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# The big and the small of it: Getting your visual bearings

By **KRISTEN PETERSON**  
*Las Vegas Sun*

Paul Morrison's large-scale painting in the Las Vegas Art Museum is a black and white, graphic-style landscape that covers the entire wall.

Looming over the spacious gallery, it is the visual anchor in the white room and the centerpiece of the Morrison exhibit opening Saturday at the museum.

The fact that it is paired with the adjacent exhibit of Victoria Gitman's miniature trompe l'oeil paintings and drawings — also opening Saturday — creates an "Alice in Wonderland" scenario that was unintentional.

In fact, only during the installations, did Executive Director Libby Lumpkin realize the macro and micro of it all.

But they complement each other. Although each artist's work can easily hold its own, the polar-opposite experiences in viewing make the trip to the concurrent exhibits doubly intriguing.

Morrison's "Phytochrome" is bold, immense and lively. It's painted directly onto the 40-by-20 3/4-foot wall using stencils. Up close its lines are abstract. Stand back and you are peeking through the leaves of a foreground dandelion at a landscape with clouds, fir trees and a castle. Perspective changes depending on where you stand in the gallery.

Conversely, Gitman's framed paintings and drawings are so intimate, small, detailed and impeccably crafted that they lure you toward them so you can lose yourself in the realism and marvel at the steady hand that created them.

Each artist's work is an extreme study of precision, space and detail — or lack thereof.

With Morrison's you can practically walk into the painting. With Gitman's, you are always outside the work, peering in and contemplating — at finely detailed beaded purses

### IF YOU GO

**What:** "Paul Morrison" and "Looking Closely: Victoria Gitman Paintings and Drawings"

**When:** Opens Saturday; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday

**Through:** April 27

**Where:** Las Vegas Art Museum, 9600 W. Sahara Ave.

**Admission:** \$6; \$5 for seniors (55 and older); \$3 for students (13 and older); free for children 12 and younger; 360-8000 or [www.lasvegasartmuseum.org](http://www.lasvegasartmuseum.org)

(oil paintings on panel), 19th-century French paintings and drawings in miniature, and paintings of postcards of masterpieces.

Though focusing on feminine form and objects, Gitman reconfigures the idea of the feminine in her work, gives her the reputation of a feminist painter.

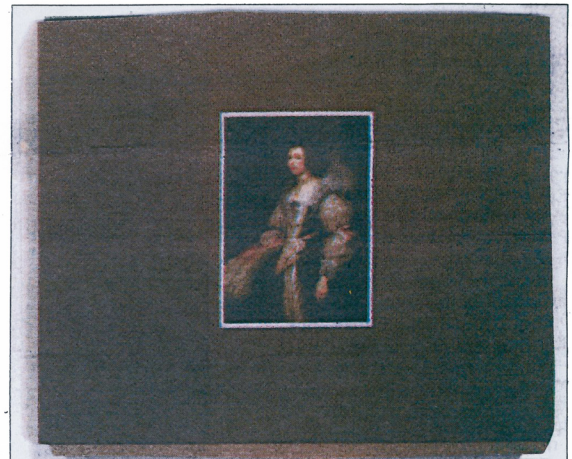
Lumpkin's first exposure to the Argentine-born artist was through her geometrically arranged Victorian necklaces, also oil on panel. The museum director was intrigued by the "minimalist frontality" and "severity of composition" in the trompe l'oeil works, which place traditional oil painting in a contemporary conversation.

"It's a real pleasure to linger over these," Lumpkin says.

Morrison's "Phytochrome" is a culmination of the British artist's interest in cartoons, botanical drawings and Renaissance woodcuts. In addition to the site-specific "Phytochrome," the Las Vegas Art Museum features an exhibit of Morrison's older cartoon-style works, which also incorporate plant motifs.

A fan of Morrison's work, Lumpkin says she was drawn to the sense of space that he creates and the way that "so much visual information is conveyed in simple graphics."

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Small trompe l'oeil paintings such as these by Victoria Gitman at the Las Vegas Art Museum are meant to trick the eye.

