

if ART Gallery in Columbia, SC, Features Works by Laura Spong



Work by Laura Spong

In August, it is one year since Columbia artist and legend Laura Spong passed. To mark the occasion, if ART Gallery will organize several events. From Aug. 9 – 31, 2019, the gallery will present *Laura Spong; Dealer's Choice*, an exhibition with some of if ART Gallery owner Wim Roefs' favorite paintings by Spong.

On the exhibition opening day, Friday, Aug. 9, from 6-8pm, the gallery will present *Toasting Laura: The Reception*, with occasion to toast Laura. And, on Tuesday, Aug. 13, beginning at 7:30pm, one year after Laura's death, the gallery will organize *Remembering Laura: An Open Mic Evening* during which friends, family, collectors and others can share stories about and memories of Laura.

"It only seems right that we pause and remember Laura one year after she passed," if ART owner Roefs said. "And aside from the exhibition and reception, talking about her seems like the thing to do. Many of us think about her all the time and miss her, and we are all left with treasure troves of memories of and stories about Laura. Many of us shared some privately after her passing, but I am sure there are people who'd love to have an evening talking about Laura and telling stories that, perhaps, no one else has heard yet. She was, after all, a character and much beloved, and she was a fixture on the Columbia and South Carolina art scene for decades."

"Laura also was someone who inspired many others, artists and non-artists, who knew her work, who used to be her colleagues at Gallery 80808/Vista Studios or who simply met her on occasion. She set an example for many, both as an artist and human being – an example of perseverance, dedication to talent and calling, modesty and kindness. And sly humor. It's time we got to share some of our memories of this fabulous human being."

Spong in 2017 received the Elizabeth



Photo of Laura Spong

O'Neill Verner Governor's Award for the Arts for Lifetime Achievement, South Carolina's highest award in the arts. The City of Columbia declared September 5, 2017, "Laura Spong Day."

A native of Nashville, TN, Spong was born in 1926 and passed on August 13, 2018. She was among South Carolina's most prominent abstract painters. Spong was included in *Abstract Art in South Carolina 1949 – 2012*, the South Carolina State Museum's historic overview of abstract art in South Carolina. She 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 Museum in Florence, SC. Spong also was represented in gallery and museum 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 Museum of Art in Greenville, SC, acquired both early and

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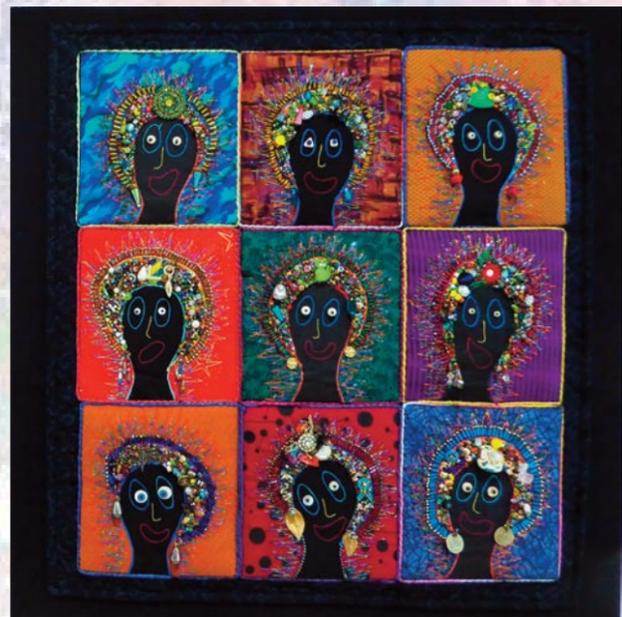
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