

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Katie Deits, Executive Director; (561) 746-3101

Email: katie@lighthousearts.org

Photos Attached

What: Opening on Thursday, February 16 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and running through March 24, 2012 at the Lighthouse ArtCenter Museum is “Realism — A Stringing Together of Abstractions,” “Sea Creatures Above and Below” Wildlife Photography by Ruth Petzold, and “It’s All in the Details” Ceramics by Nick Ramey. On March 15, Petzold will give a lecture on her wildlife photography.

Where: Lighthouse ArtCenter Museum & School of Art, 373 Tequesta Drive, Tequesta, Fla. 33469.
LighthouseArts.org

High season exhibitions feature hyper-realistic paintings paired with abstracts, wildlife photography and a nationally renowned ceramics artist

Tequesta, Fla. (January 24, 2012) — Art lovers will be delighted to discover the variety of exhibitions — from paintings to underwater photography to sculptural ceramics — opening at the Lighthouse ArtCenter Museum on February 16. Immense hyper-realistic paintings of sunsets and florals by JB Berkow are paired with colorfield abstract paintings by Rita Shapiro, while in another gallery wildlife and underwater photographer Ruth Petzold features photographs taken around the globe from pole to pole. Nationally renowned ceramic artist and sculptor Nick Ramey’s work will be on display, and the artist also will present a workshop on February 24 and 25.

People who are familiar with JB Berkow’s work are struck by her stunning hyper-realism. In fact, her work appears so real that art critics have dubbed it “art you can live in.” Oddly enough, Ms. Berkow does not consider herself a realist painter. Instead, she thinks of herself as “an artist stringing together abstractions.”

She feels this way because of the way she composes her work. “I start in the upper left-hand side of the canvas. As I move across and down, I finish one segment at a time until the painting is done and the illusion of realism is complete,” says Ms. Berkow. “My concerns are about line, shape, color, positive and negative space and the push and pull of both, all the same exact elements with which abstract painters are concerned.”

Aware that people were not seeing her work the way she did, she decided to produce a 20-minute documentary on the topic titled, “Realism: A Stringing Together of Abstractions.”

To emphasize the points raised in the documentary, she went a step further by orchestrating a series of collaborative paintings that she created with her friend and well-established color-field artist, Rita Shapiro. After working together for many years in the same studio, she came to realize that they both approached their work in exactly the same way. The only difference was that one did it on a quantum level while the other did it on a cosmic one. By combining their very diverse styles together, they have invented a distinctive new body of work. Their collaboration is even more unusual because they are not merely combining their talent to craft a single piece of artwork, but instead are combining their individual separate works together to produce a new whole. By juxtaposing their different styles, it forces the viewer to look at realistic and non-objective art in an entirely new way. Each begins to play off the other, making the lines between them start to blend, minimizing differences, and allowing similarities to become more obvious.

Ruth Petzold has had a lifelong passion for nature and photography, which became her life’s work. Since getting her first camera at age 7, she has devoted herself to photographing nature and wildlife above and below the water. From wildlife in the wilds of Africa, Antarctica and the Arctic, to the undersea world of the Pacific Rim countries and the Caribbean, she has pursued the beauties of nature on all seven continents and in most of the global seas and oceans. Her passionate love of the natural world has taken her to exotic and remote parts of the world in pursuit of her subject matter — 11 times to the African continent, 10 times to New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and six times to Indonesia, just to mention a few of her photographic excursions.

In the exhibition, “Sea Creatures, Above and Below,” are photographs (some as large as 5 feet wide) from her explorations that include polar bears, rare leafy sea dragons, whales, as well as a pygmy seahorse the size of one’s pinky fingernail. Although Ms. Petzold suffered a leg amputation years ago, it has not stopped her indomitable spirit from continuing to do underwater photography and travel the world in search of great photographs. As a wildlife conservationist, she is a member of the Explorer’s Club.

A renowned photographer with many awards to her credit, her work has been exhibited in the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the Vero Beach Museum of Art, and the Crooked Tree Art Center in Michigan and published in National Geographic. Her photographs appear in the Natural History of Fishes and other scientific publications with Dr. Eugenie Clark. She has won awards from the Crooked Tree Art Center, American Society of Media Photographers, and a gold medal for International Underwater Photography in Egypt.

Educational components to the exhibition include wall panels with descriptions of the sea creatures, characteristics and geography, and on Thursday, March 15, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Ms. Petzold will be in the museum to address questions and will deliver a lecture on her photography and experiences beginning at 6:15 p.m.

Among other accomplishments in the ceramics field, Nick Ramey has just been awarded a five-year residency at Baltimore Clayworks and was part of the study abroad program in China. Mr. Ramey has a bachelor of fine arts degree from Indiana University and a master of fine arts degree from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. During graduate school, he developed an interest in using representational imagery that eventually led to a switch in focus from functional pottery to figurative sculpture.

