

February 27, 2020

## Contemporary Art Series|Marion Wilson

Interview by Angela Cappetta



### ***Marion Wilson: The Landscape Is Sanctuary to Our Fears***

January 27 – May 6, 2020 at the William Paterson University Galleries

This exhibition is an exploration of Paterson, New Jersey as well as the Northeastern region through bodies of water. To enumerate, it is an investigation of ecology and landscape. And, that fosters a closer connection to self and place. Artist Marion Wilson investigates relationships between humans and nature. She does so at a time when extreme climate change threatens ecosystems and communities. Furthermore, her exhibition is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.



## **1. YOU SEEM TO BE A MULTI-MEDIA ARTIST. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?**

I do work in a variety of media as many artists do these days. But the intersection of painting and photography has been a constant in my work always. Contemporary Art Series|Marion Wilson; For the Waters of My Childhood series in this show where I revisited and bottled the water and landscapes that I had swum in as a child but now were too polluted for swimming – I am making very painterly photographs. I print digitally on painted sheets of Mylar where you can see remnants of brushwork – using a product developed by Golden Paints for printing on non-porous surfaces. This allows the photographs to look kind of watery-or the way images suspend in layers of oil painting glazes. I'm also creating a new lens so to speak by photographing through the glass bottles; and you can see places where the images bend and refract.

Another favorite piece in my show is River, for which I borrow the jacquard coding pattern cards that were used in the silk mills in Paterson. The Paterson Museum loaned me several objects from their historic collection and I loved the length of these cards spilling over the side of a gallery wall, next to the somewhat cheeses photograph of the Paterson waterfalls.

## **2. TELL US ABOUT YOUR RESIDENCY WITH LIGHT WORK?**

I lived in Syracuse, NY. One of places I absolutely miss is Light work's Community darkrooms. It is such an incredible resource for artists. And I have benefitted from a good relationship with the lab for two decades. Furthermore, I was fortunate to receive a grant from them in 2016.

Because I have a painter's approach to printing, I really needed the DIY approach that the lab afforded me. The printer act as a paintbrush for me. The staff is constantly making suggestions. I still travel to Syracuse at least twice a year to print at Light work.



### **3. HOW DID THIS SHOW AT THE WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY GALLERIES COME ABOUT?**

Kristen Evangelista became interested in my work when another artist and faculty member, Michael Rees invited me to give a lecture and do studio visits with the grad students at William Paterson University. At that time I was doing a rather large exploration of bryophytes- moss species. I had just driven a renovated RV collecting moss species from Upstate New York down to Miami to participate in the PULSE Art Fair. I think Kristen was interested in the way I was integrating art and science and she wrote a grant to the National Endowment for the Arts to invite me to do a project using the Passaic River watershed as a springboard for creating new work. She paired me with scientist professor of environmental science Nicole Davi who taught me the process of checking for water quality that I used in *Waters of my Childhood*. The NEA grant afforded me a year of creating new work for the solo exhibition that opened last week. And a catalog accompanies the show as well with an essay by Jane Harris and the curator, Kristen Evangelista.



#### **4. WHAT'S ON THE EASEL NOW IN YOUR STUDIO?**

Well there is always this let down right after a show opens but I am excited about the next body of work already. My “easel” so to speak funnily enough is right now my refrigerator freezer. I have been collecting and freezing all my color compost for the past six months and in March and bringing it up to Light work to photograph this new series of still life. I am interested in the incredible disorder v. order of this work. Plus the extraordinary color. And whereas the water was intimate yet blurry; these images are loud and precise. I’m excited! Stay tuned.

Written and shot by NYC portrait photographer Angela Cappetta.