

A Conversation with Danielle Eubank, "Natural Patterns", LAUNCH Gallery, by James Scarborough

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Water becomes witness in Danielle Eubank's ambitious practice. Her twenty-year odyssey documenting every ocean through paint transforms environmental activism into visceral art-making. Alongside Zo Frampton's meditative abstractions and Katie Elizabeth Stubblefield's forensic coastline studies, "Natural Patterns" at LAUNCH Gallery presents three distinct approaches to documenting our planet's precarious beauty.

Eubank's "Mara'a V" demonstrates the documentary precision that has driven her to sail from the Arctic to polluted urban waterways like the Gowanus Canal. Her stated methodology of finding "the tipping point between the conceptual and visible" positions the paintings as both aesthetic objects and climate records. The Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant recipient has systematically painted over 200 bodies of water, creating what she describes as "patterns within patterns" that translate water's movement into painterly rhythm.

Frampton's monochromatic landscapes and Stubblefield's plexiglass drawings on discarded materials extend this documentary impulse. Where Eubank pursues water's global reach, her co-exhibitors focus on intimate encounters with ecological disruption. Together, they demonstrate how contemporary artists navigate the dual responsibility of bearing witness and creating meaning. Their collective vision suggests that art's power lies not in offering solutions but in making the invisible consequences of environmental change undeniably present.

Below follows an email conversation with Danielle Eubank.

JS: Your "One Artist Five Oceans" project spans two decades of sailing and painting. How has your relationship with water as subject matter evolved from those early expeditions to your current work documenting polluted sites like the Gowanus Canal?

DE: I have always seen myself as an artist who is interpreting the world, both internal and external. In the early days, I felt a responsibility to create lifelike portraits of water. Now that I have painted all the oceans as well as hundreds of other bodies, I feel like I am painting from within the painting, from within the water. I am no longer a spectator, who is documenting what I see.

JS: You describe seeking "the tipping point between the conceptual and visible." Can you elaborate on how this aesthetic philosophy guides your technical approach when translating water's ephemeral qualities onto canvas?

DE: "The tipping point between the conceptual and visible" is a phrase that my friend Dr. Nikki Santilli came up with when talking about my work. What I mean by that is the valley between abstraction and realism. Sometimes it's a tipping point in so far as it can lean into abstraction or fall into figurative art. Many times when talking about art, the question is asked, "are you an abstract or a realist artist?" I am fascinated by the area in between.

JS: Your work connects art, culture and science for climate awareness. How do you balance the demands of environmental advocacy with the autonomous requirements of painting as an artistic medium?

DE: I am so glad you asked that question. The best art makes us think and feel. This goes for all art: dance, film, music, literature, fine art. Art should help us see something in a new way, get us to really think about something, realize something new. If the work is emotive, we will remember it longer. If it makes us feel passion, really feel something, then it has touched our core. Great art does this.

In my work I talk about something I am dedicated to, helping the environment, and I hope that my work sometimes helps others feel excited about the natural world. I make the best art I can in the hope that it will catalyze passion in others.

JS: The exhibition statement mentions creating "patterns within patterns, representing vertical stacks of rhythms." How do you see this formal approach relating to water's natural behavior and movement?

DE: Part of my fascination with water originates from when I first began observing it and was perplexed by its amorphous forms. They seemed unknowable which drove me to understand them.

I love patterns within patterns. I love looking at something up close and having a different sensation as when I look at it from a distance. Water reflections are comprised of elliptical contours. When water reflects multiple parts of the sky at the same time, resonates the sand or stones underneath, demonstrates surface tension, light, or reflects an object made by people, it bestows an opportunity to create organic structures. As I paint shapes on the canvas, I bend and mold them, adding new reniform and ovoid lines.

JS: Having painted both pristine Arctic waters and heavily polluted superfund sites, how does the physical environment influence your color palette and mark-making decisions?

DE: I wish Arctic waters were more pristine than they are. It seems to me that my work on polluted waters is darker, angrier. I push into the canvas more and leave chads of paint on the side of the brush strokes. Often I use pencil and charcoal in my oil paintings. The polluted water series' feel belligerent compared to some of the Arctic series'. This isn't entirely on purpose. Sometimes I don't notice the distinctions in different bodies of work for years.

