

The Boreal – Small wonders

An image can relay many things, even from the perspective of a small size in comparison to a larger counterpart. It is my hope these studies that developed from using a variety of original hand printed processes in my role as an artist, printmaker, painter and photographer will encourage the viewer to get closer and perhaps develop an intimate relationship with each work.

The idea of “small” relates also to the size of the actual subjects being studied, especially delicate tiny plant, mammal, insect, amphibian and bird species native to this region that co-exist with other larger forms of life found within the boreal forest.

Natural environments have been the main component of much of my past art work. With this series I have continued explorations on this theme but with greater emphasis on personal close up observations of select components of the boreal forest environment. Species survival is also a subtext in some cases.

The forests of Northwestern Ontario harbour a wide variety of plant, animal and insect life that are unique to this region of Canada. Many rare species have been able to adapt and thrive here due to factors created by past geographic disturbances and unique climatic factors due to the influence of location between the Canadian North and the Great Lakes. Proximity to Lake Superior has also been a significant factor as it keeps the climate somewhat cooler in areas close to the lake. Unfortunately conditions favourable for many of these species are being altered as a result of climate change and the presence of man through resource industries such as forestry and mining. These factors are having a negative influence on the survival of many species.

Predictions made by NASA scientists in the fall of 2011 indicate that the Great lakes basin area of North America will be one of the most affected regions during the next few decades in the scope of climate change. There will be noticeable habitat changes directly related to conditions that were once favourable for species to thrive in. We may indeed see the disappearance of many of these unique components of nature. I feel that documentation of particular components of the natural environment found in this region is an important issue worth pursuing.

My role as an artist in this case is to present you the viewer with studies that examine established relationships between environments and habitation of species as they exist. Perhaps these might also raise awareness of the influence our own species has on other forms of life found on the planet.

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