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PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM

Léni Paquet-Morante: Extract / Abstract

July 19 – November 9, 2025



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Léni Paquet-Morante is a Hamilton, New Jersey-based artist who reimagines landscape art through a process of extraction and abstraction, which she achieves both in plein air practice (outdoors) and in her studio. She combines observation and intuition to record elements of nature, including trees, grasses, leaves, stones, and bodies of water, selecting salient elements of a scene from her notes while allowing others to arise from her memory as she creates works of art. Exaggerating the shapes, lines, and colors of the landscape, she retains her subjects but abstracts them, recording her recollection of a landscape rather than its precise representation. She states: "Motivated by process-driven imagery, my abstractions reference familiar landscape elements, extracted then rearranged in a manner that speaks to the architecture of memory and dreams."

Michael Quituisaca

Graduate Student, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University

GALLERY 1

Wood over Pond Run was one of the first instances in which Paquet-Morante saw abstracting water systems as a pathway to develop her artistic practice. For this painting, she worked from a photograph of a nearby pond, experimenting with the forms that stood out to her. Rather than focus on the distant horizon, the artist looked down, at details of water. She took a sectional approach to this composition, interpreting a sliver of landscape in great detail and with both uncommon color and abrupt cropping—an approach that reappears in her artwork and suggests a more expansive surrounding.

Vernal Pool, Shade features intense, vigorous brushstrokes that emphasize the dappling effects of light even as they define rocks, trees, and other details from nature. Created *en plein air*, the painting has a loose, abstract style that speaks to the artist's interest in shape-making.



Wood over Pond Run, 2020
Acrylic on canvas



Vernal Pool, Shade, 2022
Acrylic on canvas

GALLERY 2

Paquet-Morante's plein air approach includes creating small studies in ink as notes of her surroundings that aid in completing her work back in the studio. As such, her paintings record a multisensorial recollection of various water sources that she uses as inspiration, including tidal pools, shallows, and streams. Through each color, shape, and mark, she emphasizes nature as a subject that can be fragmented and rearranged, drawing on the way in which reflections refract what is on the water's surface. In her more abstract work, such as *Winter Sky on a Shallow*, the result is a dreamlike collage. Paquet-Morante explains this process as an "opportunity to think of landscape as one would still life, or language, with parts that can be rearranged, have new scale relationships, new hierarchies."



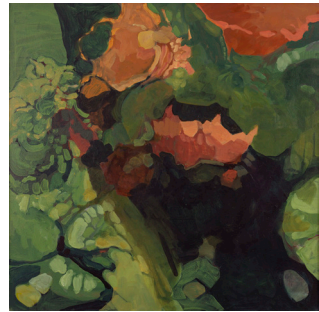
Winter Sky on a Shallow, 2021
Ink and acrylic on canvas



Forest Floor, Water, 2020
Acrylic on canvas



Ice Rings on Bear Swamp, 2021
Acrylic on canvas



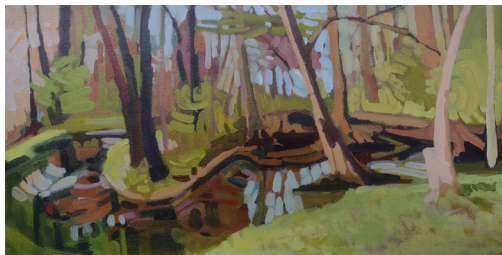
Settled Shallow, 2021
Acrylic on canvas



Pebbled Shallow, 2022
Ink and acrylic on canvas



Loblolly Cove, 2022
Acrylic on canvas



Creek Bend, 2024
Acrylic on canvas

GALLERY 3

In her *Monoprints* series, Paquet-Morante combines a painterly approach with print-making techniques. She explains: “I apply ink on a glass pane, manipulating it in several ways both directly and indirectly. Embracing process, I allow traces where a rag would have been used to shape a thin layer of ink, and density where a brush would have been laden. The final print shows the result of many pressings, each layer building complexity. The decision to split the page into two fields speaks to diptych compositions. At the top I generate a rhythmic sense of water and landscape, and at the bottom a simplified design implies detail from the image above.” The imaginative compositions of the *Flotsam* series and *Shallows in Yellow and Black* follow a similar process. They reflect the artist’s penchant for contrasting decisive brushstrokes and vibrant colors with the white of the canvas, playing with negative space to create the final image.



Flotsam at Water Line, 2024
Acrylic on canvas



Flotsam and Grit in Pink, 2024
Acrylic on canvas



Flotsam in Gold and Pink, 2024
Acrylic on canvas



Flotsam on a Green Reflection, 2024
Acrylic on canvas



Flotsam with Ice Raft, 2024
Acrylic on canvas



Debris on a Blue Pebble Beach, 2024
Acrylic on canvas



Shallows in Yellow and Black, 2023
Acrylic on canvas



Monoprint XII, 2023
Ink on Arches 88 paper



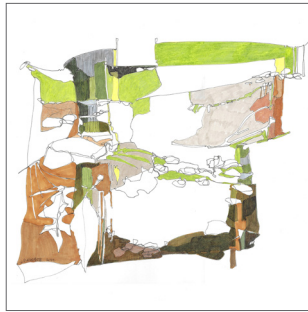
Monoprint XV, 2023
Ink on Arches 88 paper



