

3T Vakil: Eyes On The Rainforest

Science and art in Puerto Rico.

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Pelagophyton cyclipetalum, 20" x 44" – 50.8cm x 111.76cm, acrylic on PVC, 2024

Review by Miklos Legrady, edit by Gabor Podor

Puerto Rican artist and scientist Thrity (3T) Vakil, FLS¹, says her life in Puerto Rico's rainforest became a reality following a three-year coral-reef research expedition as a diver onboard the famous research vessel *Heraclitus*². In 1999, she arrived after Hurricane George at Las Casas de la Selva³, a sustainable forestry and rainforest enrichment project in Patillas, southeast Puerto Rico. Today she leads the onsite management team as Project Director since 2007. While the goal of science is an increase in natural knowledge, the discipline required also shapes artistic practice, bringing incredible consistency and coherence to Vakil's work as a professional artist. 3T Vakil's achievements in both science and art set her as one of today's neo-renaissance figures.

Fixing the art world. In the 1960s, art moved from the Cedar Tavern to the seminar room,⁴ as artists earned a living by teaching. There was less time for studio work, so

¹ Fellow of the Linnean Society

<https://www.linnean.org/the-society>

² Videos on research vessel *Heraclitus* on youtube

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=research+vessel+Heraclitus

³ Established in 1983, the land known as Las Casas de la Selva is the home of Tropic Ventures Sustainable Forestry & Rainforest Enrichment.

<https://eyeontherainforest.org/>

⁴ An observation by Robert Storr, MOMA curator, published in

the academy moved the goalpost; they said painting was dead and art became anything you could get away with. However, political science says your culture is your future. When the art world told the public that art was anything you can get away with, that allowed MAGA to reply that politics is anything Donald Trump can get away with.

The rebirth of painting. Today, a new generation of painters, like 3T, are fighting back on the creative and therefore the political front. The science of linguistics tells us the long awaited death of painting is an unrealistic expectation; painting is a non-verbal language on par with literature, operating on a different bandwidth. Neither literature nor painting are likely to die anytime soon. They have been around since the dawn of humanity and serve both scientific and artistic functions. Science is an accurate observation of the natural world while art is our reaction expressed in a non-verbal language.

Established artists like 3T make a difference in our personal lives and in the political arena, when 3T proves that art is no longer anything you can get away with. She is grounding her work in the science of non-verbal language and a disciplined mastery of talent that took years to achieve. In the relationship between art and science, her work in the rainforest influences her visual art. This work is not imitative but a professional grasp of natural complexity. 60+ paintings, done in the last year, consist of abstract lines and shades carved out of layers of paint using sticks, fingers, pottery shards, brush, and any tool at hand.

3T's creativity comes from the creative unconscious documented by the psychologist Carl Jung as the mechanism that empowers the artist. 3T, commenting on her work, said that as she paints, unconscious inspiration fills her mind, heart, and soul, as if she was a vessel for this creative vision. There is a psychological depth in the lines and shapes that create what looks like Celtic weave patterns, or abstractions of autumn leaves on the ground, or forest foliage, or bark on trees, or reflections in river-run waters. You can talk about the images, but the experience of seeing overrides explanation. That is the meaning of painting as a non-verbal language. This asemic painting style obviously comes from a deep psychological discipline that must be seen; the work's beauty cannot be put into words.

3T named each painting with a botanical flourish that reflects her deep immersion into the plant world, for the abstract complexity of the paintings share an obvious similarity to nature's foliage, revealing her personal aesthetic direction. 3T's canvasses capture the essence of the painting medium and the mystery of botanical nature. As well, the paintings tell stories of the profound psychological impacts of Hurricane Maria in 2017 and Hurricane Fiona in 2022.

Beauty in art is an algorithm. Working in the background, paintings on a wall produce an unspoken influence, organizing our thinking patterns, promoting mental health, uplifting mood, strengthening resolve. We live with images that speak to us; even when they are seen every day, they form our psychic background.

