



Columbia Celebrates Laura Spong

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slows you down and attracts your gaze. Once it has captured your attention, it compels you to come forward and see it up close. Once there, the detail, subtle surface, and color choice rewards that bold move of approaching. You, as an artist, have won the battle of the moment, but the encounter is brief because the cell phone is buzzing and a flickering screen has the viewer looking elsewhere. In these times, a painter can hope for a one-night stand, a brief encounter for the competition of the viewer's gaze. Possibly a lingering image will stick and bring the viewer back for just one more moment. A painter can only hope.

It is these qualities of strength and beckoning seduction I find in Laura Spong's work. Her range of specific-to-vague and soft-to-hard imagery calls me across the room to see more. The subtle-

ties of space, the chaos and order, the movement of line reward the act of travel. Her work has it all. The stories being told are allegories of modern painting. She speaks through many who have come before her, yet she speaks in the language of moment. The vocabulary is strictly visual. The work needs no words. It contains the rhythm of a symphony or the intensity of a rock opera. The colors dance, the line penetrates, the scale encompasses my vision, and the experience rewards.

Artist Mark Flowers, a South Carolina native who lives in Alexander, NC, has been making art for more than 35 years. His work is in many public and more than 300 private collections. Flowers teaches painting at the University of South Carolina Upstate in Spartanburg, where he also is the gallery coordinator.

Richland County Library in Columbia, SC, Features Works by Alicia Leeke and Dr. Tammi Richardson

The Richland County Library in Columbia, SC, will present *View from Under the Microscope*, a traveling exhibition by South Carolina artist Alicia Leeke and Dr. Tammi Richardson, from the University of South Carolina's Department of Biological Sciences, on view from Feb. 8 through Mar. 10, 2016. A lecture will be given on Feb. 9, beginning at 6:30pm. Dr. Richardson will discuss marine food webs and ocean acidification. Leeke will talk about the importance of phytoplankton in our ecosystem as well as her process in creating the project.

The project consists of an artistic body of 18 2-D, digitally created paintings based on images of microorganisms

known as phytoplankton. The collection showcases the beauty of these microorganisms collected from water bodies in South Carolina, such as tidal creeks, lakes and ponds, including Darryl Creek in Mount Pleasant, SC, and Quinine Hill Lake in Columbia, SC.

Leeke was awarded a grant by the Charleston Scientific and Cultural Education Fund to produce a traveling exhibition entitled: *View from Under the Microscope: Science-based Learning Through Art*.

Leeke partnered with Dr. Tammi L. Richardson from the University of South Carolina to create a colorful abstract,

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