

A World without Windows

December 10, 2022 - January 12, 2023

By Erin Besch

The Burren College of Art, MFA Art and Ecology Interim exhibition, *Protopia*, shows Amelia Rafle's work alongside artists Lindsay LeBlanc and Catherine McDonald. The show *Protopia*, describes a future that is incrementally better than the present, but not quite utopian through the lens of past, present, and future ecologies.

Rafle's work is a commentary on the staggering number of birds that die each year from flying into windows. It is estimated that 1 billion birds in North America alone die from this cause each year.

On one wall, the work *Struck* is comprised of 40 (5 ½ by 8 inches) digital images of dead birds on transparent paper. These pieces are the result of a research project Rafle conducted at Virginia Commonwealth University's campus in 2020 where she collected data on the number of birds that were struck by windows during migration season. The transparency of the paper added a sense of fragility to the pieces, and the repetition of the images served to further highlight the scale of the problem. Each print was a reminder of an individual bird that had lost its life, and the series as a whole was a powerful statement on the impact of human activity on the natural world.

Rafle's other work, *Window*, is comprised of 6 etchings on (24 by 30 inches) panes of Perspex that cast images of dead birds on the wall. The shadow of the bird on the wall serves as a powerful metaphor for the unseen impact of human actions on nature. QR codes accompany the work, leading to articles that provide more information on the issues and how individuals can make a more positive impact.

The exhibition was a thought-provoking and powerful reminder of the importance of art in raising awareness of ecological issues and the impact that humans have.