

A Traveling Exhibit for 2011-2013

The Southern Frontier: The Landscapes of Bartram's Travels
 Paintings by Philip Juras

Taken together, the paintings in this exhibit allow a viewer to experience something that I would argue is not easy to envision in the modern South: a glimpse of the presettlement southern frontier. While there are written descriptions of that landscape, particularly by the 18th century naturalist William Bartram, almost no visual imagery exists to document the southern wilderness before European settlement. Perhaps for the first time, these paintings bring the long lost southern frontier to 21st century eyes in the same way that 19th century American landscape painters like Bierstadt and Moran brought the western frontier to the consciousness of our industrializing nation. In doing that, the exhibit will acquaint the viewer with many of the important and imperiled ecosystems that remain in the south today – remnant natural communities that would greatly benefit from greater public awareness.

Two approaches create this viewing experience. Most of the images in the body of work depict remnant natural landscapes from across the Southeast. These landscapes, many of which are quite rare, still exhibit the same qualities Bartram encountered and documented in his travels 240 years ago. I also portray environments described by Bartram that no longer exist, such as the Black Belt prairie of Alabama and the Keowee Valley of South Carolina. My knowledge of these remnant and extinct landscapes is drawn from my 1997 MLA thesis research on the presettlement South; ongoing involvement with scientists from the Nature Conservancy, various universities, and state and federal agencies; and life-long love of nature and travel. Using that background I also provide contextual descriptions to accompany the paintings in the exhibit.

The first exhibit of the body of work, scheduled for January-April, 2011 at the Telfair Museum in Savannah, Georgia, includes more than 50 paintings. A third of them are studio paintings ranging in size from 24x36 to 40x80 inches. The rest are a mix of studio and plein air works ranging in size from 8x10 to 24x36 inches. An exhibit is also being planned at the Morris Museum in Augusta for 2011. Other locations are being explored. I plan to keep the work together as a traveling exhibit into 2013.

Catalog:

The catalog will be published by the Telfair Museum and distributed by the University of Georgia Press. It will include three essays. Holly McCullough, Director of Collections and Exhibitions at the Telfair Museums, will discuss the exhibit within the context of the American landscape painting tradition. Dorinda Dallmeyer, Director of the Environmental Ethics Certificate Program at the University of Georgia, will talk about William Bartram and the lasting impact he has had as one of our nation's earliest and most outstanding scientists and artists. I will provide ecological and historical context to accompany the paintings in the catalog as in the exhibit. There will also be a special contribution from award winning author Janisse Ray.

Related Publication: *Bartram's Living Legacy, the Travels and the Nature of the South*

In September 2010, fourteen of the paintings in the exhibit, along with my accompanying essay, will be published in the book *Bartram's Living Legacy: the Travels and the Nature of the South*. William Bartram's *Travels*, first published in 1791, is a touchstone for understanding the environment and culture of the presettlement South. This anthology combines a reprint of Bartram's *Travels* with Bartram-inspired essays by many of the South's most respected nature writers. It is edited by Dorinda Dallmeyer of the University of Georgia and the Southern Nature Project and will be published by the Mercer University Press. The exhibit of paintings at Telfair Museum in Savannah will take place in conjunction with a major conference in March of 2011 related to the release of the anthology. More information can be found at www.BartramProject.com.

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Education

- 1997 Master of Landscape Architecture, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA. MLA Thesis: The Presettlement Piedmont Savanna: A Model for Landscape Design and Management
- 1990 Bachelor of Fine Arts, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA. Major: Drawing and Painting.
- 1988 University of Georgia Studies Abroad in Cortona, Italy, Drawing and Painting.