Here we look at the science and beauty of Vakil's visual language, as she already described the poetic aspects of her work online in her website of recent painting series, "**Spandrel Spaces: The Art of In-Between**"⁵. In between science and art, we see an order emerging from a scientific mind speaking an aesthetic language. Thrity is a neo-Renaissance artist.

3T will be exhibiting her work in 2025 in Puerto Rico.

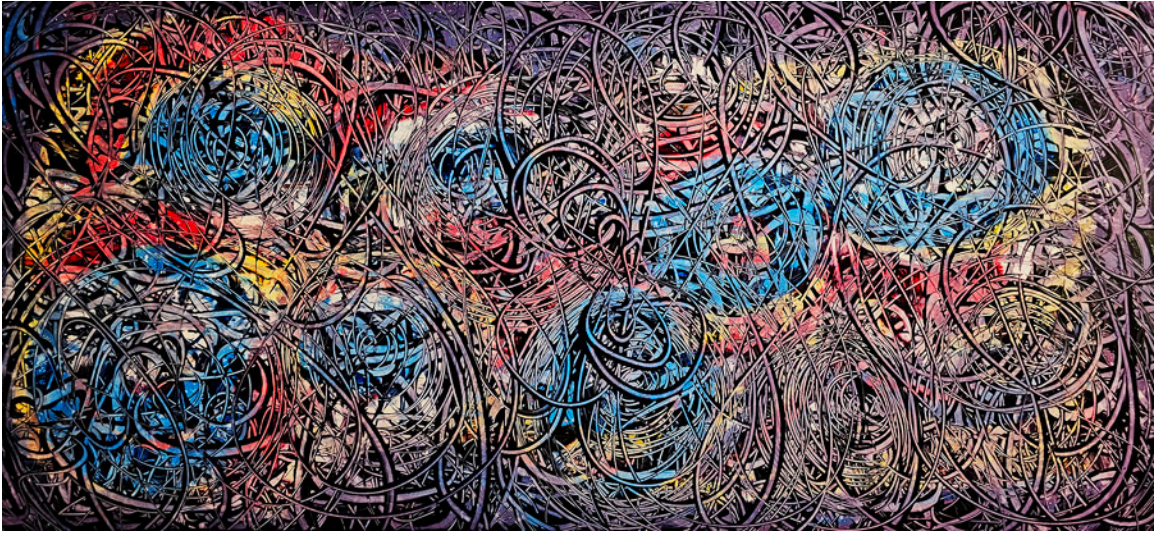
(Note to editor. While typically we embed images into the article, for this one, as a different style, I would like the images to follow below the article, to allow for more images than normally shown.)

A selection from the series by 3t Vakil
Spandrel Spaces: The Art of In-Between



Florosophica virtutis, 20" x 44" – 50.8cm x 111.76cm, acrylic on PVC, 2024

⁵ 3T Vakil text and images, "Spandrel Spaces: The Art of In-Between", 2024
<https://3Tvakilpaintings2024.myportfolio.com/work>



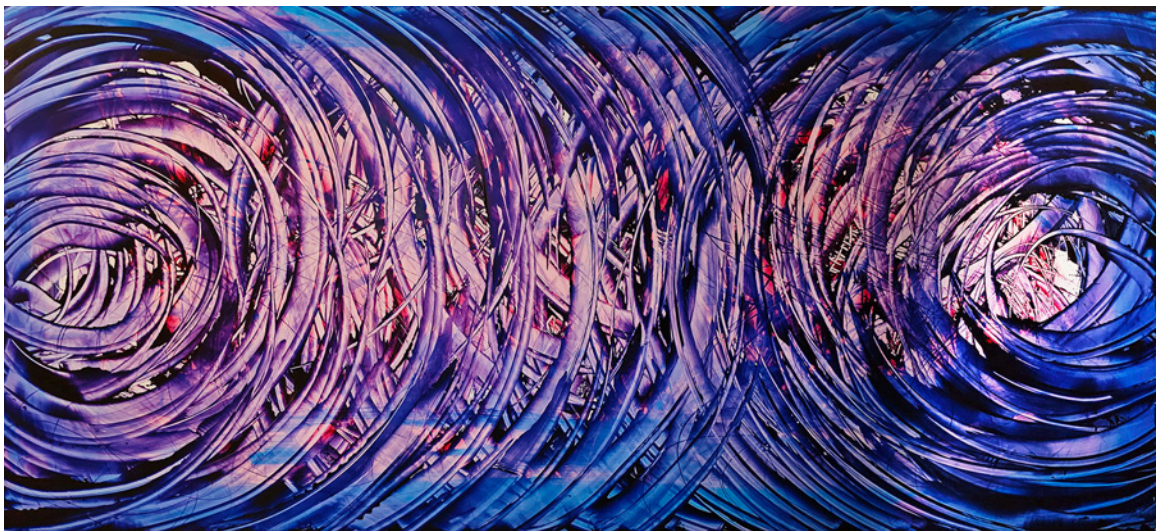
Sporiforia visionalis, 20" x 44" – 50.8cm x 111.76cm, acrylic on PVC, 2024



