



Art Daybook: The sensation of cool woods

By Molly Glentzer | August 23, 2017 | Updated: August 23, 2017 1:14pm



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Photo: Courtesy Of The Artist, McClain Gallery



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"Shield" is among works on view through in "Mara Held: Errant Traveler" at McClain Gallery.

The piece: "Prowling the Impassable"

The artist: Mara Held

Where: McClain Gallery, 2242 Richmond, through Aug. 26

Why: The magic of the eclipse lasted just a few minutes. Mara Held's paintings could keep one's eyes busy a good bit longer, and maybe provide the sensation of walking in cool, northern woods.

Her studio is on an old dairy farm in the Hudson Valley that's been in her family since the 1960s. Her organic imagery captures the waterfalls and rivers of the Catskills, the veined wings of indigenous insects and fungi from the forest floor, with an occasional detour to the pelagic forms of coral reefs.

Viewers might think she's been smoking some of those mushrooms, looking at the magical mystery-tour-like dips and swirls of her compositions, which also appear to be inspired by Japanese prints and woodblocks.



Photo: Courtesy Of The Artist, McClain Gallery



"Prompt" is among works on view through in "Mara Held: Errant Traveler" at McClain Gallery.

In fact, her medium requires a bit of help from chickens. Held paints with egg tempera, a painstaking technique handed down from Renaissance painters that demands extreme precision.

Color me happy.

Bookmark Gray Matters. It can keep one's eyes busy.