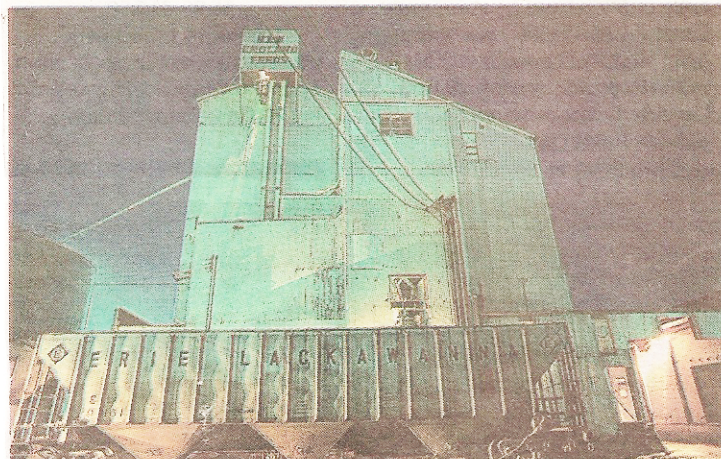


# Perspectives in scale, irony, and light



From top: Black disks joined by metal rods form a huge network in Anna Hepler's "ARREST, ARRAY." A message of death is broadcast in Joe Wardwell's "Fade Away." Fantastical aqua light dominates in Lynn Saville's "Erie Lackawanna."

By Cate McQuaid  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

## Sending a message

There's such rock 'n' roll flash and humor to Joe Wardwell's paintings at LaMontagne Gallery, it's easy to miss what a superb painter he is. In this show, he slaps flaming text borrowed from rock lyrics across idyllic landscapes that recall Albert Bierstadt's epic visions of the American West. The contrast of text and image introduces irony, pathos, and political consciousness into the scene.

"Fade Away" features those words in sunset yellow and orange blazing across an image of a sunset over a lake, with a spiky, fallen tree trunk extending from the shore into the water broadcasting a message of death. The paint is vaporous and drippy, as if the scene itself is fading.

"Any Wonder (Fooling Ourselves II)" is a brilliant piece, set up like a postcard. It's a symmetrical view of a lake circled by trees, with a snowy mountain rising in the distance and the text "Does Anybody Wonder" emblazoned across the center. Here, too, dead wood emerges from the water, this time at the bottom center of the canvas, like a finger pointing directly at the viewer. Wardwell renders the water with extraordinary finesse, making surface, reflection, and depth shimmer. Some of the trees stream with drips. The image is almost confrontational and at the same time hallucinatory, quivering toward dissolution.

**ANNA HEPLER: Intricate Universe**  
At: Montserrat College of Art Gallery, 23 Essex St., Beverly, through Oct. 17. 978-921-4242 Option 3, [www.montserrat.edu/galleries](http://www.montserrat.edu/galleries)

**JOE WARDWELL: Die Young**  
At: LaMontagne Gallery, 555 East 2nd St., South Boston, through Oct. 10. 617-464-4640, [www.lamontagnegallery.com](http://www.lamontagnegallery.com)

**LYNN SAVILLE: Night/Shift**  
**GUILLERMO SRODEK-HART: Shrines**  
At: Gallery Kayafas, 450 Harrison Ave. through Oct. 17. 617-482-0411, [www.gallerykayafas.com](http://www.gallerykayafas.com)