing feast composed of experience, shadows, and play of light that is always in the process of becoming and evolving. The moment you partake is an entrance to the timeless now, a magnificent buffet laid out with singular and loving care that is always happening. Time leaves beautiful detritus evidence, for example, cake crumbs on a plate after the real feast occurred. The moment of enjoyably tasting and swallowing the actual dessert, however, is the only true reality.

Time does not exist as a fixed entity or constant, but rather has come to be understood as combined with space, relative to the motion of gravitational objects within that spacetime. The human brain must need manufacture time for use as an abstract reference point for organizing, cataloguing, labeling, logging in and sorting out.

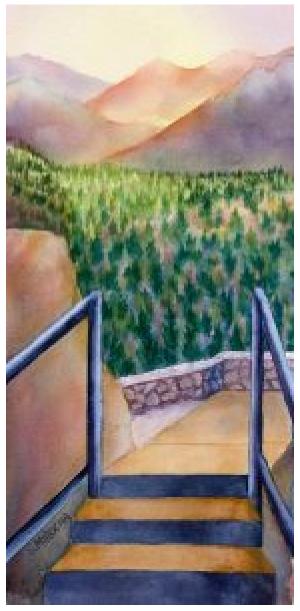
Square Peg

Fitting the Pieces



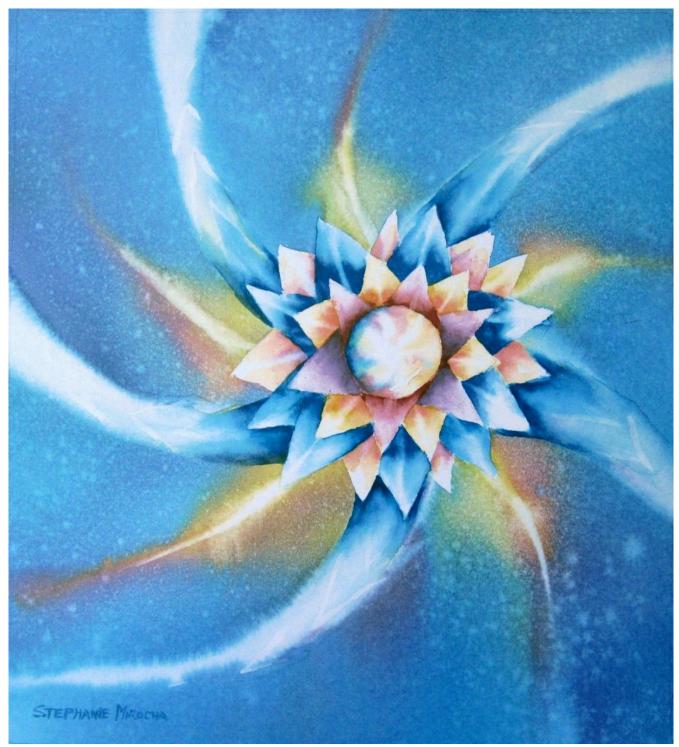
Acrylic and wood on hardboard, 12" x 12", 2022.

Stairway To...



Watercolor on paper, 6"x14", 2004.

StarFlake



Watercolor, 9"x10", 2002.

Star Helix

Fibonacci Sequence

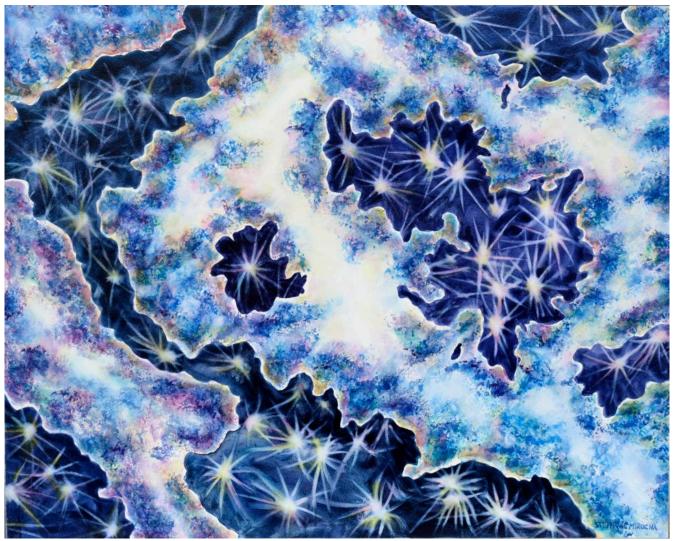


Acrylic on hardboard, 40"x30", 2019.

