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SIMMONS COLLEGE TRUSTMAN ART GALLERY PRESENTS
Verdant: Elizabeth Awalt, Ken Beck, Aaron Fink, and Catherine Kernan

BOSTON (March 27, 2015) — Simmons College Trustman Art Gallery presents *Verdant*, an exhibit of paintings by Elizabeth Awalt, Ken Beck and Aaron Fink, and prints by Catherine Kernan from April 21-May 29. The artists get lush with nature themes at the Trustman Art Gallery, located on the fourth floor, of the Main College Building, 300 The Fenway in Boston. A reception from 5-7 p.m. will be held on Wednesday, April 22. The exhibit and reception are free and open to the public.

Verdant is a salute to uncontrolled nature, fecund, beautiful, rank and alive. It also honors art collector Sinclair Hitchings and his long commitment to Boston artists, who are all part of Hitchings' *Art in Boston* project. Although the show is visually rooted in the natural world, it is also a metaphorical statement about the luxuriant art scene in Boston.

Elizabeth Awalt has us up to our gumshoes in the transcendental muck of a New England spring. Her muscular washes, scratches and wiggling marks are like a vernal pool—full of life in transition. *Shock Me*, oil on panel, is scraped to reveal color under-painting, while the over-painting is a bravura application in bright yellow-greens with dark blues, and earthen reds forming thrusting stalks terminating in pregnant pods that twitch every which way.

Ken Beck paints seductively, thickly, and tactilely. His landscape forms seem more than descriptive—they are monumental, even at small scale, telling us a larger truth about what is and what can be imagined. *Below the Marsh*, a vertical work with one-third exultant sky and the lower two-thirds with an impasto treatment of vegetative growth that is bursting, twisting and blooming in the dark foreground while receding to the horizon the vista of sun on field is achingly beautiful.

Aaron Fink gives us flowers—flowers that are large frame-filling works, petal mouth's gaping to show their private sexual selves or screaming defiance of their short life. *Orchid in a Vase* is wetly pink with yellow obloids providing the "tonsils" in an orifice surrounded by white petals. These white petals are amazingly "not white" in the style of John Singer Sargent, painting white with greens, yellows and greys and a scrumble of white overlay. The round vase reflects the colors of the orchid and its stem dimly swims out of the darkness. Horizontal and vertical lines, thin dripping paint and a *pentimento* of under-color interrupt the image.

Catherine Kernan is a non-traditional printmaker, her abstracted suggestive images resulting from an interface between painting and printmaking. She carves large woodblocks but builds on the base images with a painterly process of controlled accident. *Navigation #3* is a large vertical work suggesting shimmering water ripples, reflections and subsurface forms. The fluidity of the dancing lines against a golden surface and botanical seeming shapes suggests the cinematic "golden hour" when the lighting is magical yet the shadows create mystery.

All four of these artists are vigorous in their technique and their sensuous application of material reflecting a corresponding echo in their subject matter. They evoke our dreams of the green world, so hard to imagine after the world of white, then sludgy grey, that this past winter has entrapped us in for so long. Sinclair Hitchings has been buying art and encouraging Boston artists for decades, first as Keeper of Prints at the Boston Public Library and since his retirement, his quest to form a foundation that celebrates the diverse talent on offer.

The Gallery is closed for the Simmons College Commencement, May 15, and Memorial Day, May 25.

Trustman Gallery hours are 10 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The gallery is free, open to the public and wheelchair accessible. For more information, contact Marcia Lomedico at 617-521-2268, or visit the Trustman Art Gallery website at www.simmons.edu/trustman.

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