

August 10, 2013  
Press Release

## **SPACES & PLACES: Interiors & Landscapes**

Tamara Thomsen

On view from August 6 through September 16 at 350 Bleecker Lobby Gallery in Manhattan is a solo exhibition, *Spaces & Places*. A selection of Tamara Thomsen's recent watercolors covers a period from 2008 to 2013. It includes her landscapes of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and interiors of Mount Pleasant, a 1760's Georgian mansion in Philadelphia. The Closing Reception for the artist is Thursday September 12, 2013, 6-8pm.

Of the title of the show, *Spaces & Places*, Tamara says, "As my work turned from interiors to the newer Botanic Garden paintings, I realized whether inside or outside, I was painting rooms. Architectural spaces such as an attic, a stairway, and a kitchen are composed of walls, doorways, a window, and woodwork. Places such as esplanades and pools in a garden landscape are enclosed by rows of cherry trees, reeds, rosebushes, and sky. Interpreting these elements through perspective and the push/pull of color, I look for the feeling of being somewhere."

On the face of it, the work adheres to traditional tenets of watercolor craft. Paint is reliably transparent, allowing the white of the paper to do its job. Large areas of pale "washes" provide unpredictable drama. These techniques and others exploit subject matter in ways that sometimes pump up areas with irreverent, sassy results--which draw the viewer in to the *space* for a closer look.

"Wood grain in the floor of *Attic* (2008) for instance, is brushed-in with cartoon-like multi-colored lines. The prominent bed of rosebushes in the lower foreground of the piece *Esplanade for Lucy*, (2011) is painted in strong blacks, the color equivalent of negativity. However, the whimsy of the leaf patterns is nothing of the sort (sort of.)" Thomsen states. She continues:

"One of the earliest paintings in this group, *Stairway* (2008), takes a downward view of a staircase as it makes a 180-degree turn. Walls painted in flat trapezoidal shapes of outrageous chartreuse, olive, and chrome greens frame the structure. Surprisingly, this unexpected greenish color scheme comes off as a perfectly reasonable accompaniment to a venerable example colonial American woodcarving."

In *Red Thorns, Call of the Sea* (2013) the newest work in the exhibit, she enlivens a somber April setting at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and offers a narration, "The rawness of the flowerless pruned and thorny rose stems and shorn stubble of the tall grass are sturdy elements in this composition. But the ginned-up color of these forlorn botanicals lift and celebrate a fine bronze sculpture of a young woman, the 1923 *Call of the Sea* by American sculptor Harriet Whitney Frishmuth (1880-1980)."

Most of the paintings are fairly large. Almost everything is rendered in one layer of transparent paint, even the smallest details. She works flat on a big table. The compositions are made from Thomsen's own photography. Dozens of smaller painted studies precede the final work. It is in

these sketches that she works out the color, and experiments with brush technique and paint application. A few of these sketches are included in the exhibit.

She lives in Brooklyn, a short distance from her studio at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. She recently showed work in local group shows including *Personal Accounts* at Long Island University Gallery, *New Intimists* curated by Samantha Friedman at NutureArt, and *Brooklyn Navy Yard Artists* curated by John Ros.

This year a temporary public art piece, *Particular Vitrines: January Crimson*s, is on view in the lobby at 65 Broadway in the financial district in Manhattan. Co-lab Projects in Brooklyn curated the project.

Thomsen studied painting in school, obtaining a BFA from Syracuse University and an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University. In 1999, after a two-decades job at the New York design firm, Smart Design (famous for Oxo Good Grips,) she re-immersed herself in fine art.

**SPACES & PLACES: Landscapes and Interiors in Watercolor**  
Tamara Thomsen

Exhibit runs August 6 to September 16, 2013  
Artist's Reception Thursday, September 12, 6-8pm  
350 Bleecker Lobby Gallery

350 Bleecker St. (W. 10th/Charles)  
Hours:  
Monday to Friday 4pm to 9pm  
Saturday/Sunday 11am to 9pm

**Contact Tamara Thomsen:**

917-686-7963

tkthomsen@gmail.com

Spaces & Places online link to images:

[http://tamarathomsen.com/SPACES\\_PLACES/thumb\\_places.html](http://tamarathomsen.com/SPACES_PLACES/thumb_places.html)