

Olivia Petrides, mid-career, at the Quincy Art Center

Contemporary art continues to break down traditional barriers shedding any discernible image. At the same time modern science battles to laud the earth's image in order to capture the imagination and build a healthy respect for nature. Artist Olivia Petrides, at mid-career, softens this dichotomy and bridges these worlds. Her early work, small exquisite paintings of plants and trees, grounds her in the respected tradition of scientific illustration, while her recent drawings represent their time, sinking the viewer into an undefined experience.

Her process, rather than image, takes center stage in the new work. Her line performs, rather than describes. She blends the growth of the old traditions with the exploratory nature of a contemporary painter and gives a new way to look at and observe the world around us. Showing Olivia's development gives the viewer a better understanding of art as a living thing that grows in response to its habitat. The old becomes merely a root which sustains the new.

It has been an honor for me to share the Field Museum experience with Olivia over the past twenty years.

Peggy Macnamara

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE
FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, CHICAGO
ADJUNCT ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT
SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO