



ANTONIA MUNROE



The Bird of Paradise, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 18 x 15"
cover: *The Green Honey Creeper*, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 18 x 15"

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Rare Bird Paintings

September 20 - October 28, 2017

VICTORIA MUNROE
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My bird paintings are inspired by 16th and 17th century artists who began to record the natural world through careful scientific observation. Working on several continents unbeknownst to each other, the artists were often employed as court painters whose patrons were eager to further the emerging field of natural history.

Since 2014, I have traveled to Rajasthan, India to study the techniques of Indian miniature painting. In keeping with the traditional process I use hand ground pure pigment dispersions which I mix with a binder to create gouache, the original medium used by the 17th century Mughal painter Ustad Mansur and his contemporaries. While paintings of this period were typically on paper, I paint on panels prepared with gesso and pigmented clay with delicate brushes made from the underside hairs of a squirrel's tail. The squirrels are trapped, plucked and then released. Nevertheless, it is considered illegal in India to sell the brushes.

The process of tracing the bird onto the panel is in strict adherence to tradition. For centuries Indian painters copied earlier paintings by renowned artists, regardless of subject matter. Using vellum, pigment powder and a stylus, the contours of the birds are transposed to the prepared panels. The painting then begins, at first loosely filling in the bird body with white pigment and then overlaying many layers of color with single strokes of minuscule brushwork. During the process I will continually refer to the original master painting for definition and exquisite detail. However, in the end I might stray from the delicate recording of natural history and embellish the bird with imaginary features and different colors.

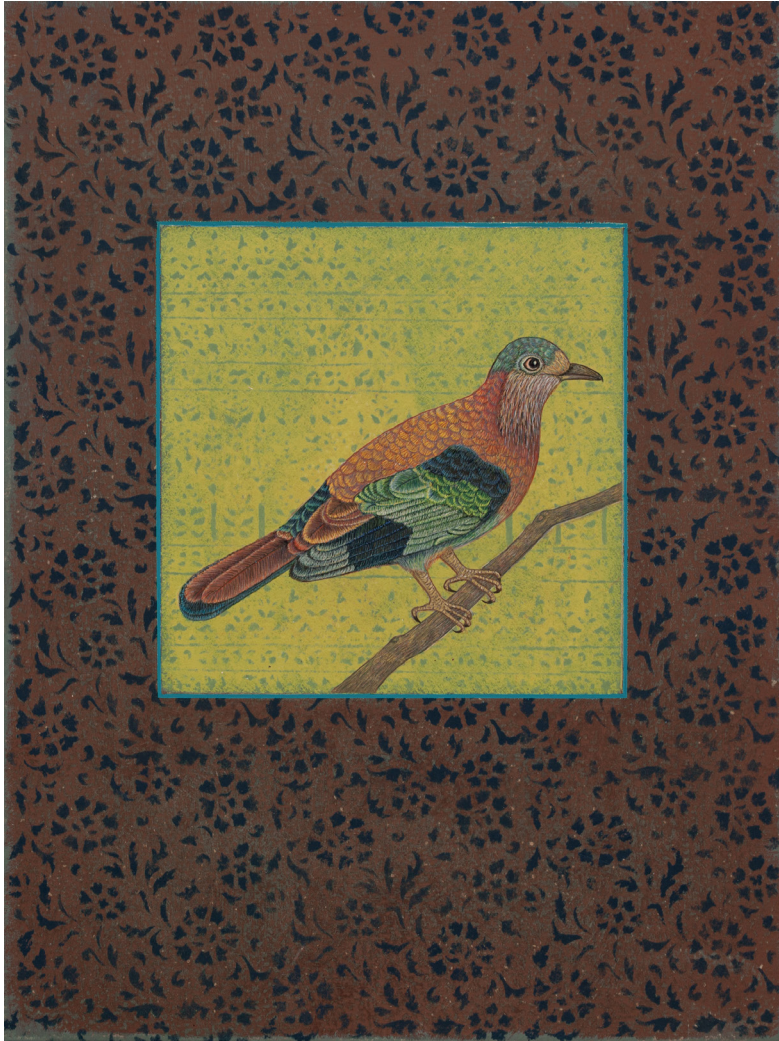
Indian miniature paintings are often surrounded by elaborately painted borders. Unable to resist an enduring fascination with block-printed textiles, I fill not only the borders but the backgrounds of the paintings with my original stenciled designs. Thus do the avian subjects appear as brilliant, enchanted creatures often perched on a flowering branch or vine amidst a forest of subtle patterns.

