

NATURE REMAINS:

PAINTINGS BY BARBARA SCHREIBER



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Curated by Lia Rose Newman

For more than forty years, Barbara Schreiber has created beautiful paintings about ugly realities. Much of her early work addressed social and political concerns, but more recently her paintings center on profound loss.

A reader and wanderer, Schreiber draws inspiration from literature, travel (including aimless drives and poking around unfamiliar places), and long walks near her longtime home in Charlotte, North Carolina. Her paintings on paper are (mostly) flat, meticulous, and controlled. Schreiber does not make preliminary sketches and notes that, “all decisions, messes, and mistakes occur right on the page. There’s a lot of ruin and rescue in these paintings.”

Many of Schreiber’s compositions resemble stage sets or film stills—moments paused at points of tension or ambiguity. The actors, including passenger pigeons, foxes, and lambs, are often engaged in strange, sometimes comical behaviors. In these frozen, theatrical scenes, animals often stand in for humans, and the narratives function as allegories about trauma, displacement, and grief—but also adaptation, persistence, and survival. These narratives are shaped as much by what is absent as by what is present.

Ever evolving as an artist, Schreiber presents a body of work in ***Nature Remains*** that signals a shift. The backdrops have become more atmospheric, indicating a move away from explicit storytelling. In *Waxwings and Their Tempters*, the background is an expanse of vivid red-orange, while in *Flood Zone (porcelain fox)*, foxes and shards of a plate are painted atop a field of soft blue. In both works, Schreiber cuts into the familiar rectangle substrate she once considered safe. The expressive silhouettes—a flame in the former, a Hokusai-inspired wave in the latter—echo the emotional and environmental content of the paintings. Movement is created through the irregular patterning of plant matter, often inspired by her own wild garden, that weaves between background and foreground, along with her animal subjects and occasional random tools or other objects.

Balancing humor and dread, Schreiber’s paintings are deeply personal, yet speak to our shared anxieties about the current moment. Though rooted in environmental themes—especially the impacts of overdevelopment and habitat destruction—her paintings are also elegies about personal loss and emotional dislocation. What may have begun as a meditation on extinction—such as in a series of paintings about Martha, the last passenger pigeon, who died in 1914 while in captivity at the Cincinnati Zoo—might also be a portrait of heartbreak, or the slow unraveling of a life. While these works may appear simple at first glance, they are complex, meticulously painted reckonings about what is lost, what is threatened, and what remains.

NATURE REMAINS: Paintings by Barbara Schreiber,
OPENING RECEPTION is on Thursday, July 17, 2025 from 6-8 pm.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Barbara Schreiber's works on paper appear lighthearted at first glance, but often have disturbing undertones.

Born in Baltimore MD, Schreiber was a Cold War baby. Her aesthetic was formed in part by dinner-table discussions of political brinksmanship, her upbringing in a gritty town, and the solace she found gazing at tiny, enameled antiquities at the Walters Art Museum and four small Cézanne paintings of Mt. St. Victoire at the Baltimore Museum of Art.

Schreiber's exhibitions include the High Museum of Art, PS 1, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, SPACE Pittsburgh, the Weatherspoon Museum of Art, Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, Telfair Museum of Art, Mint Museum of Art, American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the Sorbonne, and numerous other spaces. She has completed residencies at Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the Hambidge Center, McColl Center, Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, and Goodyear Arts.

In addition to her work as an artist, Schreiber can sometimes be pestered into writing about visual art. Her articles, essays, reviews, and navel staring have appeared in Art Papers, Sculpture, Metalsmith, Creative Loafing Charlotte, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The Charlotte Observer, and other publications. She was an associate editor of Art Papers for ten years.

Schreiber attended Atlanta College of Art and received her BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art. She currently lives in Charlotte, NC.

Schreiber's work is filled with animals that sometimes serve as stand-ins for humans. In particular, she identifies with small, wild ones—adorable, understood by few, and ultimately alone in a complex, fast-moving world.

