

## In the galleries: Eerie prints and sculpture that hint at ecological ruin

Also: Literary abstractions, the extreme blues of nature's harsh beauty and an anniversary celebration of a longtime D.C. gallery



Review by Mark Jenkins

February 16, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. EST

### Natural Blue



Installation view of "Natural Blue." (Leeanna Earp/Montgomery College, Visual and Performing Arts Department)

The ocean is both threatened and threatening in "Natural Blue," a King Street Gallery show that showcases four visual artists, one of whom pairs her work with a colleague's verse. The contributors suggest the qualities of water with paint, ink and wood, or simply with light.

Among local artist Ruth Lozner's entries are frameworks of model houses, made of painted wood raised on stilts as if in preparation for a great flood. Meredith Starr makes blueprint-like cyanotypes whose stark imagery complements poems by Sarah Kain Gutowski, a fellow New York area resident, who writes about nature's harsh beauty.

Also featured are local artist Jacqui Crocetta's pretty but ominous paintings of beaches and tidal pools contaminated by stray plastic, which are often painted on actual plastic (from the [same series recently shown at the McLean Project for the Arts](#)).

The most ethereal works are Meredith Leich's videos, filmed on sea- and ice-forged locations in Iceland, Alaska and a small Massachusetts island that may be submerged by a rising ocean. The Boston artist projects patterns on boulders or a large boat propeller, using stop-action animation to suggest aquatic currents or glacial movements. Leich's creations are delicately beautiful, but they warn of such perils as the slowing of the Gulf Stream and the disappearance of glaciers.

**Natural Blue** Through March 1 at King Street Gallery, Montgomery College, 930 King St., Silver Spring; [bit.ly/MC-VPA](https://bit.ly/MC-VPA). 240-567-5821.