



The Working Waterfront:
Port Tampa Bay
New Paintings by Laura Waller

Dedicated to my husband Ed, my family, Barbara Hill, and the memory of Louis Perez.



ON COVER: *Intermission*, 2014, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.

ABOVE: *TampaShip*, 2014, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.

The Working Waterfront: Port Tampa Bay

New Paintings by Laura Waller

January 23 - March 7, 2015

Clayton Galleries
4105 S MacDill Ave, Tampa, FL 33611
(813) 831-3753

www.claytongalleries.net

Essay

Local artist Laura Waller's exhibition, *The Working Waterfront: Port Tampa Bay*, explores one of Florida's major marine hubs and provides visual documentation of America's global industry. This series evokes the 19th-century Romantic painters' interest in the sublime, presenting each ship, in its monumental and overwhelming size, with a narrative: carriers that navigate the world, cross boundaries, and, through her presentation, demonstrate their grandeur. Using angles, ephemeral lighting, and dramatic architecture, Waller pulls the viewer in and demands their interaction and acknowledgment of, as she calls them, "true international citizens."

Exploring the port by land and boat, Waller investigated the tethered lines, the architectural formations, the shadows, and colors in her surroundings. From her perspective at water level, Waller documented the massive projections of the hulls, the bulbous bows, the bumpers, anchor chains, and tugboats. Waller's interest in these ships and industry goes well beyond the physical attributes - she researches shipping terms and the functionality of each element, and she reads literature and documentaries on the U.S. Merchant Marine. Waller also uses online databases to track the ships as they navigate the world, performing their duties through waters often made treacherous by both man and nature. Her excitement and passion for this series permeates each painting and allows the viewer to transcend the traditional disconnect between consuming and having access to goods with the

knowledge of how these items arrived on our shores – the life and essence of this industry.

Bursting into the viewer's space, the hull in *Thorco Tribute No. 2* (2014) juts forth, evoking feelings of power, solidity, and magnificence. Waller's use of color blocking and the juxtaposition of complementary hues call attention to the form and structural essence of this mighty ship. The cropped image heightens the importance of the lines and geometric construction of the vessel, unifying individual elements into a cohesive mass of forms. Water, the conduit on which this ship relies, is absent, forcing the viewer's attention to be focused on the ominous façade of this rugged hull.

To imbue her paintings with the character and pulsing vibrancy one experiences when viewing her work, Waller captures the rust and grittiness of each ship through her process. Using an undercoat of raw sienna, sometimes emerging behind the impasto made by rough brushstrokes and the visible marks of a palette knife, Waller's series is united by the harmonious warm colors and earth tones. Wrapping around the sides of each canvas, the images appear to continue indefinitely and allude to the incredible size and magnitude of the subject matter, despite the cropped and foreshortened presentation that fills the visual field. Her work recalls the exploration of form and architecture in early photographers like Alfred Stieglitz and Berenice Abbott, conveying the potential for movement

in a single moment. Other influences seen in her paintings include the Post-Impressionists and early abstract painters' interest in the emotive power of color and form, yet Waller presents a unique style and quality in her work, an examination past the formal elements into the ships as vessels capable of telling their own personal story.

Devoid of human figures, Waller's paintings nonetheless document the implication of human activity and explore the humble beauty found in the commonplace. Waller's goal was to allow the ships to speak to the person engaging with her work, to allow the viewer the opportunity to investigate past the surface presentation, and to leave visible documentation of these giant nomads, a goal she has not only reached, but exceeded.

Christy Paris has a Masters in Interdisciplinary Humanities from Florida State University and a Masters in Art History from University of South Florida. Her research includes gender and identity, specifically in the works of 20th-century female painters like Grace Hartigan, Pet Steir, and Sherrie Levine.

A certified teacher in the state of Florida, Christy has been teaching for over ten years in both secondary and post-secondary levels. Earning her Museum Studies Certificate from FSU, Christy has also interned and worked at the Museum of Fine Arts in Tallahassee and the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, Florida. Christy is currently an art history Adjunct Professor at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg campus.