Select Solo Exhibits

- 2010 *A Vision of Grasslands in the Southeast*, North Carolina Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill, NC
- 2009 *A Pleasant Territory: Grasslands in the Southeast*, Circle Gallery, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA.
- 2007 *New Landscapes*, Aurum Studios, Athens, GA.
- 2005 *Southern Landscapes*, Carolina Galleries, Charleston, SC.
- 2004 *Forged by Drought, Flood, and Fire: Scenes of Remnant Landscapes*, Circle Gallery, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

Select Group Exhibits

- 2008 *Italia*, group exhibit, Carteret Contemporary Art, Morehead City, NC.
Spirit of the Land III, invitational exhibit, Athens, GA.
- 2007 Two Person Exhibit, Carolina Galleries, Charleston, SC.
Spirit of the Land II, invitational exhibit, State Botanical Garden, Athens, GA.
- 2006 *At the Water's Edge*, group exhibit, Carolina Galleries, Charleston, SC.
Spirit of the Land, invitational exhibit, State Botanical Garden, Athens, GA.
Perspectives of Travel, two-person exhibit, UGA Alumni Center, Atlanta, GA.
- 2005 *Matters of Perspective*, two-person exhibit, Aurum Studios, Athens, GA.
Places-Nonplaces, two-person exhibit, Circle Gallery, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA.
Skinnydipping, group exhibit, Mercury Gallery, Athens, GA.
Lyndon House Arts Center 30th Juried Exhibition, Athens, GA.
- 2002 *Exploration and Discovery: Field Studies*, group exhibit, Circle Gallery, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA.
Topophilia II, invitational exhibit, Clayton Street Gallery, Athens, GA.
- 2000 *Isolalunga to Holzhausen*, two-person exhibit, Joanna Angell Gallery, Walterboro, SC.
- 1997 *Twenty-second Annual Juried Exhibition*, Lyndon House Arts Center, Athens, GA.
- 1995 *SED First Annual Juried Student Exhibition*, Circle Gallery, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA.
- 1990 *Honors Thesis Exhibition*, group exhibit, Visual Arts Gallery, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

Recent Presentations

- 2010 "Forgotten Grasslands: Envisioning the Presettlement Piedmont," Evelyn McNeill Sims Lecture, North Carolina Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill, NC.
"Behind the Scenes: A Landscape Painter Drinks Science Kool-aid," cosponsored by the Environmental Ethics Certificate Program and the Department of Geology at The University of Georgia, Athens, GA.
- 2009 "Portraying the presettlement Southeast through oil paintings of remnant grassland communities," 6th Eastern Native Grass Symposium, Columbia, SC.
- 2008 "Scenes of a Vanished Wilderness," artist in residence series, Reynolds Plantation, GA.

Gallery Representation

Carolina Galleries, Charleston, SC
Aurum Studios, Athens, GA



Anthony Shoals, Broad River, Georgia
Oil on Canvas, 40" x 66", 2009



Oak Savanna, Sprewell Bluff Natural Area, Georgia
Oil on Canvas, 24" x 36", 2009



Last Light, Dawho River, Edisto Island, South Carolina
Oil on Canvas, 30" x 42", 2008



Interdune, Harbor Island, South Carolina
Oil on Canvas, 40" x 54", 2009



Longleaf Glade, Greenwood Plantation, Thomasville, Georgia
Oil on Canvas, 40" x 60", 2008



Old Growth Cypress in the Rain, Altamaha River, Long County, Georgia
Oil on Canvas, 18" x 24", 2009



Altamaha River, Wayne County, Georgia
Oil on Canvas, 24" x 36", 2009



North Shore of Lake Pontchartrain, Fontainebleau State Park, Louisiana
Oil on Canvas, 24" x 36", 2009



White-topped Pitcher Plants, Baldwin County, Alabama
Oil on Canvas, 18" x 24", 2009



Alachua Savanna c. 1774, Alachua County, Florida
Oil on Canvas, 18" x 26", 2010



Black Belt Prairie c. 1775, Montgomery County, Alabama
Oil on Canvas, 24" x 32", 2009



Steady Wind on the Saint Johns River, Bayard Conservation Area, FL,
Oil on Canvas, 18" x 24", 2009



Keowee Valley c. 1775, Pickens County, South Carolina
Oil on Canvas, 18" x 28", 2009



Dark Prong Forest, Pisgah National Forest, North Carolina
Oil on Canvas, 30" x 42", 2007



Shining Rocks, Shining Rock Wilderness, Pisgah National Forest, North Carolina
Oil on Canvas, 40" x 80", 2008