



Contact: Phil Sumpter
Dir. of Marketing & Communications
215.925.9914 ext. 15

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**KNOWN FOR HER UNIQUE PRINTMAKING STYLE, VISUAL ARTIST
SHELLEY THORSTENSEN STRETCHES BEYOND RITTENHOUSE REPRESENTATION
TO PRESENT VERSATILE BODY OF WORK IN OLD CITY
SOLO SHOW TO OPEN APRIL 1**

PHILADELPHIA, PA – the Painted Bride’s **Independence Foundation Gallery**, presents ***This is the Smoke from when the Horses Left***, a debut solo exhibition featuring works by Philadelphia-based visual artist **Shelley Thorstensen**. The show, curated by **Anabelle Rodríguez**, will be on display in the Bride’s main gallery space **April 1 through May 14**. Receptions will take place **on First Friday, April 1 and May 6, 5-7pm**.

While recent solo exhibitions at the **Woodmere Art Museum** and at the **Print Center** focused on her skill as a printmaker, for her **Painted Bride solo show debut, Shelley Thorstensen** takes the opportunity to display her expanded vocabulary by presenting a panoply of drawings, sculptures as well as prints. ***This is the Smoke from when the Horses Left*** reflects her search for life meaning in various forms. For this artist, a certain obsessive quality overtakes the psyche, driving the process, demanding production, seeking a seduction of the corporeal. Shelley Thorstensen is first and foremost an artist, a member of an “obsessive” clan. She draws, she makes art, she seeks meaning. Forms appear and reappear signaling a preoccupation with life and death, with here and now, with the fantastic as well as the mundane.

There will be First Friday receptions held on April 1 and May 6. Receptions take place 5pm – 7pm and are free and open to the public. For April 1 reception, Fidget and Pandemix join musical forces in the DJ booth to provide good vibes and atmosphere for the First Friday social gathering kicking off the Spring season. Complimentary beverages will be provided by Flying Fish Brewery. The exhibit will be on display through May 14. Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 12pm to 6pm weekly. For more information, visit paintedbride.org, call the Box Office at 215-925-9914 or visit the Painted Bride Art Center, located at 230 Vine Street in Philadelphia.

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Press note:

For additional information (see below), or confirmation, or to schedule an artist interview call: Phil Sumpter, at (215) 925-9914 ext. 15.

SHELLEY THORSTENSEN | Artist Statement

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There is a life to form: at once mutable, at once constant, insistent and forever repeatable. "Once upon a time" is the evocation, the start of a story begun somewhere. When marked by visual device it moves from what is known or from what is unknown. There are figures that hold their ground; others uncover and ease toward a kind of transfiguration and pictures are made. Time will hold still or move on. Like x - y coordinates, layers race to hold meaning, or give up secrets. They can emit symbols, again mutable in pace and evolution. The work is always consequential, the amalgam of meaning.

Shelley Thorstensen
January 2011

SHELLEY THORSTENSEN | Career Profile & Resume

Born in 1953 in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Thorstensen received a BFA, Cum Laude, in Experimental Studio from Syracuse University, School of Visual & Performing Arts, in Syracuse, NY, and an MFA from the Tyler School of Art of Temple University, in Elkins Park, PA, winning the Lester & Viola Hecht Award for Printmaking.

RECENT EXHIBITIONS INCLUDE

2011

The Painted Bride, Philadelphia PA This is the Smoke from when the Horses Left

The Chapin School, Princeton, NJ

2010

Woodmere Art Museum: Counterpoint: The Leap from Vision to Print

2009

Houghton College, Houghton

2008

The Print Center Philadelphia, PA

2007

Eighty-first Annual Competition: Printmaking, The Print Center, Philadelphia

2006

Invitational Exhibition and lecture, SUNY Binghamton, NY

2005

Women's Studio Workshop, Rosendale, NY

Gallery Recolte, Fukuoka, Japan

2003

Muse Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

Montgomery Center for the Arts, Princeton, NJ

Moore College of Art and Design, Philadelphia, PA

2002

The Free Library of Philadelphia, PA

River Run Gallery, Lambertville, NJ

Society of American Graphic Artists, New York, NY

National Print Exhibition, Hunterdon Museum of Art, Hunterdon, NJ

1999

Williams Gallery

The Nassau Club, Princeton, NJ

RECENT AWARDS INCLUDE

Eighty-first Annual Competition: Printmaking, The Print Center, Philadelphia PA
Geraldine R Dodge Foundation Artist-in-Residence, Women's Studio Workshop
IMI Faculty Research Award, Moore College of Art and Design, Philadelphia, PA
The Puffin Foundation Award, Isles, Inc., Trenton, NJ
The F. Lamot Belin Art Scholarship Award, Trenton, NJ

SELECTED PUBLIC AND CORPORATE COLLECTION

Blue Cross / Blue Shield of PA, Philadelphia, PA
Frans Masereel Centrum, Kasterlee, Belgium
Free Library of Philadelphia, PA
The Print collection Archive, University of Mississippi
Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis, MN
Newark Public Library, Department of Prints, Newark, NJ
Oregon Institute Print Center, Portland, OR
Polymetaal, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Royal Museum of Art, Antwerp, Belgium
Rutgers University, Rutgers, NJ
University of Scranton, Scranton, PA
Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX
Women's Studio Workshop, Rosendale, NY
Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA

Artist on Artist

Shelley's work is part deep personal archive, part printmaking evangelism. She's trying to write her own legacy, pay homage to her influences (contemporary and historical) and make working sense of her past. It's autobiographical, it's spiritual, and it's illustrative. It's all woven together in a fabric of metaphor and commentary. There's no question that a narrative exists within each one of her pictures, but to get at it you will have to be willing to spend time with the work to crack the code. The artist struggles through each image, pushing and pulling, and reconciling with herself what to reveal and how not to give too much away. I love Shelley and her work (one can hardly separate the two, she is as much her work as she is anything) because of that struggle. It's been instructive and valuable to my own studio practice to observe this ongoing conversation from the different distances of student, protégé, colleague, and friend.

Shelley's works are almost strictly abstract; the floral patterns that she includes function not as representational subject matter but as identifiable motifs in the subtly nuanced compositions that she creates. Objects that are landscape based but could just as well be and sometimes are torsos, trees, lilies and fallopian tubes, balance the figure ground relationship. Her works are formally masterful.

Jillian L. Sokso, MFA
Assistant Professor and Chair, Department of Art
Houghton College