Background

For twenty years, I painted scenes of our nation's harbors and waterfronts, focusing on Maine where I spend part of each year working in my studio. I was interested in the coastal ambiance of each region, its architectural elements, boats and seaside cottages, specifically the everyday, working waterfront, its utilitarian objects and how they are affected by light.



ATC-25 No. 1, 2014, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.

Port Tampa Bay series

A Florida resident since childhood, I lived and worked for years in Tampa where I also have a studio. In 2013, I became intrigued with painting a working waterfront closer to home.

Artist's Statement

I chose Port Tampa Bay, a major Florida industrial port, as the subject for my new series. The Port is closed to the public, but with resolve, I was able to gain access and an escort to tour the dockyards and other sites. I explored each channel by power boat, photo documenting the ships from a water level perspective. I researched the Port's history and its vital marine businesses, noting the cargo ships loading and offloading containers and goods, tugboats guiding the ships in and out of the Port, and vessels in dry dock for repairs and maintenance.

Since I find worn, aged surfaces and humble objects beautiful, the Port's rusty, gritty shapes provide a fascinating subject to explore. I also like the juxtaposition of interpreting the Port's rugged vigor from a woman's perspective; I paint a massive ship's bow aimed straight toward the viewer to emphasize its threatening, ominous quality.

Visually documenting this part of America's industry, with its global connections, is reminiscent, as someone recently said, of a WPA project. To my knowledge there is no other painter using this Port as a primary influence. It is important for me to capture the port at this moment in Tampa's history. When possible, the name of the ship becomes the title of the painting.

Process

My paintings are water-based oil on Belgian linen. In striving to communicate the incomplete, the raw sienna under-painting is often revealed to the viewer.



Michael A. No. 1, 2014, oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in.



Michael A. No. 2, 2014, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.



Carol E., 2014, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.



ABOVE: *American Victory*, 2014, oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in.



ABOVE RIGHT: *Jerilyn*, 2014, oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in.



RIGHT: *Paul T. Moran*, 2014, oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in.



Top Island No. 3, 2014, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.



Thorco Tribute No. 2, 2014, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.



Monarch Countess No. 1, 2014, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.



Thorco Tribute No. 3, 2014, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.



Lacatau, 2014, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.

Biography

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Laura Waller received her undergraduate and master's degrees from Newcomb College and Tulane University in New Orleans, LA. Concurrent with her studies in sociology, psychology and social work, she developed a passion for art and art history.

After an eleven year career as a professional therapist, Laura Waller became a certified financial planner and founder of the successful Waller & Wax Advisors firm in Tampa, FL. Throughout her thirty year career in finance, she continued to paint and study independently with a number of prestigious artists in Arizona, Florida and Maine. Waller was selected in 2013, 2014 and again for 2015, for artist residencies at the Vermont Studio Center.

Laura Waller paints full time, dividing her schedule between her Maine and Tampa studios, and is currently working on her new Port Tampa Bay series. A solo exhibition, titled "The Working Waterfront: Port Tampa Bay" premieres in early 2015 at the Clayton Galleries, Tampa, FL. Waller's award-winning work is collected by individuals and corporations worldwide.



SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 *The Working Waterfront: Port Tampa Bay*
New Paintings by Laura Waller
Clayton Galleries, Tampa, FL. January 23 – March 7
- 2005 *Laura Waller*, Blue Ibis Gallery, Ruskin, Florida

AWARDS

- 2014 Selected artist, Creative Capital Foundation Professional Development Program funded by the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs.
- 2014 Award of Excellence, 9th Biennial National Art Exhibition, Visual Arts Center, Punta Gorda Florida; Juror Carl J. Samson, former Chairman of The American Society of Portrait Artists.
- 2013 Best of Show, 27th Annual All Florida Juried Exhibition, Lee County Alliance for the Arts, Fort Myers, Florida; Juror, Frank Verpoorten, director and curator of the Baker Museum of Art, Naples, Florida