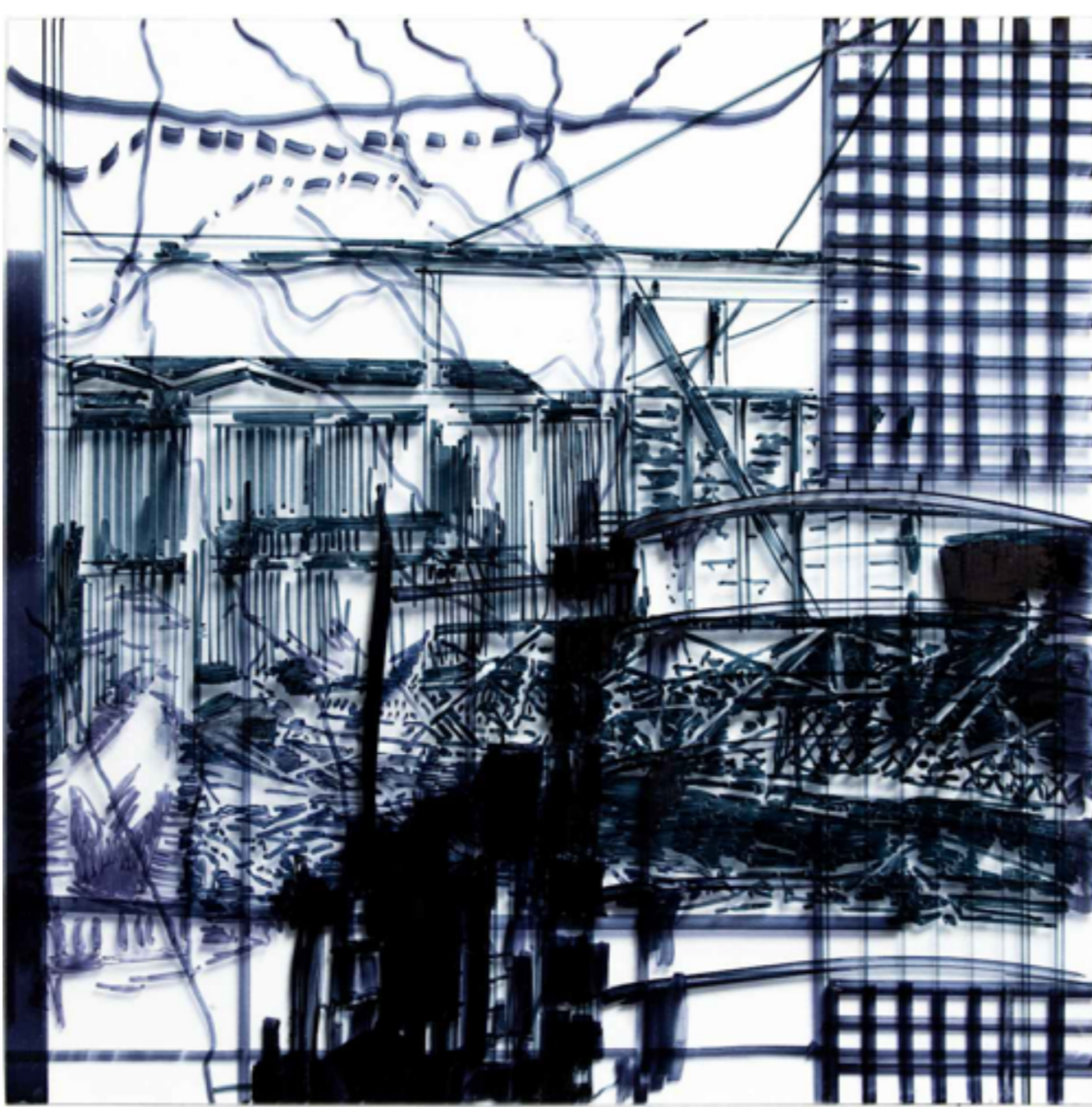
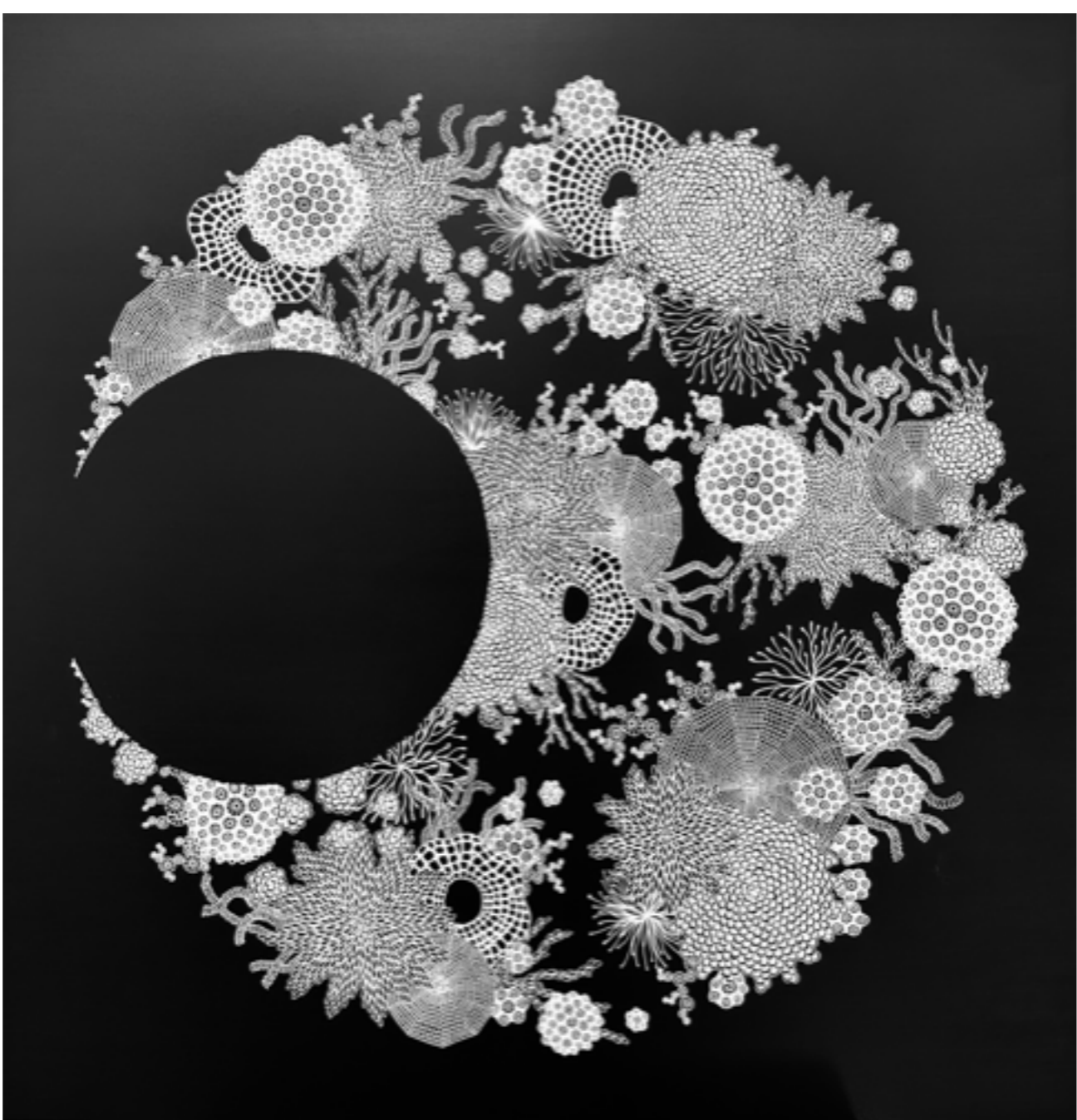
JS: Your expeditions have taken you from circumnavigating Africa to traveling from Indonesia to Ghana. How do these culturally diverse encounters with water inform your understanding of its unifying properties?

DE: The more I travel, the more I see, the more people I speak with, the smaller the world seems. There is only one ocean that connects all continents, and all life depends on it. It unifies all of us.

JS: Looking at "Natural Patterns" alongside Zo Frampton and Katie Elizabeth Stubblefield's work, how do you see your water paintings dialoguing with their approaches to documenting environmental change?

DE: I love the dialogue between our work. Zo Frampton's organic geometry is spellbinding. I am engrossed by her high-contrast treatment and detailed shapes. While my work in this show examines nature, Zo's work is more abstract, yet still organic. It feels like nature. Katie Elizabeth Stubblefield's stunning Sharpie marker drawings on plexiglass demonstrate urban decay and destruction. They feel industrial, yet also geometrical. The collection as a whole gives the viewer a considered, well-rounded view of the human condition in this time.

The exhibition runs through August 30, 2025. Gallery hours are Thursday & Friday: 12pm - 4pm, Saturday: 12pm - 5pm. Admission is free. LAUNCH Gallery is located at 170 South La Brea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90036. For more information, click [here](#).



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