

# Clemson University's Lee Gallery

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proach to creation to explore ideas of the reconstruction of a landscape's past and future. "Solastaliga" investigates both artists' sense of longing for a comfort while at the same time exploring more personal questions about identity in a changing landscape.

Abrams came into the Clemson MFA program with a BFA in Ceramics from Armstrong University and an appreciation for mythological and figural work. He was attracted to ceramics for its forgiving quality and sculptural nature. Conceptually, he enjoys the combinations of high and lowbrow art and the inclusion of historical and scientific research within his practice. His work features hand sculpted porcelain shaped into large glacial-like formations. He selectively includes drawings of mountains and glaciers on the surface to give visual context. Historically, porcelain is considered the most pure and fragile ceramic medium and is usually formed using mold casting or wheel throwing. However, by Abram's choice to hand sculpt this particular medium, he is mirroring the fragility of glaciers when faced with human impact. He is also relating the glacier's disposition to change with the transient state of the human psyche.

Floyd graduated with a BS in Visual Arts from Lander University. She has worked in a variety of photographic processes including film, large format, and silver print. Her past work highlighted portraits of her family, lines in the landscape, and glimpses of everyday life. Currently, she shoots photographs in large format film and scans these to create large scale prints. Her work features diptychs, triptychs, and single frames as formats to display a location's susceptibility to physical change over time. These images will represent the memory tied to a landscape, as well as represent its future. Her current area of focus is studying the residential landscape of Greenwood. Growing up and moving away from a small southern town, Floyd was interested in document-



Work by Deighton Abrams

ing the transformation she has noticed in specific outdoor sites she remembers from her childhood. Figures of children are also featured in the photos to create a narrative of place and to point to an underlying theme of displacement. The specificity of the places in her photographs heightens the drama of her message.

Both Abrams and Floyd's work will serve as reminders of the environmental change that occurs by human impact, but will also remind us of the environments we have placed our identity in and if we also long for the comfort found in a familiar environment. Oftentimes, when an artist's work is autobiographical, it invites us to pose similar questions that the artist is asking about our lives. "Solastaliga" is a tribute to change, environment, identity, and a longing of a locale.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings or contact Leah Brazell by e-mail at ([lbrazel@g.clemson.edu](mailto:lbrazel@g.clemson.edu)).

# Tangible Imperceptions

## BFA Senior Exhibit

CLEMSON CENTER FOR VISUAL ARTS LEE GALLERY

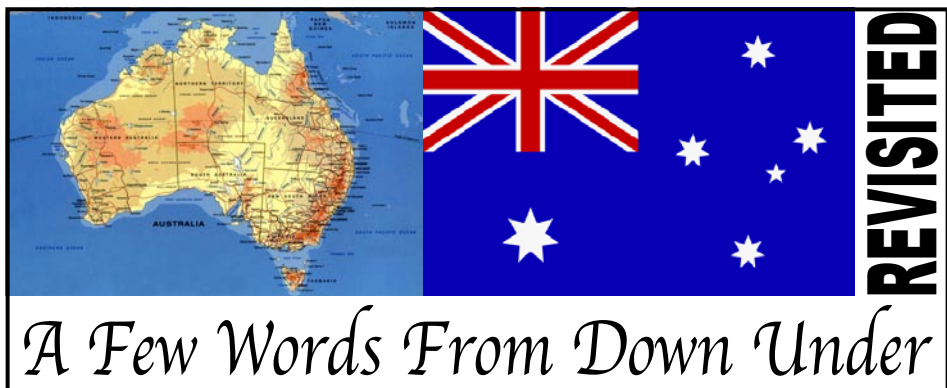
As artists we look at the world and the time we live in with dissecting eyes. We question what is seen and explore the unseen. We seek to materialize our thoughts, feelings, experiences, and interactions with the intent of making commentary and sharing our human experience. In this exhibition we are making the intangible tangible.

Nov. 21–Dec. 2  
M–Th, 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  
Reception • Dec. 2, 6–8 p.m.  
Artist Talks • Dec. 2, 6:30–7 p.m.

This exhibit showcases a culmination of research in which students go through a series of critiques during their time as a Bachelor of Fine Arts candidate, helping build a body of work of the students' choosing. The public is invited to join the conversation by attending the artist talks, followed by the artists' reception. All events are free.

Lee Gallery • 1-101 Lee Hall  
323 Fernow Street • Clemson, SC  
Clemson University

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**Editor's Note:** Judith McGrath contributed her writings about exhibits and events taking place in Western Australia to *Carolina Arts* for about a decade. Although she was writing about events taking place thousands and thousands of miles away, they seemed relevant to what was going on here in the Carolinas. Her contributions were very popular when we first ran them and continue to be popular on our website's archives. We've decided to revisit them from time to time.