ABOUT THE CURATOR:

Lia Rose Newman has been Director/Curator of the Davidson College Art Galleries since January 2013. She provides leadership for the advancement of visual art at Davidson College, curating exhibitions and related programming and providing strategic vision to create an inclusive, interdisciplinary center of learning. With specific interests in socially and politically engaged art practices, Newman's curatorial projects have explored such topics as HIV, climate catastrophe, and immigration. Newman also oversees the Davidson College Art Collection. She has helped the college acquire nearly 1,000 works of art, including significant sculptures and commissions focused on diversifying the collection. Newman also serves as Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Art Department, teaching a course that centers student voices in determining acquisitions for the Galleries. She earned a BA in Art History and a BFA in General Studio with concentrations in sculpture and photography from Winthrop University and an MA from Duke University.

PHOTOS BY TAMARA LAVALLA.

Waxwings and Their Tempters

28 x 36" framed

Acrylic on cut paper

2025

\$3,500.00



Dinner for Finches

28 x 36" framed

Acrylic on cut paper

2025

\$3,500.00



Flood Zone (otter tangle)

28 x 36" framed

Acrylic and collage

on cut paper

2025

\$3,500.00



Flood Zone (porcelain fox)

28 x 36" framed

Acrylic and collage

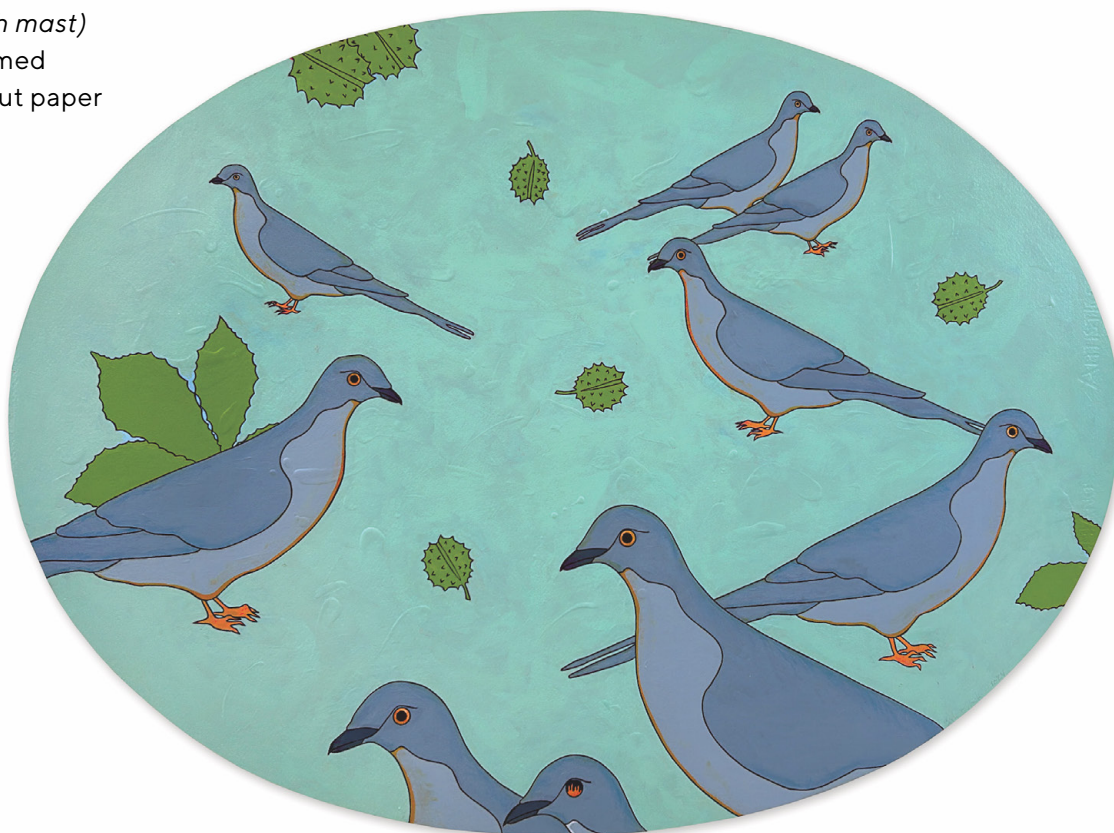
on cut paper

2025

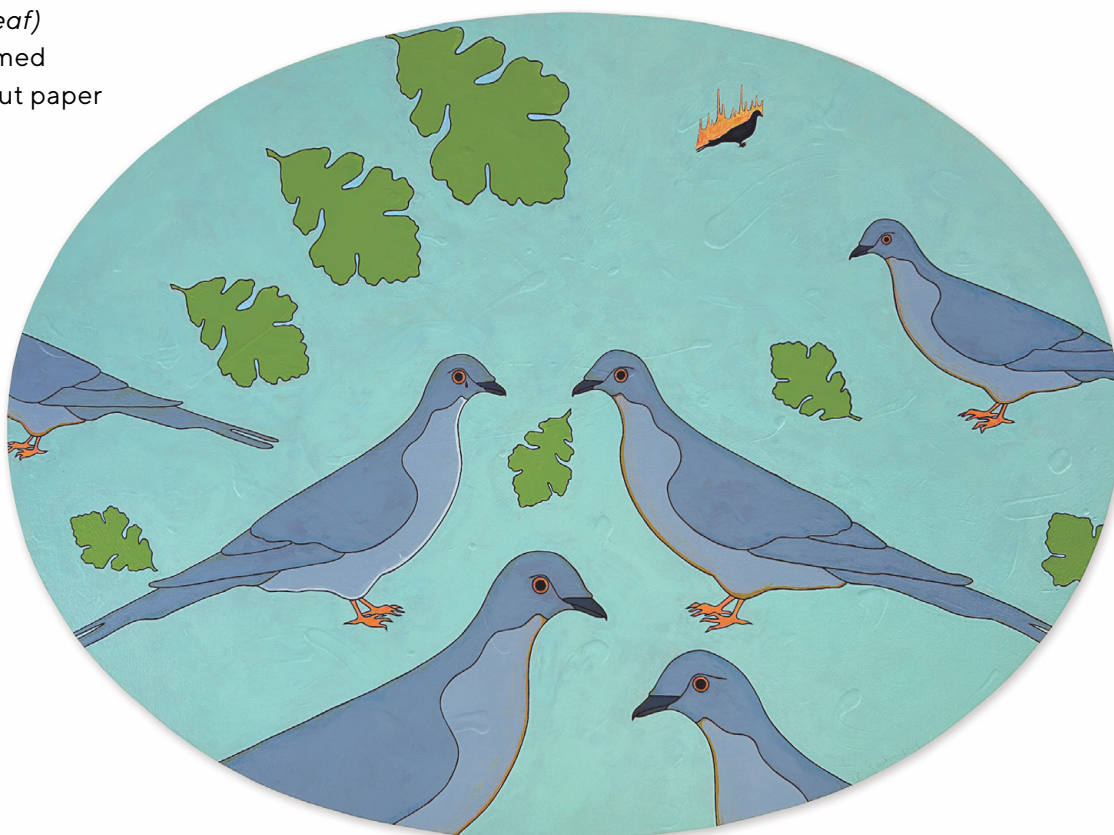
\$3,500.00



*Martha, an extinction
story (beech mast)*
28 x 36" framed
Acrylic on cut paper
2024
\$3,500.00



*Martha, an extinction
story (oak leaf)*
28 x 36" framed
Acrylic on cut paper
2024
\$3,500.00