DUAL AND GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2014-2015 Fine Art Exhibition, Tampa Bay Lightning/ Amalie Arena, Tampa, FL; Jurors from Tampa Museum of Art, Dali Museum, Florida Photography Museum and St. Petersburg Museum of Fine Art
- 2014 *City Scapes: The City As I See It*
The Gallery at the Watershed, Eugene, Oregon. Jurors Robert Canaga, curator of the Gallery at the Watershed, Jeff Wilson-Charles, developer of the Whitaker area of Ferry Street Bridge, and Dr. Philip Sperenza, Assistant Professor of Architecture at the University of Oregon.
- 2014 28th Annual All Florida Juried Exhibition Lee County Alliance For The Arts, Ft. Myers, Florida; Juror, John Loscuito, director of the Bower School of Music and the Arts Art Gallery at Florida Gulf Coast University.
- 2013 *New Works by Laura Waller and Taylor Ikin*, Nuance Galleries, Tampa, Florida
- 2013 Maine Coastal Islands Exhibit, Headquarters, National Wildlife Refuge, Rockland, Maine
- 2013 *Maine Icons and Special Places*, River Arts Center, Damariscotta, Maine; Juror Bruce Brown

Resume

- 2013 *Oil Paintings by Laura Waller*, Corporate Headquarters, Maine Home and Design Magazine, Portland, Maine
- 2013 *New Works by Laura Waller and Taylor Ikin*, Nuance Galleries, St. Petersburg, Florida
- 2012 *New Works by Laura Waller and Taylor Ikin*, Nuance Galleries, Tampa, Florida
- 2012 *Maine Icons and Special Places*, River Arts Center, Damariscotta, Maine; Juror Bjorn Runquist
- 2012 *The Human Side*, River Arts Center, Damariscotta, Maine; Juror, Judy Taylor
- 2011 Holiday Show, Jonathan Frost Gallery, Rockland, Maine
- 2011 *Travelscapes*, Nuance Galleries, Tampa, Florida
- 2010 *New Works, Laura Waller and Taylor Ikin*, Nuance Galleries, Tampa, Florida
- 2010 Holiday Show, North Light Gallery, Millinocket, Maine
- 2009 Waller and Ikin Exhibition, Demonstration, Nuance Galleries, Tampa, Florida
- 2008 *Two Friends Return, Laura Waller, Taylor Ikin*, Nuance Galleries, Tampa, Florida
- 2008 Annual Florida Watercolor Society Exhibition, Old School Square Cultural Center, Delray Beach, FL; Juror Mary Todd Beam
- 2007 *Two Friends, Laura Waller, Taylor Ikin*, Nuance Galleries, Tampa, Florida
- 2006 Oncology on Canvas, traveling exhibition organized by Eli Lilly and Company, premiered at Royal Academy of Art in London, UK, and worldwide.

ARTIST RESIDENCIES

- 2015 Vermont Studio Center Residency in Arts Program, Johnson, Vermont
- 2014 Vermont Studio Center Residency in Arts Program, Johnson, Vermont
- 2013 Vermont Studio Center Residency in Arts Program, Johnson, Vermont

INDEPENDENT STUDIES

Independent studies with leading artists in Arizona, Florida and Maine

EDUCATION

- 1982 Certified Financial Planner, Awarded by College of Financial Planning
- 1968 Master's Degree, Social Work; Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
- 1966 Bachelors of Arts Degree, Sociology, Psychology; Tulane University, New Orleans, LA., Phi Beta Kappa

CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

Eli Lilly and Company, New York, NY
Liquid Pictures 3D, Laguna Beach, California
Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota
Raymond James Financial, St. Petersburg, Florida

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2013 *Alliance Announces Winners in 27th Annual All Florida Juried Exhibition*; Michael Kiniry, *The River Weekly News*, Vol. 12, No. 24, June 21.
- 2013 *Best of Show, Owl's Head, Gives Viewers a Respite from Confrontational World*; Thomas Hall, *The Examiner*, www.examiner.com; June 8.

GALLERY REPRESENTATION

Clayton Galleries
4105 South Mac Dill Avenue
Tampa, FL 33611
813-831-3753
claytongalleries.inc@verizon.net



CREDITS:

Photography:

George Cott - Eagle Photographics

Stephen Morrison - PDQ Photo

Brochure Design:

Joe Traina - C A Creative