### A Few Words From Down Under The Loss of a Forest

by Judith McGrath, first published in June 2008

You don't know him; he was born, lived, painted, and taught art in my town. Years ago he traveled through Europe with his young family, absorbed its cultural past and present, came home again to live in a small community in the tree covered hills, shared what he'd learned with his students, and continued to develop his own unique art style.

His impact on the art world in this town is subtle albeit far reaching. His work enhances university walls, government halls, corporate collections and suburban homes. Then in his late sixties, having battled the illness long enough, David gave up the fight.

He was one of nature's gentlemen,  
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generous to a fault, respected by all and loved by many. His funeral was attended by important people and humble folk, art appreciators and astute collectors, a politician or two, numerous past students, and just about everyone he had stopped to help along the way. The simple chapel was overflowing with tearful mourners, every one of them sincere in their grief.

He was an excellent artist yet humble in his talent. I recall attending an opening of one of his exhibitions when I happily purchased the exhibit (painting) I fell in love with at first sight. When I told the artist, he insisted on seeing which one I'd selected. "Ohh, that one," he said half to himself, then turned to me and asked nervously; "Do you really like it?" When I assured him I most certainly did, a broad smile lit up his face. But then he was always genuinely surprised when his shows were sell-outs or when he got a good review.

It's been over three years since his death and the visual arts community continues to miss David and the love of life that imbued his art. After sufficient time had elapsed, the State Gallery was approached to host a retrospective of the artist's work, and rejected the request. I don't know their reason for dismissing the chance to celebrate the life and work of one of this town's own highly respected artists, other than the fact that he never bothered to chase fame by begging for

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representation in a major city on the other side of the continent, or overseas.

Thankfully, a small but vibrant arts centre in the community where the artist lived and worked stepped in to present an excellent exhibition of David's working drawings, quick sketches, and a cache of finished paintings that have never been seen outside his studio. It was a beautiful and informative display that was attended by a record number of visitors during the month it was on. Those of us who knew David feel he'd be happier with having his work displayed in the warm and friendly atmosphere of the local art centre, rather than in the cold and officious mood of the State Gallery.

Well I'm not as generous or even-tempered as the artist was. Yes, I can accept that a State Gallery has a scheduled calendar put in place however they could have found a small gallery or corridor to display a few paintings in tribute to the artist's passing, considering what he has contributed to the state of the Arts in this State.

And I can understand why commercial galleries would knock back hosting an exhibition where no works are for sale, after all they are in business to make money. But there are a few commercial galleries that have showed and sold David's work over the years, and made a tidy profit from doing so, that could have stepped forward to provide a level of posthumous prestige to the life's work of this generous man. Especially as they continue to profit from the many artists he has helped and/or influenced.

Except for the few who are promoted by those with a financial (rather than artistic or cultural) interest, many artists live and die with little fanfare. Still they continue to pursue their creative discipline with the understanding that music, literature and image making encourages and defines our humanity. After all, Humans are the only creatures on this Earth that make Art, for no purpose other than its aesthetic value.

Over the years I've had the pleasure of interviewing many practicing artists

(including David) and I'm always appreciative of how most (like David) just want to communicate the energy that emanates from their subject (portrait, landscape, or still life) to the viewer. It's a kind of magic.

I firmly believe that when a creative artist uses his/her talent to explore, discover, amaze and/or ignite the intellect, emotion, curiosity and/or wonder in another being, then that artist should be celebrated in life, mourned in death, and remembered in history. We should do this because all artists celebrate their humanity and, through their work, invite us to the party. When will we learn that when an honest artist (famous or not) dies, it is akin to the loss of a whole forest?

P.S. Yesterday the coordinator of the art centre that hosted David's retrospective called me and asked if I'd write a little something that will help her get a grant to send the exhibition around Western Australia. She asked for support from a few prominent artists of David's generation and they all jumped at the chance to help celebrate his life's work. I'll let you know if she gets the grant but I'm not holding my breath.

Judith McGrath lives in Kalamunda, Western Australia, 25 minutes east of Perth. She received a BA in Fine Art and History from the University of Western Australia. McGrath lectured in Art History and Visual Literacy at various colleges around the Perth area, and was an art reviewer for *The Sunday Times* and *The Western Review* both published in the Perth area. McGrath was also a freelance writer and reviewer for various art magazines in Australia. She also co-ordinated the web site *Art Seen in Western Australia* found at (<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/25381>). McGrath is currently enjoying retirement.

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