Rain of Birds and Flowers

28 x 36" framed

Acrylic on cut paper

2022

\$3,500.00



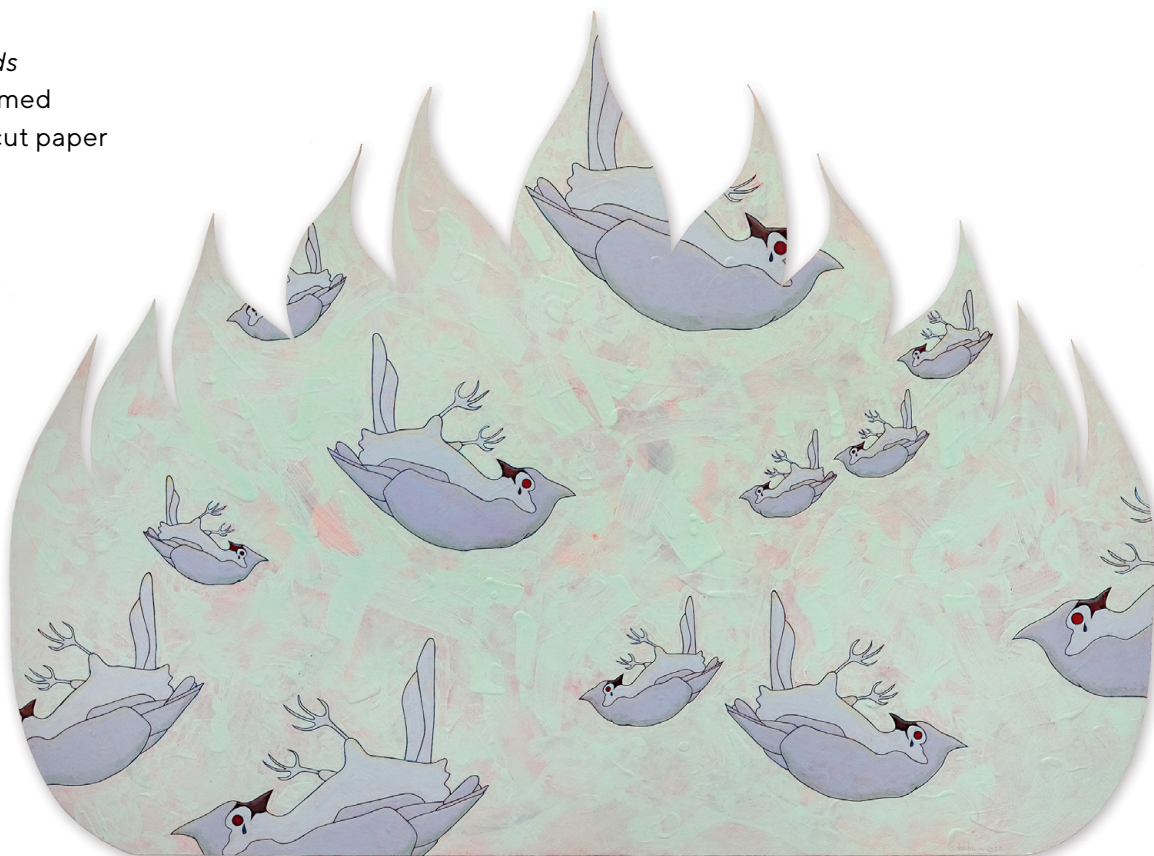
Rain of Birds

28 x 36" framed

Acrylic on cut paper

2022

\$3,500.00



Prairie Fire

28 x 36" framed

Acrylic on cut paper

2022

\$3,500.00



Group Portrait

28 x 36" framed

Acrylic on cut paper

