

Ethereal Assisi comes to Hoffman Gallery in Waterston exhibit

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(Portland, Ore.)—The fantastic, miraculous and sensational features forming the popular legend of Saint Francis of Assisi inspire an upcoming exhibit at Lewis & Clark's Ronna and Eric Hoffman Gallery of Contemporary Art, which opens Sept. 6. San Francisco-based artist Darren Waterston has been recognized for his ability to imaginatively integrate organic forms into ambiguous, abstract landscapes. The two-part exhibition at Lewis & Clark offers a variety of visual interest, navigating the intersection between the physical and metaphysical in both "Constellations: Paintings by Darren Waterston" and "The Flowering (The Fourfold Sense)."

The subject of the 2007 monograph "Representing the Invisible," Waterston is particularly interested in rendering the unseen but tangible connections between the everyday and the otherworldly. "So much of my artistic practice is about trying to disengage from material embodiment, to represent that disengagement," Waterston said.

"The Flowering" is a portfolio comprised of 13 original prints by Waterston and 13 broadsides by Tyrus Miller, professor of modern European literature at the University of California at Santa Cruz, which explores the senses and bodily experiences of Saint Francis of Assisi. Waterston's interest in Saint Francis stems from a 2005 artist's residency at the Civitella Ranieri Center in Umbria, near the home of the mystic saint. Immersing himself in Saint Francis lore, Waterston learned about the saint's tremendous physical sacrifices and enduring legacy. Informed by a range of historical and theological source material, the watercolors and texts resist Catholic literalism in favor of artistic amplifications. The exhibition's title refers to the Fioretti, a 14th-century account of the saint's life and works.

The works included in "Constellations" are all oil paintings, demonstrating the alluring incandescence and textural variety for which Waterston has earned critical attention. Waterston's work has been featured in exhibits internationally, and he is included in permanent collections at the Portland Art Museum and the de Young Museum, in San Francisco, among others. "I've been watching Darren Waterston's work for more than 10 years," said Linda Tesner, director of the gallery of contemporary art at Lewis & Clark. "I think he is one of the most interesting and talented artists working today."

The Hoffman Gallery will host an opening reception for the exhibition on Sept. 6 from 5 to 7 p.m., followed by an artists' talk. "Sacred Traces: Sensuality and Spirituality in the Art of Darren Waterston," will be a dialogue between Waterston and Miller, moderated by Ben David, assistant professor of art history.

The Hoffman Gallery of Contemporary Art is located on the Lewis & Clark College campus at 0615 SW Palatine Hill Road in Portland. The gallery is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The show is free and open to the public; parking is free on weekends. For information about the exhibit, call Linda Tesner, at 503.768.7687 or visit www.lclark.edu/dept/gallery/. Artist interviews are available before the opening; for information about contacting Waterston, call Emily Slavin in the Office of Public Affairs and Communications.

Link to gallery for purchase:

<http://www.gallery16.com/index.php?page=editions&artist=dw>