



Charles F. Pitz

Olympia, WA

www.charlesfritz.com

Please direct inquiries to: charlesfritz@gmail.com

[Instagram.com/charlesfritz](https://www.instagram.com/charlesfritz)



Artist's Statement

The shrines and reliquaries I create are focused on contemplating what is truly sacred in our world, in an age of rapid climate change.

Some have said that humankind is "at war with nature". As our planet warms and ice caps melt in response to the rising concentration of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, we watch a long-term collapse in biodiversity accelerate in ecosystems across the planet. With a changing climate we find ourselves facing an existential risk, one that is altering the natural world as we know it on a very short time scale.

I'm unsure at this point if we have the ability to significantly evolve our behavior of how we live on this planet. I am convinced that if we are to succeed, it will require us to fundamentally re-define what we see and treat as sacred. All my interests and skills seem to be colliding together in the artworks I make now, with these questions in mind. They are perhaps an eccentric blend of art history, natural science, environmental philosophy, Wunderkammer, and old-world craftsmanship. They are expressions of both grief and wonder.

Mare Sacro (Tabernacle) - 2021

In the 15th century, Renaissance artists of Tuscany were actively incorporating Brunelleschi's mathematical principles of linear perspective into the devotional artworks they were creating for their patrons. To heighten the worshiper's sense of being in the presence of the sacred, forced-perspective (*prospettiva accelerata*) tabernacles were created for cathedrals, churches, and private chapels. Through tricks of visual perception, artists were able to manipulate the viewer's emotional and spiritual experience, creating an illusion of 'extra-dimensional' depth and radiance. Simultaneously magnifying and distancing, beautifully ornamented with glowing gold leaf and delicate carvings, Renaissance tabernacles left the devotee with the belief that they had directly encountered something transcendent, something sublime.

Mare Sacro is ornamented with natural specimens both from my home on the shores of the Salish Sea, and marine environments across the world. Echoing images of ascension and resurrection from Masaccio's *Holy Trinity* and Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin*, *Mare Sacro* imagines an alternative vision of what is truly sacred in the world as climate change wreaks havoc on our home.

(Materials: Figured black cherry, Basswood, 23K gold leaf, Japanese book cloth, Venus comb, Brown paper nautilus, juvenile Dungeness crab, Pearl turbo, Seahorse, Limpet, Brown auger turritella, Ram's horn squid, Pacific blue mussel, Pixie scallops, Thorny phos, Pearl umbonium, Deep water tibia, Black lip, Red-breasted triton, Spurred turban, Auger shell, Strawberry clanculus, Venetian pearl trocus, Fish vertebrae, Starfish, Ribbed trochus, Fan coral, Pearls, Old man's beard.)

About the Artist

Some years ago, Charles left a career as a research scientist in the environmental field to devote more time to a life-long interest in the visual arts. Near the end of his scientific career, his work was primarily focused on evaluating the coming impact of climate change on the Pacific Northwest; what he learned has had a lasting influence on his art. Although Charles is self-taught, he regularly consults with art historians, museum curators and academics in support of his work.

Portfolio Examples



Tempietto - 2022



Memento Mori - 2021



Secrets of the Past - 2022



Flight - 2022