“It is the journey of life and the process of growing up that most influences this work,” Mr. Ramey said. “I use clay as the primary medium in this work but also include many mixed media elements, including found objects, which I believe will hopefully trigger a memory or a sense of the past within the individual viewer. Most importantly, I want my sculptures to tell a story, one that might be different for each viewer, depending on their own personal history and life experiences.”

In his two-day workshop on Feb. 24 and 25, he will demonstrate wheel-thrown and figurative sculpture processes, covering a variety of techniques, including altered forms, slip-cast assemblage, underglaze/glaze and decal application. Presentations feature non-traditional building and application techniques to invoke a spark of nostalgia, as well as influences from abroad. To register for the workshop and artists’ party, call the Lighthouse ArtCenter School of Art at (561) 748-8737.

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For more information on the Lighthouse ArtCenter Museum, School of Art, exhibitions, programs and events visit LighthouseArts.org or call (561) 746-3101. The Lighthouse ArtCenter is located in Gallery Square North, 373 Tequesta Drive, Tequesta, Florida, one-half mile west of US Hwy 1. Museum hours are Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with admission free for members and \$5 for nonmembers ages 12 and up. Saturday hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with free admission.

ABOUT THE LIGHTHOUSE ARTCENTER

The Lighthouse ArtCenter is a member-supported not-for-profit 501(c)(3) community arts organization, providing excellence in art exhibitions, instruction, education and outreach for all ages. Programs are funded in part by the Palm Beach County Cultural Council, the Palm Beach County Tourist Development Council and the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners.

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Photos Attached

Cutlines:



1. JB Berkow



2. Berkow-Shapiro-LinearSeduction: Hyper-realist painter JB Berkow and abstract color-field painter Rita Shapiro collaborated on this 60-inch square oil on multiple canvases called “Linear Seduction.”



3. Berkow-Sunrise-I.jpg: Sunrise I is a multiple-paneled oil painting by JB Berkow which is 23-feet wide and eight-feet tall.



4. Shapiro-Rita.jpg: Rita Shapiro



5. Petzold, RuthCMYK.jpg: Ruth Petzold



6. Petzold-Polar Bear on a Mission.jpg: Petzold captured through her lens this polar bear in the Arctic as he lept onto an ice flow.



7. Petzold-Leafy Sea Dragon.jpg: The rare leafy sea dragon from Australia is easy to miss as it disguises itself as a piece of seaweed.



8. Ramey in studio.jpg: Ceramic artist and sculptor Nick Ramey in his studio in Baltimore, Maryland.



9. Ramey-splash.jpg: Nick Ramey's ceramics include sculpture, specialty glazes and techniques such as decals and altered shapes.

Additional Artist Bios

RITA SHAPIRO was born in Brooklyn, New York on December 1, 1934, and resided in Philadelphia for 48 years. Ten years ago she made West Palm Beach, her permanent home. She received both Bachelor of Science and Master of Education degrees from Temple University and studied painting at Pratt Institute and The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

Her work can be found in numerous private and corporate collections. Among the most notable are E.I. DuPont, SAP America, Measuring & Monitoring Inc., General Instrument Corp., Federal Reserve Bank, Philadelphia, GAP International, Access.Com, Northwestern Institute and The University of Scranton. Patti LaBelle has included Rita's work in her private collection. In 2006 her work was installed at the Florida Law Offices of Fox Rothchild, Brandywine Realty Trust, Cira Center, Philadelphia, The Vue at Lake Eola in Orlando and Scripps Florida. JFK Hospital and Morse Assisted Living have included her work.

JB Berkow is an internationally known artist who has shown in many museum and gallery shows. Her work is part of some major permanent collections including the Vatican Museum of Contemporary Art in Italy and the Boston University Performing Arts Center. Considering how realistic her paintings appear, it may surprise the viewer to learn that JB tends to think of her work as a 'Stringing Together of Abstractions. As she explains, "My greatest joy comes when, after carefully assembling every one of these small abstract elements, they come together as an image of overall beauty prompting the viewer to want to escape in their completed puzzle of realistic illusion." It is this view that has inspired her current show at the Lighthouse ArtCenter Museum.

Her critics have often described her work as so real that it gives the illusion of being able to walk right into the canvas. Some have dubbed it "Art you can live in." Ms. Berkow also is a published poet, so her monograph, published three years ago, contains not only images of the artist's work that spans across 15 years of her career, but also a poem created to go with each image. Other books that the artist has published are "What They Didn't Teach You In Art School" and "Shades of Love."

Ms. Berkow has spent most of her career helping and mentoring other artists. She started the first cooperative gallery in Washington, D.C. at age 26, which is today considered one of the top galleries of its type. She founded Frenchman's Art Studio and Gallery, Inc., a membership gallery in Juno Beach that she ran for 10 years. Since 2005, she started a full-retail gallery, RosettaStone Fine Art Gallery, in Jupiter.