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## Scott White Contemporary is in a 'Spiral'

Artist Gail Roberts views the world through bird nests and math sequences

By [Alex Zaragoza](#)



"Submerge" by Gail Roberts

Nature is connected in a complex yet structurally perfect way. Everything fits just as it should, and nature's cycles speak to life, death and the stuff that fills the in-between. This will be explored in *Spiral*, an exhibition of new paintings by Mount Helix artist Gail Roberts that'll open with a reception from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, June 8, at [Scott White Contemporary Art](#) (7655 Girard Ave. in La Jolla.)

Roberts, 61, used bird nests, trees and feathers to tap into these notions about life. Nests "proved to be a subject that continues to unfold in terms of ways in which I can communicate about a lot of different ideas related to life experiences," says Roberts, an art professor at SDSU. "I can use the nest as a vehicle to express what I'm thinking about as I'm experiencing the difficulties that all of us experience in living this very precious period of time."

Her painting "Reflections of My Father," especially echoes that idea. It's made up of 12 panels, each depicting part of a different tree. When brought together, the panels form one singular image of a tree and its reflection. She painted it in honor of her father, who died in January.

Roberts has a tendency to gather bits of natural material, including bird nests, when she takes walks.

She says that nests portray two "extreme contradictions": They serve as a protective home to new life but are made from dried, decayed materials and are eventually abandoned.

Roberts is also fascinated by the Fibonacci sequence, a series of numbers in which the previous two numbers equal the next number (0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, 233, and so on). She delves into the sequence in a series of 12 painted panels. The first depicts a single hawk's feather, the second shows two finch feathers. It continues on to the 12th panel of 233 turkey feathers, demonstrating how the sequence works.

"I'm interested in using the idea of those numbers to show how quickly in our world materials can accumulate in both the natural world and synthetic world," she explains. "You can make the comparison to growth, expansion and how much can our world hold. I'm also using it quite simply to demonstrate how in nature all these materials can accumulate but also decompose and return to its origin."