Dimensions exist beyond our limited 3D perspective, but we can use math to abstractly approach nature's alignment to cosmic forces. Perhaps we exist in tube-like structures we can only perceive as flat. In this painting, we travel upward to a portal in spirals following the Fibonacci Sequence — a math formula describing a pattern seen ubiquitously in nature such as in a pine cone or the pattern of seeds forming the center of a sunflower.

Star Moss Ice

Fractals



Watercolor on hardboard, 16"x20", 2022.

Fractals present as repeating patterns whether in large scale or small, as in the limbs of a tree exhibiting the same line, curve and form as its twigs. Rivers, trees, a snowflake, ice structures, seashells, mountain ranges and so on all dynamically grow in their same repeating shapes whether minuscule or massive.

Stranded I

String Theory

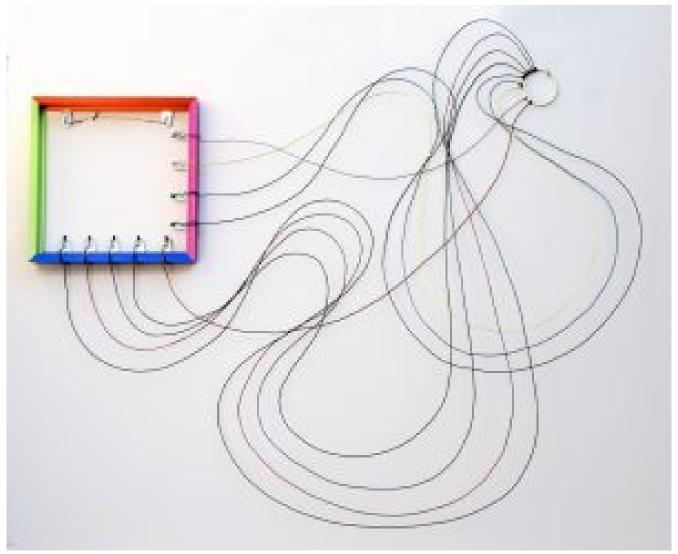


Acrylic on hardboard, 24"x36", 2022.

One dimensional strings shimmer and interact creating fields of their own, their perpetual wiggling motion a reflection of the energy underlying everything.

Stranded II

Starling Murmuration



Copper wire and metal, 30"x36"x1.5", 2021.

Each bird maintains their own path in a cross-and-swerve line, yet always parallel to their neighbor, creating one, unified, ever-changing shape, rising and falling in arcs and swirls. Seen from Earth the murmuration is a whole object, bigger than the sum of its parts in its beauty, but from within there exists only the scintillating shimmer of bodies conjoined in group symmetry moving through the late afternoon sky. Dusk finds each starling descending once more to alight upon a waiting perch, body warmed and ready to roost for the night.

Stranded III

Plato's Theory of Forms



Acrylic, wood and copper wire on hardboard, 24"x36", 2022.

Reality is merely an illusion, although a very persistent one. Albert Einstein

We perceive the world as manifest in 3D but this is not what reality actually looks like. In a deeper, quantum sense, our perceptions are as mere shadows compared to the underlying structure scintillating beneath everything which somehow shapes reality. Plato's Theory of Forms (that reality exists in a separate abstract Realm unperceivable by us) provides an analogy to something that has no physicality in the world except as an interaction of connected entities. Pure zero mass energy, consciousness, life, love, connectedness are other terms we could use instead of Forms. Some scientists propose that there is no physical reality separate from our sensory experiences of the world, but that the creative act of participation ends up actually shaping it. No matter what term we use, the Form is always available to us through insight, intuition, and a whole immersion into the present moment.

We create more than reflect the actual nature of things just by existing and perceiving.

Times Squared

Snow and Melting Ice



Acrylic on hardboard, 20"x20", 2021.

Ever-changing squares form, push and pull against each other as they sink and rise in response to the weather. Converging and emerging through time, they shift in the snow, revealing the ice beneath, eventually to melt and disappear.

Transmutation

Personal Transformation



Watercolor on 300# cold pressed paper, 13"x20", 2006.

From negative to positive light, emotional energy moves through colors, freeing up blockages and processing into personal transformation.

Tube Strands

Rolled Up Dimensions



Acrylic on hardboard, 18"x24", 2022.

Contrasting *Star Helix*'s perspective from within a rolled up dimension, *Tube Strands* plays with magnitude as if a specimen of the Cosmos were mounted onto a glass slide, and we are looking at it through a microscope.

Wavelength

Spacetime



Acrylic on hardboard, 24"x24", 2019.

