

THE NEWBERRY ARTS CENTER PRESENTS

Making Clay Personal



A 3-DAY WORKSHOP WITH
*Michael Sherrill, Glenda Guion
and Bill Griffith*



www.newberryartscenter.com

FEBRUARY 26, 27, 28, 2016

NEWBERRY FIREHOUSE CONFERENCE CENTER

Early check in/set up 4-7 p.m. February 25

LOCATION:

Newberry Firehouse Conference Center
1227 McKibben Street, Newberry, SC

REGISTRATION:

Deadline for registration is Friday, February 5, 2016. The fee is \$225* per person; \$125 for students with proof of active enrollment. Space is limited so please register early. Vendors are also invited to attend. For more information, visit www.southcarolinaclayconference.com

SC CLAY CONFERENCE SALE & EXHIBIT:

Open to all attendees and presenters, this widely advertised sale and exhibit will run from noon Friday through Sunday. A 20% commission on sales will go to support the Newberry Arts Center.

HOST HOTEL:

Hampton Inn-Newberry Opera House
1201 Nance Street, Newberry, SC

QUESTIONS?

Call Marquerite Palmer
Art Program Coordinator
803-321-1015 or email
mpalmer@cityofnewberry.com



Columbia, SC, Celebrates Laura Spong's 90th Birthday with Several Exhibitions

if ART Gallery and Vista Studios/Gallery 80808 in Columbia, SC, will present *LAURA SPONG AT 90: Six Decades In Painting*, on view from Feb. 4 - 29, 2016. A reception will be held at both locations on Feb. 4, from 6-9pm. A Panel Discussion: Laura Spong: Six Decades in Painting, will take place on Feb. 14, at 2pm @ if ART Gallery. A Laura Spong Birthday Party will be held on Feb. 18, from 5-8pm at both locations.

These exhibitions celebrate the career of one of South Carolina's most prominent painters, Columbia artist Laura Spong. Spong will turn 90 in February. The exhibition will present some 120 paintings from six decades of Spong's production, from the mid-1950s until 2016.

The exhibitions will be accompanied by a 28-page catalogue with essays by if ART Gallery owner Wim Roefs and artist Mark Flowers, a bio of Spong, Spong's artist's statement and dozens of color images of her work from the 1950s until now.

"Laura Spong's career is remarkable," if ART Gallery's Roefs says. "While raising six children, in part as a widow, Spong began to carve out a career for herself when she was in her early 30s. Even though producing art during several periods until the late 1980s had to take a back seat to raising children and other complications in her life, Spong stuck with it, until in the late 1980s she decided she was going to be a full-time artist. She was in her sixties then. Since then her career has developed steadily, really taking off after her wildly successful 80th birthday exhibition ten years ago. Late in life, Spong managed to become one of South Carolina's most prominent painters."

Spong, a native of Nashville, TN, was born in 1926. Spong was included



Laura Spong in her studio, December 2015

in *Abstract Art in South Carolina 1949 - 2012*, the South Carolina State Museum's historic overview of abstract art in South Carolina. In recent years, Spong has had solo exhibitions at the Spartanburg (SC) Museum of Art, Young Harris College in Young Harris, GA, and if ART Gallery and a two-person exhibition with Carl Blair at the Florence County (SC) Museum.

Since her 80th-birthday exhibition

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in 2006 in Columbia, Spong's career has taken off with multiple solo exhibitions throughout the state, including a retrospective at the University of South Carolina. Spong also was represented in group shows throughout the Carolinas and in Georgia and Tennessee. The South Carolina State Art Collection, the South Carolina State Museum and the Greenville County (SC) Museum of Art have acquired both early and more recent paintings by Spong in the past decade.



Laura Spong, "Bottles", n.d. (early 1960s), lacquer on masonite, 28 x 28 in.

During a career spanning some 60 years, Spong has exhibited throughout the Southeast. In the late 1950s, she took classes with J. Bardin and Gil Petroff at the Columbia Museum of Art. Twice around 1960, she was among the three winners of the Columbia Artists' Guild annual exhibition and competition, earning her two Columbia Museum exhibitions with her fellow winners. Personal circumstances, including the need to raise her children as a widow, drastically limited Spong's art production during most of the 1960s throughout the mid-1980s. Since the late 1980s, Spong has been a

full-time artist, keeping a studio at Vista Studios in Columbia since 1991 and gradually increasing her now considerable reputation. Much of her career has been documented in two exhibition catalogues, *Laura Spong at 80: Warming The Chill Wind With Celebration of 2006* and *Laura Spong 2006 - 2011: Age As An Administrative Device of 2011*, both published by if ART Gallery.

Spong offered the following statement:

*I play.
I am like a child on the floor with blocks.
Arranging, rearranging,
Adding, subtracting,
Delighted in the
shapes,
forms,
textures,
colors,
Until the components fall into place
And create a pleasing visual pattern.*

*I use ancient symbols and phosphenes
To connect with the world in time.
I use bits of forms and shapes I see around me
To connect with the world in space.
But, mostly I play with color.*

For further information check our SC Commercial Gallery listings, call if ART Gallery at 803/238-2351 or e-mail to (wroefs@sc.rr.com) or Vista Studios at 803/252-6134 or visit (www.vistastudios80808.com).

The Persistent Laura Spong
an essay by Wim Roefs

Laura Spong At 90: Six Decades In Painting covers work from the mid-1950s, when Spong began picking up the brush with some regularity, to now. It is the biggest exhibition of the artist's work to date. Following a smaller overview at the University of South Carolina's McMaster Gallery in 2006, it is the second exhibition that shows paintings from the early days of her career alongside current work. It's not a true retrospective, however; the

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