In my ongoing search for new bird imagery I have collected a precious library of mostly out-of-print Indian painting and textile books. Adventurous forays into obscure museums and bookstores in Jaipur, Ahmedabad and Delhi have provided a treasure trove of beautiful bird subjects as well as pattern designs. The Turban Museum, housed in the stables of a rambling palace in the pink city of Jaipur yielded a cache of second-hand books filled with unusual bird paintings. The books were displayed in a dark musty corner amongst countless turbaned mannequins. Another outing led to a tiny shop on a busy street in Delhi where every book, precariously stacked floor to ceiling, was jacketed in cellophane to keep the dust from encroaching. As I was taking leave my eye caught a title, "Birds of India," lying forgotten on a shelf of old magazines. A pocket-sized tattered little book, the kind one takes on a birdwatching tour, it has provided much inspiration for this collection of *Rare Bird Paintings*.

Antonia Munroe
Camden, Maine 2017



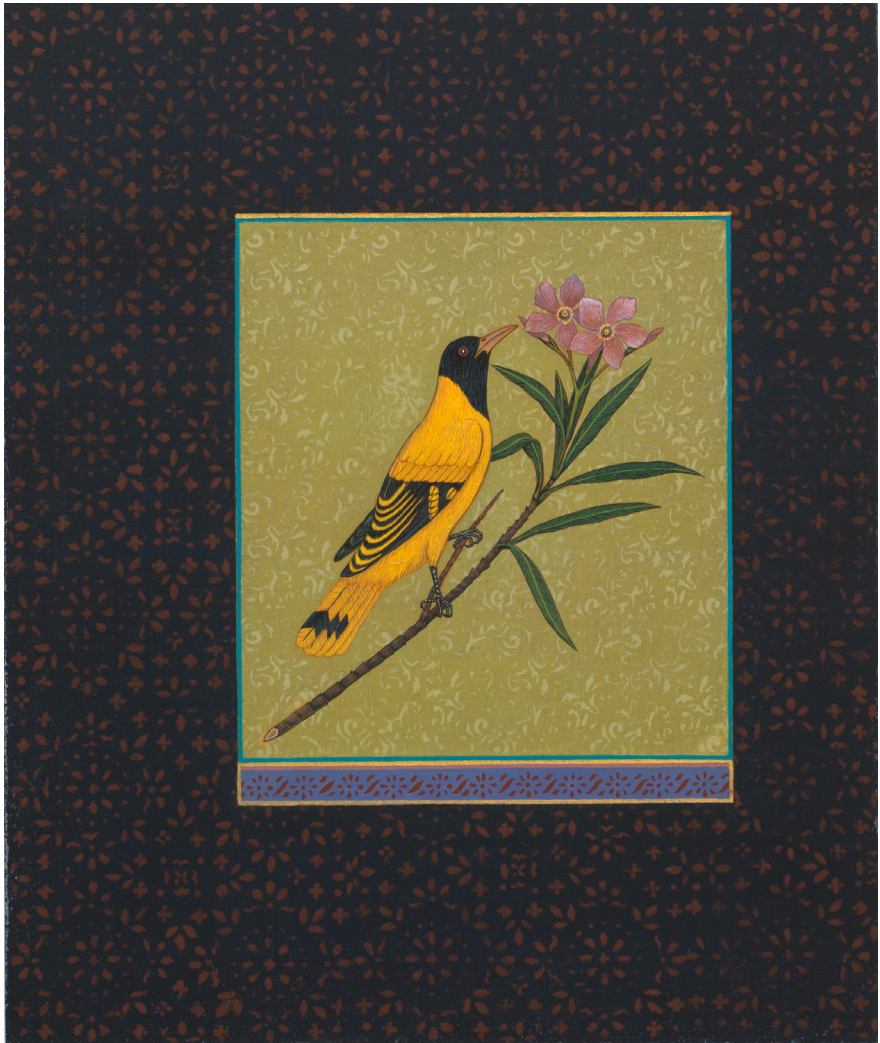
The Green Barbet, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 18 x 15"



