

# OCTAVIA

ART GALLERY

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Betsy Stewart: *Microscopic Cosmos*

June 7 - 28, 2014

Opening reception: June 7, 6 – 8 pm

Octavia Art Gallery is pleased to present *Microscopic Cosmos*, a solo exhibition of new works by Betsy Stewart. This will be the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

For many years, Betsy Stewart's paintings have examined the biodiversity in pond water, encouraging the viewer to consider the unseen. Using microscopic imagery from water sources, Stewart's paintings inflict a sense of interconnectedness. Her imagery is best described in the words of John Muir, "when we tug at a single thing in nature, we find that it is attached to the rest of the world." In giving the mutually dependent life systems found in pond water a visual presence, referencing both the micro and macro elements of the universe, Betsy reveals the fragility of our position in the cosmos.

In this exhibition, Stewart's paintings link these micro and macro spheres, exploring the connections in nature from a droplet of water to the vastness of the cosmos. After attending a lecture by NASA scientists, Stewart began a series of work titled "Biocriticals", which considers the ambiguity between the minute and the infinite. She began experimenting with the idea that many of the same shapes existed in the solar system as well as in microscopic water samples.

Betsy Stewart is a participant in "Take Me To The River," (TMTTR) an international collaboration between artists from different countries whose mission is to promote greater understanding among nations and peoples through cultural projects. Aligned with Betsy's themes, TMTTR chose the river because of the positive and life-affirming connotations of water. Since 2002 the exhibition has been presented in Cairo, Egypt, Washington D.C, Pretoria, South Africa, Istanbul, Turkey and Wichita Falls, Texas. This summer, TMTTR will exhibit a large collaborative piece, titled *Inmersión*, along with local artists at the Iturria Foundation in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Stewart is featured in public collections both nationally and internationally, such as the Bellagio Hotel, Las Vegas, the American Embassies in Barbados, West Indies and Karachi, Pakistan, the Washington Convention Center, Washington D.C., and Joule Unlimited Technologies, Cambridge, MA. Her work is in the permanent museum collections at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., Kreeger Museum in Washington D.C., Pretoria Art Museum in Pretoria, South Africa, the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake, NY, and the Wichita Falls Art Museum in Wichita Fall, Texas.

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