



Tishman Environment
and Design Center



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Michael Palumbo: Parsons School of Art, Media, and Technology Staff and Artist



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Micha

el Palumbo, Senior Office Manager at the [School of Art, Media, and Technology at Parsons](#) has been studying and creating art since his undergraduate years at the University of Rhode Island. His paintings, drawings, and photography are inspired by nature.

His art in his own words:

Q: How long has nature served as an inspiration for your artwork?A:

Nature has always been a major element in my creative process. With regard to the more traditional picture making aspect of my work, the beauty in nature appeals to my sensual self, and psychically it can evoke the subliminal. So there is a good deal of symbolism in my work which, I guess, is very 20th century because they are more internalized psychic landscapes. But I also have worked with nature itself, beginning as an undergraduate at the University of Rhode Island I have worked outside in forests or wetlands. I have a kind of empathy for wooded areas that seem abused or neglected. I plant trees that serve as kind of marker-memorials, in a way, I am viewing wooded areas as extensions of own existential identity. I believe this sensibility is more up to the minute.

Q: Are there



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specific elements of nature that you find most inspiring or interesting?A:

On the whole my work pretty much is always centered on trees or landscapes, recently I have added wildlife to my drawings but only because I have pilfered the images from ancient pottery and added them to

my own work, but don't usually draw animals or people. I am most affected by the sensuality of beauty in nature that still feeds my visceral need to draw, and even in this day and age there can be moments of peace and stillness that only nature can provide, even the darker more dangerous side of nature can evoke the sublime. As I read this I sound like a 19th century artist, I wonder if I am not working in reverse?

Q: What are some recent projects that you're excited about?

A: Well, most recently, I planted one of my tree-markers in Historical Graveyard #8 in Lincoln, Rhode Island. It is neglected place that the town of Lincoln has forgotten. While planting trees I am finding the creative process works very differently than picture making, I plant the tree and then begin to understand something about the place itself, whereas in making images there is some understanding of what you are going to do before you do it. The graveyard is from the mid-nineteenth century, it is all overgrown now nature has reclaimed it. The idea of nature reclaiming what we have done as a society appeals to me, it is somehow comforting to know that if we just stop nature will continue on. This sort of rogue planting also gives me a stronger sense of thinking of land as something in itself, something

more than private or public property. There are many artists who work with nature but the artists that interest me the most are the those who's work is transparent so that nature is changed in some slight way but not altered significantly. Work such as Maya Lin's "Wave Field" and Carl Andre's "Stone Field Sculpture" are pieces that I admire for their simplicity, marrying nature and culture with perfect balance.

Check out more of Michael's work



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