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Media Contact:
Gina Hyams, PR Consultant
413-464-2851
ginahyams@gmail.com

Spencertown Academy “Still Life: Flowers, Fruits & Foods in Repose” Exhibition

Spencertown, New York—Spencertown Academy Arts Center kicks off its 17th annual Hidden Gardens program with “Still Life: Flowers, Fruits & Foods in Repose,” an exhibition featuring artists Mary Beth Eldridge, Ann Getsinger, Ellen Joffe-Halpern, Julie Love Edmonds, Alice McGowan, Scott Taylor, and Terry Wise. The show will be on display from August 14 through September 19 on Saturdays and Sundays, 1:00pm to 5:00pm. Admission is free and all art is for sale with a portion of the proceeds to benefit the Academy. Please note that on Saturday, August 28, the gallery will be open from 9:00am to 5:00pm during the Hidden Gardens Tour.

Spencertown Academy Curatorial Committee members Moira O’Grady and Norma Cohen organized the exhibition. “This year’s botanical show features scenes of tabletops and other settings where flowers, fruits, and food items provide glimpses into daily life that can be restful, playful, or downright intriguing,” says O’Grady. “Seven accomplished artists with very distinct styles will present their visions of peaceful—and sometimes challenging—still-life renderings. We are monitoring the local COVID-19 situation to see if it will be safe to host an opening reception for this exhibit. Please check the Academy’s website for forthcoming details.”

Artist and art teacher Mary Beth Eldridge (Pittsfield, MA) works in oils, watercolors, and acrylics. She finds creative inspiration in objects that populate her life. She says, “They reflect memory, functionality, and simple pleasure. With limited palettes, brush, and knife, these paintings, though small, use color, pattern, and form to convey hospitality and simplicity.” Her work has been featured in Pittsfield exhibitions at Lichtenstein Center for the Arts, Colonial Theatre, and Downtown Inc.

“I paint whatever seduces me most sweetly,” says Ann Getsinger (New Marlborough, MA). “At the starting point of a painting, I don’t want it to be reasonable...Painting has been an experimental vehicle for the most playful places in my mind to go beneath the surface, to harmoniously engage reality, imagination, and intuition in order to shine a bit of light into the cavern.” Her work can be seen at The Gallery at Somes Sound (Mount Desert, ME), Stockbridge Station Gallery (Stockbridge, MA), and at the Camilla Richman Fine Arts (Osterville, MA).

Ellen Joffe-Halpern (Williamstown, MA) is an artist, expressive art therapist, and teacher. “I don’t know how to slow life down so that it is ‘still,’ but I can paint in the moment and hold it in that way, an ongoing search to transcend the limits of time,” she says. “Most of my work is done from on-site sketches that I then transform through a veil of memory, experience, and affection.” Painting under the signature Joffe, she has exhibited extensively throughout New England.

Oil painter Julie Love Edmonds (Stockbridge, MA) tries to achieve a balance between the representational and abstract qualities in her artistic subjects. “I am attempting to upset the natural movement of the eye from one space to the next so that another context, other than naturalism, is allowed,” she says. “The goal is to represent life, not just in the way it looks, but the way it is experienced in different levels.” Edmonds has participated in many solo and group shows in Massachusetts and New York.

Alice McGowan (South Egremont, MA) creates paintings that are primarily meditations on light. “I find vegetables, fruit, and other elements of daily life particularly compelling as subjects,” she says. McGowan was born in postwar Japan to American parents and spent her childhood there and in India and the Philippines. “Making art has always been important to me, although other priorities took precedence for much of my life. I feel fortunate that recently I’ve had more time to paint.”

Painter Scott Taylor (Pittsfield, MA) is known for his use of color. He draws inspiration from New England's rustic barns, wooded pathways, garden flowers, old rusted trucks, and treed ridgelines. "Often when I start a painting, I have an idea and direction for what I expect the piece to be, but at times the painting will take on a life of its own," he says. His work is in permanent collections at Dana Farber Pediatric Children's Hospital, Fairview Hospital, and Hillcrest Cancer Center.

Painter and printmaker Terry Wise (Stockbridge, MA) says, "I don't enjoy cooking, but I love to set a beautiful table—to revel in the patterns and colors of textiles and smooth ceramic surfaces. Always drawn to still life paintings, I have come to understand the greater importance of the genre... The table as symbol of family and community and nourishment has become my message. Wise exhibits throughout the northeastern states and occasionally in Europe.

Founded in 1972, Spencertown Academy Arts Center is a cultural center and community resource serving Columbia County, the Berkshires, and the Capital region. Housed in a landmark 1847 Greek Revival schoolhouse, the Academy is located at 790 State Route 203 in Spencertown, New York. For more information, please contact info@spencertownacademy.org.

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Image captions:

1. "Deconstruction with Rubber Band" by Julie Love Edmonds (oil on canvas, 30" x 38")
2. (LEFT) "Life Is..." by Ellen Joffe-Halpern (oil on canvas, 13" x 13") and (RIGHT) "Lemons, Floe Blue Plate" by Mary Beth Eldridge (oil on canvas, 13.5" x 13.5")
3. "Primary Squash" by Ann Getsinger (oil on linen, 19" x 23")
4. "Grapefruit" by Alice McGowan (oil on paper, 15" x 17")

5. "Grey Day with Teal Flowers" by Scott Taylor (mixed media on paper, 27" x 40")
6. "Apple Basket" by Terry Wise (oil on canvas, 36" x 40")