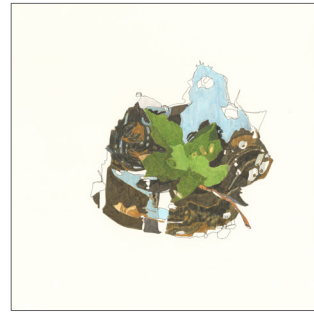
Monoprint XVI, 2023
Ink on Arches 88 paper

GALLERY 4

The drawings in this gallery emerged as studio work after another large body of drawings that Paquet-Morante completed in 2022. But in their muted coloring, abstract forms, and exaggerated perspectives, the seeds of future paintings were planted—including the *Flotsam* series, in which negative space becomes an important part of the composition. Smaller-format drawings serve as her primary note-taking method when working *en plein air*. When Paquet-Morante ventures out to a nearby stream, for example, she closely observes and extracts key elements of the landscape and then rearranges them into medleys of line, shape, and color. The larger-format drawings shown here, done in the studio, rely on a combination of the artist's field notes and her subconscious. Recalling natural elements from memory, Paquet-Morante guides her pen to create familiar forms as well as new ones. She taps into the way in which the mind creates dreams: "In my invented landscape drawings and paintings, nuanced space supports a sense of something more personal, like how a keen memory of a pile of pebbles found and handled during a long hike becomes the most important part of it. I believe dreams and memory emerge this way too, where retained parts get reconstructed for something new yet familiar."



Shifted Shallow, 2022
Ink on paper



Pothole, Leaf, Sky, 2022
Ink on paper



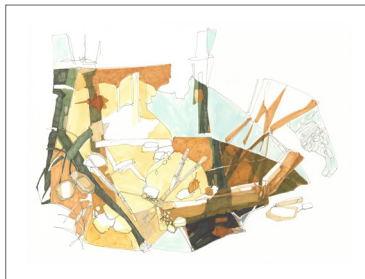
Composed Shallow, Leaf Litter, 2022
Ink on paper



Current at Gully Shallows, 2022
Ink on paper



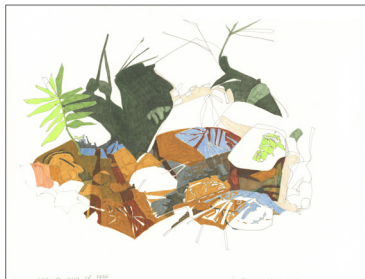
Constructed Shallow, 2022
Ink on paper



Composed Shallow, Fallen Limb, 2022
Ink on paper



Composed Shallow with Leaves, 2022
Ink on paper



Sourland Gully, Ice, Fern, 2022
Ink on paper



Showers on a Shallow, Early Grasses, 2022
Ink on paper

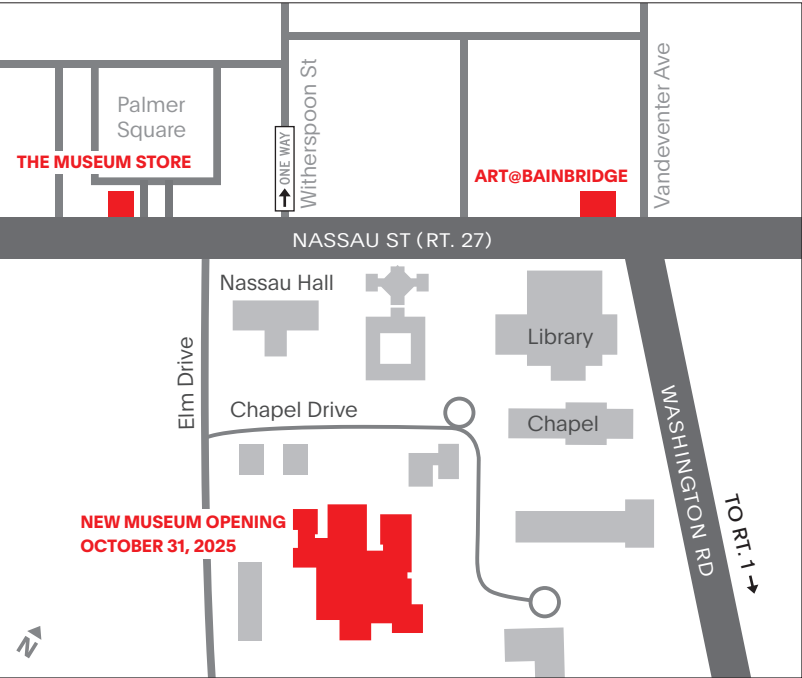
All works are by Léni Paquet-Morante (born, 1962, Témiscamingue, Quebec, Canada; active Hamilton, NJ); are courtesy of Léni Paquet-Morante; and are © Léni Paquet-Morante.

Léni Paquet-Morante: Extract / Abstract is curated by Michael Quituisaca, Graduate Student, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.

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Art@Bainbridge is a gallery project of the Princeton University Art Museum, located in historic Bainbridge House in downtown Princeton. Our main building is under construction as we build a bold new Museum, opening to the public on October 31, 2025.

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COVER: Lény Paquet-Morante, *Debris on a Blue Pebble Beach*, 2024