The Indian Roller, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 16 × 12"



A Green Lovebird, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 16 x 12"



A Black-hooded Oriole, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 18 x 15"



A Crimson-throated Barbet, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 18 x 15"



A Crowned Pigeon, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 18 x 15"



Two Fairy Bluebirds, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 16 x 12"



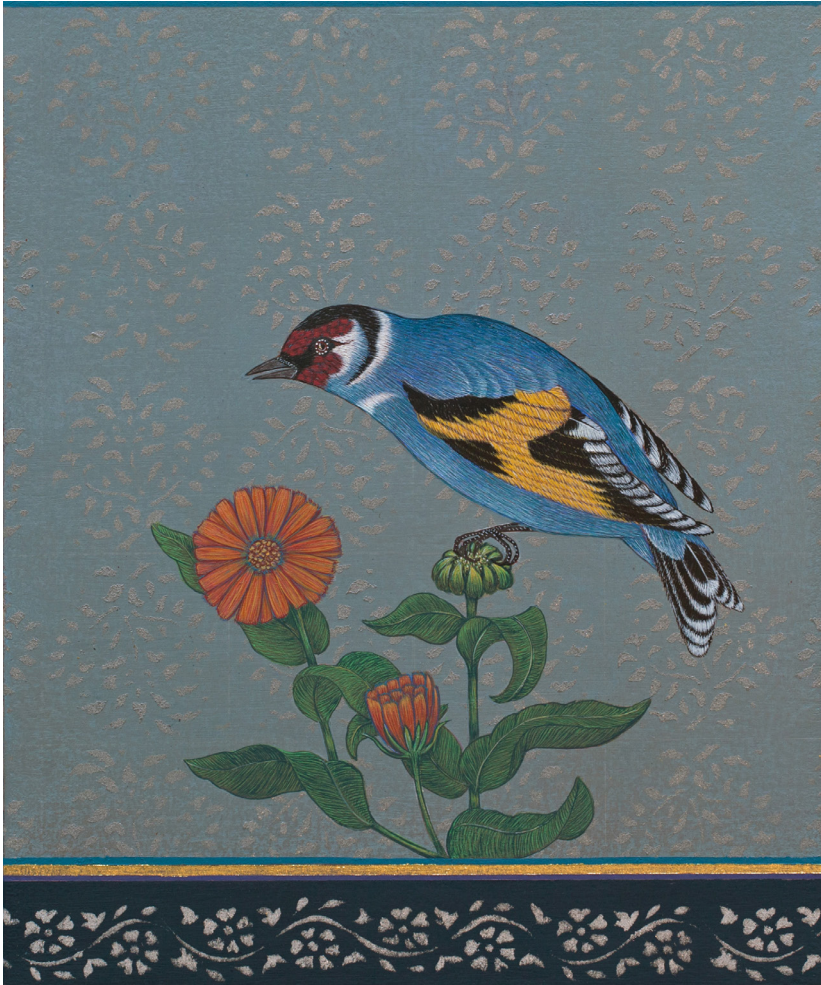
The Cock of the Rock, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 18 x 15"



The Blue-bellied Roller, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 18 x 15"



A Blue-throated Bee Eater, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 12 x 10"



An Imagined Blue Finch, 2017, pigment dispersion on panel, 12 x 10"

