

An Artist with an Eye for the Environment

An artist's lens heightens environmental awareness



It is without a doubt that artist Velia De Luliis works from a standpoint of preservation. Her gouache and oil paintings depict endangered plants on simple black backgrounds giving these threatened species new life on canvases. As seen in her past solo show Resilience at Ochi Gallery in Sun Valley Idaho, De Luliis hopes to use her art as a call to action, having

the work perform as a time capsule and increase the public's environmental awareness. "By fusing art and nature conservation, my hope is to give threatened species a platform, a call to action if you will," the artist explains. "Resilience highlights both endangered and thriving flora as a way to shine appreciation on the sheer resilience of nature despite challenges that are ever present."

Since the life forms in her work are still surviving in their fragmented environments and landscapes, the paintings act as a celebration and a resource. It is this critical need to draw attention to the consequences humans have on the natural world that makes De Luliis' art so impactful. "History shows us that humanity can be destructive; at times unpredictable, disloyal, selfish and cruel. I continue to find peace and hope within the natural world where instinct is unwavering and questions are answered."

Having spent much of her life outdoors Velia explains, "It is where I feel the most at home and in many ways the environment and natural sciences always made sense to me. There's logic, order and reason when studying these subjects; even the destructive elements that come with evolution and survival of the fittest. In the continuous struggle to understand our current political and global events, I use nature in my paintings as a vehicle to dissect and process what is happening today."

Nature as a subject matter in her work and the need to highlight endangered species stemmed from her college thesis work where she was required to create ten pieces with a cohesive theme. In an effort to educate herself, De Luliis chose to research elements in nature that are often used for western medicine i.e. the poppy flower for pain medication. Further investigation revealed that many of the species that help in healing were becoming endangered and/or going extinct, the primary cause being human destruction. "I found this deeply disturbing and darkly ironic and thus began my mission to use art as a vehicle to highlight the importance of environmental preservation," she explains.

Having a tendency towards the intricate within her work, De Luliis finds pleasure in creating and painting micro details but also enjoys the more loose drawings which happen directly on the canvas to discover, define composition and proportion. "This method of creating a charcoal drawing to find the form and then working on

top with tight line work and complex detail is a reflection of my character," De Luliis explains. "Struggling with dyslexia through my early years and to a lesser degree today, I was presented with an extra level of challenge which necessitated a rigorous work ethic. This combined with my natural stubbornness is a perfect reflection of how I create. I have to earn the right to hang my pieces."

After graduation from the high school in 2009, she enrolled at California College of the Arts (CCA), beginning studies in furniture design. Ultimately, she focused on art and design and graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Illustration.

De Luliis was lucky enough to have mentors in both schools (SFWS and CCA) who were invaluable in her years as a student. Reflecting on her time at Waldorf, she notes that the school's focus on a collaborative work and approach to problem solving aided her greatly in her professional career. "Working for myself adds an extra level of challenge, including the diplomacy needed when dealing with clients, both creative and otherwise. Having that early exposure to group dynamics provided me insight and tools to navigate these challenges."



[Learn more about Velia De Luliis' exhibitions, collaborations and projects on her website, \[veliadeiuliis.com\]\(http://veliadeiuliis.com\) and her day-to-day life \[@veliadeiuliis\]\(https://www.instagram.com/veliadeiuliis\).](#)