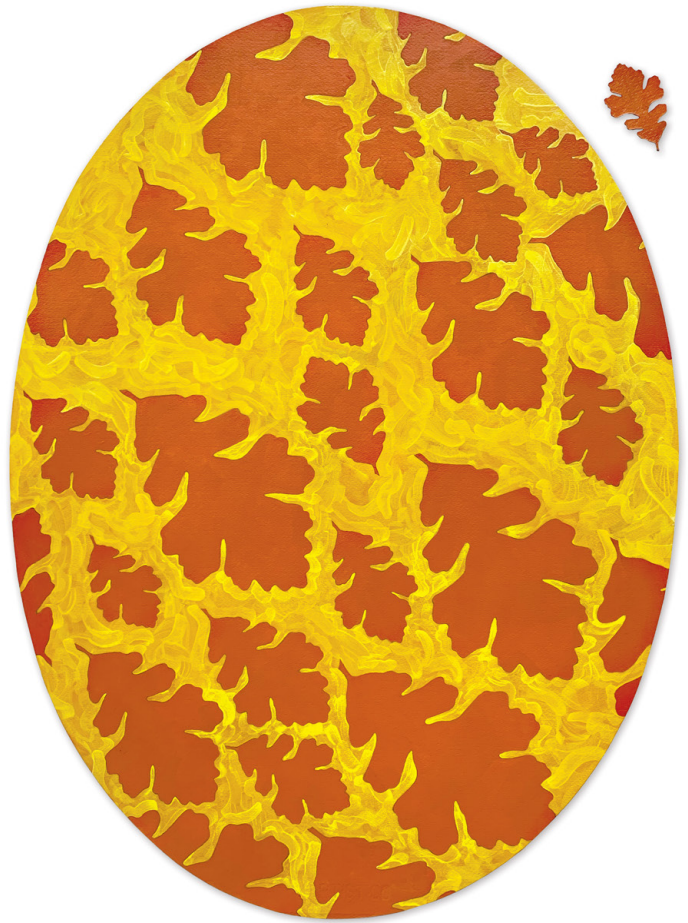
2022

\$3,500.00

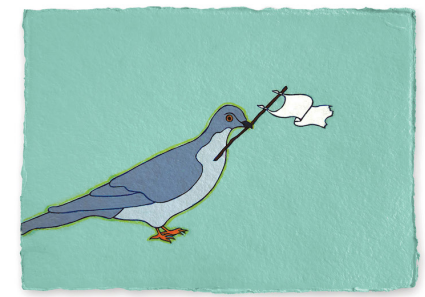
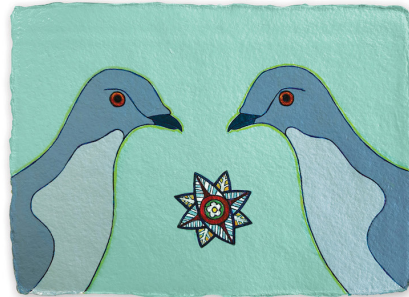
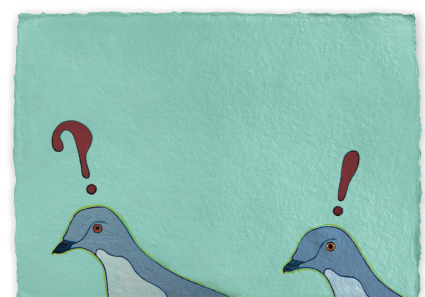
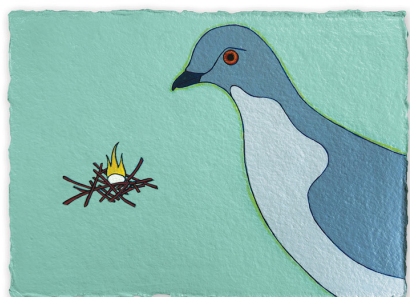
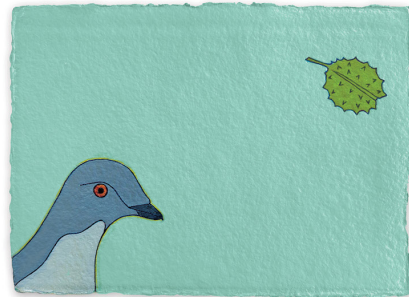
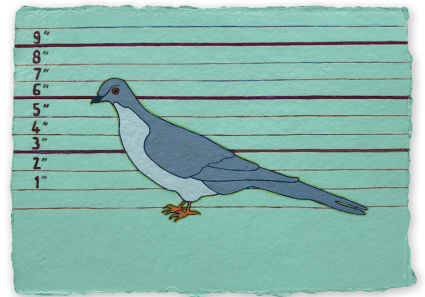