EDUCATION

Simon's Rock Early College, Great Barrington, MA 1968-1972

San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA 1973

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 "Rare Bird Paintings" Victoria Munroe Fine Art, New York, NY
- 2013 "New Work: Painted Collages" Studio Gallery, Camden, ME
- 2010 "Miniatures" Caldbeck Gallery, Rockland, ME
- 2008 "Nine Diamonds" Caldbeck Gallery, Rockland, ME
- 2006 "Eight Nest Paintings" Caldbeck Gallery, Rockland, ME
- 2004 "New Paintings" Caldbeck Gallery, Rockland, ME
- 2002 "Views of Aroostook County" Caldbeck Gallery, Rockland, ME
- 2001 "Paintings" Clark Gallery, Lincoln, MA
- 2000 "New Paintings" Caldbeck Gallery, Rockland, ME
- 1994 Frick Gallery, Belfast, ME
- 1993 Victoria Munroe Fine Art, New York, NY
- 1991 Maine Coast Artists, Rockport, ME
- 1986 Goodrich Gallery, New Haven, CT
- 1981 Impressions Gallery, Boston, MA
- 1981 Silvermine Guild, New Canaan, CT
- 1979 Impressions Gallery, Boston, MA
- 1978 First Branch Gallery, Chelsea, VT
- 1973 Hurlbutt Gallery, Greenwich, CT

RESIDENCIES

- 2006-present Horizons Arts Program, 5th grade Self-Portrait Projects, mixed media, Camden Rockport Middle School
- 2006-present Horizons Arts Program, 4th grade Embroidery Project
- 2011 "Día de los Muertos" project, Spanish Three students. Funded by the Bisbee Fund, Camden Hills Regional High School
- 2009 Service Learning grant for collaborative art project with 2nd graders, Gladys Weymouth Elementary School, Morrill, ME
- 2009 Bisbee Fund grant with Advanced Painting class, Camden Hills Regional High School

- 2006 Horizons Arts Program, oil painting, Camden Hills Regional High School
- 2005 Horizons Arts Program, oil painting, Camden Hills Regional High School
- 2005 Youth Arts residency "ABCs in Color" mosaic mural with kindergartners, Rockport Elementary School
- 1993-94 Youth Arts residency "The Maya" mural project with 7th graders, Mary E. Taylor School

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

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| Amerada Hess Corporation, New York | Milbank Tweed Hadley and McCloy, New York |
| American Telephone and Telegraph, New York | Orrick Herrington and Sutcliffe, New York |
| Becton-Dickinson and Company, Paramus, NJ | Susan and Stephen D. Paine, Boston, MA |
| Boston Public Library, Boston, MA | Swanledge Corporation, Boston, MA |
| Chemical Bank, New York, London and Geneva | Phillip Morris Corporation, New York |
| Connecticut General Life Insurance, Hartford, CT | Pyramid Corporation of America, Stamford, CT |
| Cosmopolitan Magazine, New York | Reader's Digest Corporation, New York |
| Hearst Magazines Corporation, New York | Simpson Thatcher and Bartlett, New York |
| Hospital Corporation of America, New York | Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA |

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Carl Little "Paintings of Maine," Down East Books, Spring 2006
- Deborah Weisgall, "Still Lifes Breathe a Quickening Spirit," The Camden Herald, August 2000
- Ken Greenleaf, "Small Works Raise Large Questions," The Maine Sunday Telegram April 1993
- Patti Marxsen, "Antonia Munroe Creates Art with Staying Power," The Camden Herald, April 1993
- Susan Strickler, American Traditions in Watercolor, catalog, Worcester Art Museum collection, 1987

TEACHING

- 1993-present Founder/Director of The Art Circle, art workshops for children and young adults, Camden, ME
- 1999, 2001, 2006 Horizons Mentor Program, Camden Hills Regional High School, Camden, ME
- 1966-73 Co-founder/Director of The Striped Umbrella, art workshops for children, Fairfield, CT

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING

- 2006 Safe Passage Guatemala City volunteer artist working with children from the Safe Passage Program

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