

Sumter County Gallery of Art

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decay of abandoned buildings in and around Columbia. He documents his journey of exploration through painting using color and light to depict the mood and temperature of each space. Keith also experiments with the bending of his canvases to literally surround the viewer within the spaces themselves. He depicts the tension of the push and pull of space within the canvases by varied painting techniques that highlight and expose each element.

Keith has been juried into the prestigious ArtFields, Lake City, SC in 2016 and 2018. He has had solo exhibitions at Francis Marion College, Florence, SC, University of SC and Pierce Community College, Steilacoom, Lakewood, WA, as well as several group exhibitions. We are excited to present Keith so early in his career.

Keith offered the following artist statement: "My work is an investigation of abandoned architectural spaces that are gradually being reclaimed by nature as well as a study of the illusionistic aspect of creating three dimensional images on a two dimensional surface. By combining the two I am able to expose these spaces in their beautiful collapse. I am compelled to explore these structures to capture the mood and reality of the space as it existed when I was present. I document these structures via photos and sketches that result in drawings and paintings that further reflect the uniqueness and feeling of that space. In this series I employ methods of distortion by curving, stretching, expanding the way I depict the space as well as the canvas that they reside. These works are a way for the viewer to trespass with me in an uncomfortable but quite place."

Susan Klein is a contemporary mixed media artist who has exhibited her work both nationally and internationally. She has shown at the Brooklyn Artists Gym, Brooklyn NY, 3433 Gallery, Chicago, IL, PDX Contemporary Art, Portland, OR, University of Ulsan, South Korea, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, as well as other venues. Recent awards include a Wassaic Project Residency in Wassaic, NY, and International Studio and Curatorial Summer Residency Program in Brooklyn, NY, both Summer 2018, where she created new work for her Sumter County Gallery of Art exhibition. Klein received her MFA in 2004 from University of Oregon and a BFA in 2001 from University of New Hampshire. She currently teaches painting and drawing at the College of Charleston.

Klein's work weaves in and out of irreverence for the sacred and a reverence for the banal. Her sculptures and drawings are playful, colorful and humorous - and they take themselves seriously. They are complex explorations of ambiguous forms—urns, gravestones, altars, fingers, phalluses, and monuments—that evoke the human devotional impulse. She is interested in the arbitrary manner that objects can be consecrated and made sacred. An ordinary object can be transformed into a thing that carries power, weight and spirituality. It can act as the connection between this world



Work by Robert Keith IV

and another.

Humor is an important component in Klein's work. It is a counter to the heaviness in life. Klein sees it as a way to process and manage emotions, trauma and current events. It is also a way to prevent work from becoming literal, heavy-handed and overly simplified. It keeps complexity in the work, and that mirrors the human psyche.

Klein began in drawing and painting and has moved into sculpture, although it seems sculptural leanings emerged early in her practice.

She observes: "In graduate school, I cut up drawings and made three-dimensional structures out of them. I also began making small foam and spilled paint sculptures. After graduate school I pulled objects and forms from paintings and made them into sculpture. There has been this continuous back and forth, although I had about three years or so where I focused entirely on painting. A year ago, I participated in a residency program at Otis College of Art and Design. They have a ceramics studio so it was the perfect time to experiment with clay. Instead of glazing, I fire the clay and oil paint it. This keeps the work firmly connected to painting and allows me to work with a process that is more spontaneous than glazing. I also love how the oil paint takes to the fired surface. It is very buttery and satisfying!"

Klein avoids artist statements and talked about why in a recent interview: "I think the work creates its own language and presents that to the viewer. I am not so interested in layering verbal/written language on top of that. Although I am an academic, I have a small problem with the academicizing of visual art. Artist statements are a direct result of the proliferation of the MFA and the professionalization of the field so I am a bit contrarian. There is something pre-lingual in my work and in my experience words can obfuscate, confuse and miscommunicate as often as not."

SCGA has several related events planned. Robert Keith will be in conversation with SCGA curator Cole Miller at a later date during the exhibition.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the gallery at 803/775-0543 or visit (www.sumtergallery.com).

University of South Carolina-Aiken in Aiken, SC, Offers Works by Susan Lenz

The University of South Carolina-Aiken in Aiken, SC, is presenting works by Columbia, SC, installation and fiber artist Susan Lenz including: *The Wall of Ancestors*, on view in the Etheredge Art Center's upper gallery space and *Buttons!*, on view on the Center's ground level walls, through Sept. 28, 2018.

The Wall of Ancestors, a collection of anonymous photographs, is the centerpiece of Lenz's larger installation, *Anonymous Ancestors*. Each image has been altered with letters clipped from vintage ephemera. The selected phrases suggest a fictional narrative. An image of an early 20th century infant propped up on a fancy wicker chair reads, "I didn't live to adulthood". Another snapshot of a feisty bathing beauty reads, "I never wore a seat belt". A couple staring blankly out of their antique frame has



Work by Susan Lenz

the caption "Virgins on our Honeymoon Night".

There's "Pillar of the Community" and "Spinster Sisters" and "Home Sweet Home: Address Unknown". There are over two-

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TAG

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