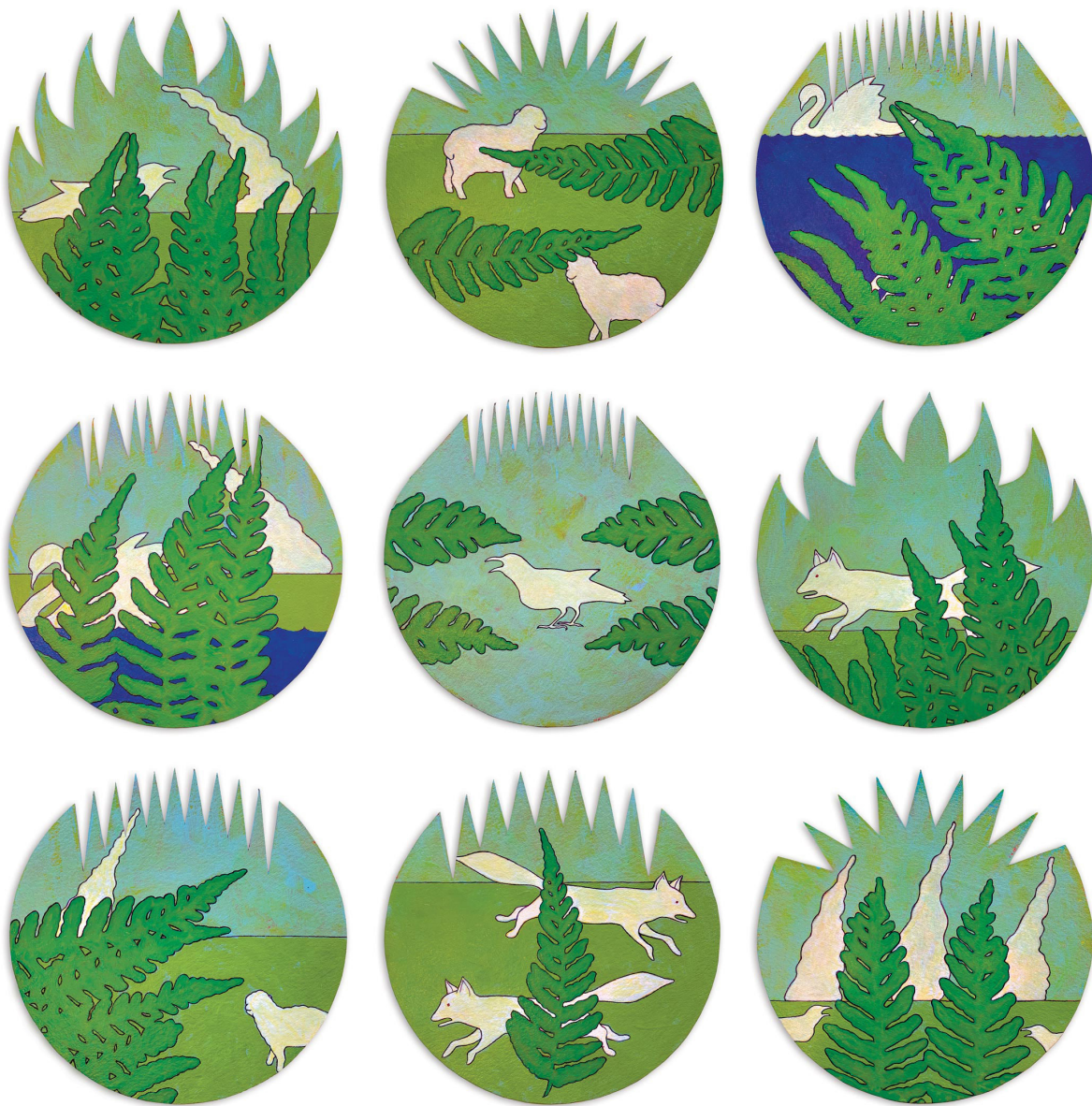
Leaves in Search of Meaning
 36 x 28" framed
 Acrylic on cut paper
 2023
 \$3,500.00



Leaves and Their Protégé
 36 x 28" framed
 Acrylic on cut paper
 2023
 \$3,500.00



Pigeons and Their Problems
 9 x 10.5" framed
 Acrylic on paper
 2024
 \$600 each



Smoke and Specter
 10 x 10" framed
 Acrylic on cut paper
 2023
 \$550 each