



# Still Hopes Episcopal Retirement Community in Columbia, SC, Features Works by Lucinda Howe

The Still Hopes Episcopal Retirement Community in Columbia, SC, will present *Abiding Trees*, featuring works by contemporary fauvist painter Lucinda Howe, on view at the Marshall A. Shearouse Center for Wellness, from Oct. 3 through Nov. 29, 2016.

Paintings of trees from South Carolina palmettos to Southwestern piñons celebrate our abiding relationships with them.

Bold, extravagant color is the first impression of the 30 paintings comprising the exhibition. A blood-red sky glows through green palm fronds. Blue-violet shadows vibrate against yellow patches of sunlit ground. Upon closer inspection, shapes of landscapes and trees appear.

"Although I hardly consider myself a wild beast," Howe says, "I share a passion for color with Les Fauves, the post-Impressionist artists of the early 20th century whose works emphasized painterly qualities and the use of deep, arbitrary color. I agree with JMW Turner who said, 'Color was not meant to describe, but to arouse and excite.'"

Painting with a local plein air group takes Howe to places she would not have found on her own and forces her to make a painting of whatever is there. She says trees often appear in her paintings regardless of her original intention. She says, "I may start out to paint a historic house or dilapidated barn and end up with a tree painting. Organic shapes come to the front and architecture becomes background. I'm also attracted to slanted light drawing me in to see what lies beyond an opening in a tree line."

On location, Howe paints with oils or fluid acrylics on a small board toned with a warm red to quickly capture light and shapes. She uses pairs of complements for



Work by Lucinda Howe

visual vibration and leaves bits of the red showing through areas of cool blues and greens. Back in the studio, she enlarges her plein air studies and has fun modifying colors, flinging drippy paint, and building texture. She infuses the paintings with personal expression by combining natural shapes with subjective color.

Often the image becomes secondary to color and surface texture in these pieces, but the painting retains an emotional component. The blood-red ground began as a way to add spice to verdant southern vegetation, but it has become a symbol for the life force within the landscape and a connection to the heart of the viewer.

Who doesn't love a tree? Trees represent the continuity of nature because they have long lives that span generations. Trees provide shelter, oxygen, and food for humans and wildlife. Trees have universal significance in our lives. However, a tree may be specific to a place or time.

Many of us have an abiding relationship with a particular tree... a memory from childhood, a memorial to a loved one, or a symbol of growth. Howe celebrates her relationships with trees in her paintings. She says "I invite viewers to

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reflect on their own abiding relationship with trees in their personal and family history."

Lucinda Howe grew up in Gastonia, NC, and graduated from Wake Forest University in 1977 with a degree in mathematics. She retired as Director of Major Group Actuarial Services after 29 years with BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina. Since beginning to draw and paint in midlife, she has traveled and painted on location around the US and Europe.

A pivotal point in her development came through travels to Arizona and New Mexico where she painted with advocates of open expressive color. The spectacular New Mexico landscape and freedom to explore color led to dramatic changes in her work. She also discovered the truth of Georgia O'Keeffe's comment "Once you've been to New Mexico it will itch you the rest of your life," and has returned many times to paint. Howe has developed a unique style, painting landscapes in

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