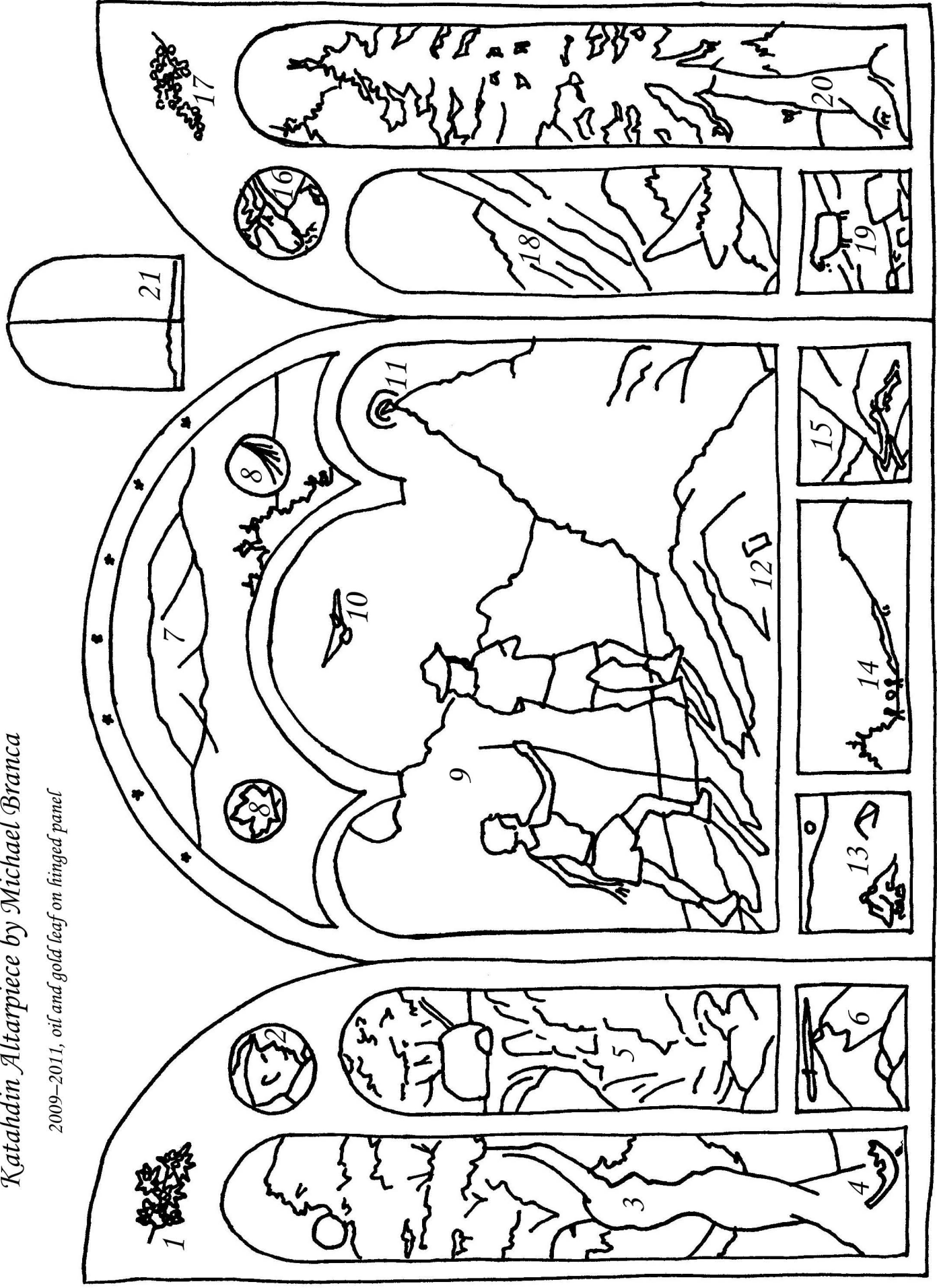


Katahdin Altarpiece by Michael Branca

2009–2011, oil and gold leaf on hinged panel



Katahdin Altarpiece by Michael Branca
A celebration of Maine's greatest mountain

"What is this Titan that has possession of me? Talk of mysteries! Think of our life in nature—daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it—rocks, trees, wind on our cheeks! The solid earth! the actual world! the common sense! Contact! Contact!"
—Thoreau, *Ktaadn*, 1864

Left Panel

1. Maine wild blueberries
2. Portrait of Percival Baxter (after Piero della Francesca)
Baxter (1876–1969) singlehandedly purchased and donated Katahdin and the surrounding 200,000 acres to the state. "Man is born to die, his works are short-lived. Buildings crumble, monuments decay, wealth vanishes. But Katahdin, in all its glory, forever shall remain the mountain of the people of Maine."
3. Maple Daphne
4. A surplus of calcium for one little mouse
5. Katahdin Stream Falls
6. The Knife Edge

Center Panel

7. Katahdin from Abol Bridge
8. Maple leaf and white pine needle medallions
9. The Summit (variation on Verocchio and Church)
At 5,268 feet, Katahdin's Baxter Peak is the highest point in Maine.
"I know I have seen God now. The occult connection that is established when one loves nature is complete—and so I felt transported to a visible fourth dimension—and since heaven is inviolably a state of mind, I have been there these past ten days." —Marsden Hartley, on his trip to Katahdin, 1939
10. Bald Eagle
Back from the brink of extinction, a symbol of the potential for people to reverse our most destructive behaviors.
11. Chickadee
Maine state bird
12. Appalachian Trail blaze
Katahdin is the northern terminus of the AT.
13. Campfire Scene (after Gentile da Fabriano)
14. The Hike
15. Naptime, Roaring Brook (after Mantegna)

Right Panel

16. Pamola
The Penobscot Indian spirit of the mountain: "The tops of mountains are among the unfinished parts of the globe.... Only daring and insolent men, perchance, go there. Pamola is always angry with those who climb to the summit of Ktaadn." —Thoreau, Ktaadn, 1864
17. Mountain cranberries
18. The Knife Edge from Helon Taylor Trail
19. Katahdin Sheep (after Thoreau)
"Having slumped, scrambled, rolled, bounced, and walked, by turns, over this scraggy country, I arrived upon a side-hill, or rather side-mountain, where rocks, gray, silent rocks, were the flocks and herds that pastured, chewing a rocky cud at sunset. They looked at me with hard gray eyes, without a bleat or a low."
20. Hemlock St. Francis (after Bellini)

Closed View

21. Katahdin from Patten