

NEW CITY

EXPO 2022 Top 5

BY ALEXANDRA DREXELIUS | APRIL 9, 2022



Andrew Rafacz (Chicago), 351

Illinois' fifty-five-mile Des Plaines River Trail offers an expansive stretch of wilderness outside the city. In a solo presentation at Andrew Rafacz, Soumya Netrabile captures the ebb and flow of this flood-prone landscape with sweeping passages of oil paint. Intense colors careen against one another, dissipating into a pool of swampy sludge. With each collision, it is as if the forest is fading into itself. The sequence of panels, oriented toward the horizontal, has a cinematic quality. The landscape moves past you at different paces, summoning the act of following these trails on foot. It becomes a blur. But points of definition, like the silhouette of a bird flapping its wings or the arm of a figure digging into the earth, provide moments for the eye to pause. Netrabile beautifully captures the life of an ecosystem, its terrors and triumphs cycling and disappearing all at once.