

DAVID MORRISON

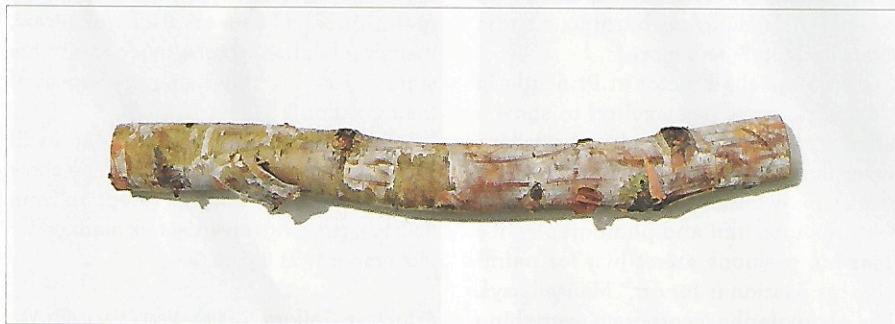
Ordinary Icons

David Morrison teaches the art of looking and seeing to his students at Herron School of Art and Design at Indiana University. “They think they already know how to look and how to see,” he says. “But I tell them we’re going to *really* look. I ask them to describe every little part of an object, not to generalize. We spend two weeks looking and observing. I want them to see how incredible the objects are. I have them draw their fingernail, looking at the ridges and colors and patterns, and how it grows. They’re always amazed at how much they haven’t seen. Once they’ve improved their vision and learned how even in drawing realistically there is gesture and abstraction, I encourage them to discover their own artistic expression—what makes them click.”

He comments that he hopes people looking at his drawings will become more curious about looking at things in nature more closely and realize the importance of preserving it. He recalls being at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta and having people ask him what his work was like. “I told them, ‘I draw sticks.’ They looked puzzled. The next day there was a reception where I showed some of my drawings and they understood,” he says. “The next morning when I arrived at the studio I found a pile of sticks outside the door. They had gone out and



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1
Paper Wasp Series No. 2,
colored pencil on paper,
20½ x 16½"

2
Firewood Series No. 3,
colored pencil on paper,
12 x 28"

3
Firewood Series No. 4,
colored pencil on paper,
12 x 28"

4
Firewood Series No. 2,
colored pencil on paper,
27 x 21"

All images courtesy
Garvey|Simon Gallery,
New York, NY.



Scan for
VIDEO



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found beautiful sticks that they thought I'd like to draw."

Morrison and his wife live on a lot of over an acre, "so it's natural to look at objects in nature and to see how they change over time and in different weather." He used to run over the abundant sycamore bark with his riding mower until one day he stopped, got off and took a real look at the bark.

His Prismacolor drawings of "sticks" and bark and the nests of paper wasps are isolated in a plain white field to remove any distractions and to invite the viewer to get up close. He says, "I want to take the ordinary and give it iconic status. The viewer discovers not only the intricate detail (only a small portion of the detail in the actual object) as well as the abstract quality of that detail."

His drawings differ from botanical drawings. "I'm not into the ideal specimen," he explains. "I draw ordinary things, branches and leaves that have fallen to the ground, with their scarification left by diseases, infestation, decomposition and storm damage...My drawings capture the degeneration cycle of plant materials and how they echo the living conditions of man and nature. I am interested in capturing the reality of their existence, with all the imperfections, echoing their fragile existence in nature."

Morrison's latest drawings will be shown at Garvey|Simon Gallery in New York, November 15 through December 22. ●

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