The symmetry of the universe reveals itself in lines of least resistance, forming collective patterns connecting atom, heart, rock, mind, body, and all of nature following unseen guiding forces through spacetime. The small reflects the large exemplifying the whole. Geologic layers, sound and water waves, rock formations, brain patterns — everything changes endlessly from renewal to erosion and back again. Each wavelength scintillates with those around it, leading into the next moment and the next, and so on in beauty.

Acknowledgements



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CONTACT

To learn more about the art, book this art series, purchase artwork or for any other correspondence, please visit the website and contact page of Otter Creations, <u>Stephanie Mirocha Art.</u>

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Stephanie Mirocha Art

Songbird Studio

Aitkin, MN

PRICE LIST (prices subject to change_

Title	Size	Medium	Year	\$Price
Baby Turtle; Life Journey	18×24	oil on hardboard	2022	1450
Baseball Atoms; Moon Shot	18×24	oil on hardboard	2021	1450
Buckeye Unfolding	20×28	watercolor on paper	2020	1450
Celtic Knot Mandala; Inner Strength	14"diam.	acryl gouache on glass	2020	250
Chia Seeds; Life in Motion	20×28	watercolor on paper	2020	1450
Extra Dimension: Looking Within	36x24x1.5	acrylic and oil on hardboard	2022	2500
Fandom; Air and Light	12x12x2	acrylic, paper, shells, leaves	2022	375
Five Square; Ancient Symbols	12×12	acrylic on hardboard	2022	375
Flying Glass Saucers	18×24	acrylic on hardboard	2022	975
Grate! Mandala; Emerging and Expanding	16×16	acryl gouache on glass	2022	375
Grate! Peeling Back the Layers	24x36x2	acrylic, metal on hardboard	2022	3500
Hidden Multi Dimensions, Rolled Up	14x8x8	Habotai silk, acrylic, plastic	2019	950
Hidden Painting Reflection; Art Mirror	12×12	acrylic on wood, glass mirror	2021	275
Icy Comet of Becoming; Transformation	24×36	watercolor on hardboard	2022	1500
Lamppost Sentinel (shown with Lightway)	8'x1'1'	found materials	2018	NFS
Light and Waves; Circle Rainbow	40×30	acrylic aluminum panel	2022	2400
Lightway (shown with Lamppost Sentinel)	24×30	watercolor on hardboard	2018	NFS
Line Spring Delicate; Rain Shower	30×24	acrylic on hardboard	2018	1500
Love Ties; Connections	16×16	acrylic on hardboard	2022	1200
May I Light My Taper from Your Flame?	14×15	watercolor on hardboard	2022	750
Möbius Mobile; Endless Path	3x14x9	acrylic, vinyl and foam	2019	375
Paths Through Barriers	24×30	acrylic media on hardboard	2019	1250
Planetscape; Home	16×20	acrylic on hardboard	2022	775
Red Herring; Which Path?	30x22x2	hand dyed silk on hardboard	2022	3500
Red Pine Candle of Love Alight	20×13	watercolor on paper	2021	1250
Samara Arrival; Red Maple Spring Sighting	14×10	watercolor on paper	2020	950
Seaweed	24×30	acrylic media on hardboard	2018	1250
Slope; Sine Cosine Tangent	3'x1'x1'	sheet metal, acrylic, canvas	2019	1500
Sometimes the Veil is Thin; Parallel Universe	18x2x2	oil on hardboard, silk chiffon	2022	2250

Spring Shadows; Time Motion Diptych	12x27x2	acrylic, rice paper, birch bark	2019	1575
Square Peg; Fitting the Pieces	12×12	acrylic on hardboard	2022	350
Stairway To	14×6	watercolor on paper	2004	250
StarFlake	9×10	watercolor on paper	2002	250
Star Helix; Fibonacci Sequence	40×30	acrylic on hardboard	2018	2250
Star Moss Ice; Fractals	16×20	watercolor on hardboard	2022	900
Stranded I; String Theory	24×36	acrylic on hardboard	2022	3250
Stranded II; Starling Murmuration	30×36	copper wire and metal	2021	3500
Stranded III; Plato's Forms	24×36	acrylic, copper wire, wood	2022	3500
Times Squared; Snow and Melting Ice	20×20	acrylic on hardboard	2021	1750
Transmutation; Personal Transformation	13×20	watercolor on paper	2006	NFS
Tube Strands; Rolled up Dimensions	18×24	acrylic on hardboard	2022	1250
Wavelength; Spacetime	24×24	acrylic on hardboard	2019	1500

Art Postcard