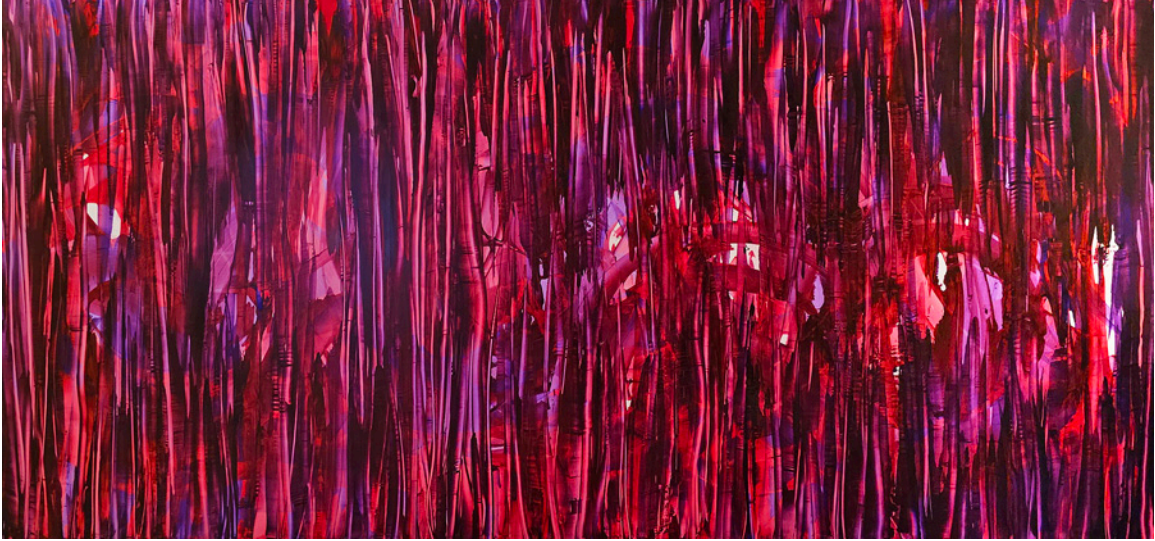
Chlorospiralis fluxiphylla, 20" x 44" – 50.8cm x 111.76cm, acrylic on PVC, 2024



Sanguinolentus intricarpus, 20" x 44" – 50.8cm x 111.76cm, acrylic on PVC, 2024



Locus coeruleum, 20" x 44" – 50.8cm x 111.76cm, acrylic on PVC, 2024



Rubriflorus sanguineus, 20" x 44" – 50.8cm x 111.76cm, acrylic on PVC, 2024



Arborascendia grandivora, 20" x 44" – 50.8cm x 111.76cm, acrylic on PVC, 2024



Luminomyces nocturnalis, 20" x 44" – 50.8cm x 111.76cm, acrylic on PVC, 2024



Myceluminaris noctiluminis, 20" x 44" – 50.8cm x 111.76cm, acrylic on PVC, 2024