

Margaret Ross Tolbert

Margaret Ross Tolbert is an artist based in Gainesville, Florida. Over the last thirty years she has executed series of paintings, drawings and lithographs from studios in the U.S., France and Turkey. Her commissions include projects for series of paintings with residencies in Turkey, Azerbaijan and Oman, enabling her to continue her research for her series, *Doors* and study of language and dance from the regions of the ancient trade routes. Her continuing focus is the Springs of North Florida, whose paradisiacal presence and the metaphor of water provide a sense of ideal destination and the exotic in the here-and-now that counterpoints the sense of passage, time and journey implicit in the *Door* paintings.

Exhibits include: *AQUIFERious* (with the work of Jill Heinerth, Mark Long, Eric Hutcheson, Tom Morris and Georgia Shemitz) at Leepa-Rattner Museum, Tarpon Springs, FL 2017; Stetson University, Fall 2016; Hillsborough College, Tampa FL, spring 2016; Thomas Center Galleries, Gainesville, FL, 2015-2016; Museum of Florida Art and Culture, Avon Park, FL 2015; *AQUIFERious: Virginia*, from the series *Reconfiguring Leonardo*; Dean's Gallery, University of Virginia, 2013: Solo exhibits include *Sirena in Rapture*, 6th Street Container, Miami, 2012; *AQUIFERious*, Lemieux Galleries, New Orleans 2010; *Sirena: At the Abyss*, Edsvik Konsthall, Sollentuna, Sweden, and *Edgezones*, Miami FL; *Margaret Ross Tolbert: Doors*, University of Richmond Museums, 2005- 2006; *Passages*, Polk Museum, Lakeland, Florida, 2004, and *Springs Eternal?*, Gulfcoast Museum of Art, 2003; *Aquifer*, LeMieux Galleries, New Orleans, LA, 2002; *Portals and Passages*, Museum of Florida History, Daytona Museum of Arts and Sciences, Gulfcoast Art Center, and Northwest Florida State College, 1997-98; *Palace/Spring*, Galleri Max, Stockholm, Sweden, 1996. In 2012 Tolbert was selected to be a LINC artist for the Everglades Art Atlas, initiating a series of paintings about the Fakahatchee Strand that were in a series of exhibits organized by the Florida Wildlife Corridor participants and LINC: Legacy initiative for Nature and Culture. Other group shows include *Framing Nature: The Living World in Art*, Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, FL 2016; *Orange State*, The Morean Art Center, St. Petersburg, FL 2016; *Eight from Florida*, Mennello Museum of American Art, Orlando FL 2011, *Region 4 : Superfund*, at

The Thomas Center Galleries, Gainesville, FL; *American Confluence*, Edsvik Konsthall , Sollentuna, Sweden, 2006; *Growth Spurt*, Edgezones, World Arts Center, Miami, FL 2005-6; *WET*, World Arts Center, Miami FL, 2005; *The Swamp: on the Edge of Eden*, Harn Museum in Gainesville, FL, 2000; *H 2 O*, traveling exhibit with venues in Florida and Georgia, 2000-2002; *Han*, an exhibit with Nitin Jayaswal based on the caravansaries of the ancient trade routes, FCCJ, Jacksonville and LeMieux Galleries, New Orleans, 2000-2001. Tolbert has received a Visual Arts Fellowship(1997-8) and an Artist's Enhancement Grant from the State of Florida. She has created many works for public places including murals in Istanbul, Muscat, and Baku Hyatt Regency, 1994-2000, and for numerous art in state buildings projects. In 2015 Tolbert completed *Connected Worlds*, an installation of large and small canvases of the forest world at the Austin Cary Learning Center, Gainesville FL. In 2012 Tolbert and Jarrod Ryhal collaborated on *Orlando Springs*, an extensive permanent installation of her paintings, lenticular photography, etched glass, and graphics of Central Florida springs for the Orlando International Airport. In 2002 she installed *Springs Passage*, 12 ft. paintings for the Volusia County Courthouse(Art-in- State Buildings). Other public art installations were completed for the Overtown Metrorail Station(Miami Dade Art in Public Places) and in 2006 a project with lenticular panels for the Weston Public Library for Broward County Public Art and Design.

Recent exhibitions have included dance performances and animations presenting the energy of the creative act of painting, of ethnic dance, and of exploration of the springs and the creative process. These include ENERGY performances for Shands Arts in Medicine, Edsvik Konsthall, and Marten Pers Skalla in Sweden, and Festival of the Moving Image in Tampa.

In 2010 the book AQUIFERious was released, with art and writing by Tolbert and with thirteen contributors. This amalgam of scientific insights woven into a catalog of Tolbert's painting, writing and performance about the springs, documents some of the many features, and urgent need for the preservation of Florida's freshwater springs and the Floridan Aquifer. AQUIFERious received a gold medal in Florida non-fiction and a silver medal in fine

arts from the Florida Book Awards, and has generated years of exhibits and public events. The book *GEZI*, with Tolbert's narrative and sketches of travels in Eastern Turkey, was released in 2006. An installation of hundreds of sketches for the Raffles Hotel opened in Istanbul in 2014. A group exhibit featuring her work at the American Embassy Residence in Ankara continued 2012 through spring 2014. .

Tolbert is also credited with the discovery of *Sirena*, a mysterious denizen of these magical freshwater springs. *Sirena* has been featured in many exhibits of lenticular photography and short video in the US and abroad. Videos of *Sirena* involve collaborations with musicians including Hauschka and Esra Bergman.

Tolbert was given a Conservation Steward Award by Alachua Conservation Trust in 2010, Lifetime Achievement Award by the City of Gainesville, and the Rotary Water Stewardship Award 2015. She has frequently been a speaker and panelist, including the 2012 Water Institute, keynote speaker at the Friends of Wekiva Springs annual banquet, and Florida Humanities Council panels with the USF Florida Studies Program, Myth and Magic of Florida Springs, and the Springs Restoration Summit 2016, and the A2RU, Emerging Students Creative Summit on Water.

Currently, Tolbert is working towards a book and film on Springs in Turkey(Proje-SU.org). She is featured in a documentary in production, *Hidden Secrets of Florida Springs*(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Trl-kjisB4&feature=share>). Other films include *Lost Springs* (Lostsprings.org)where she is creative director, and *AQUIFERious*(aquiferious.com)that she is producing. Tolbert received her BFA and MFA in painting from the University of Florida, where she studied under Hiram Williams. She also minored in Linguistics.

Links:

aquiferious.org

Proje-SU.org

LostSprings.org

margaretrosstolbert.com

Everglades art atlas: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bfWyOD6KWQ>

SPC You Tube - Video of AQUIFERious Panel Discussion held on April 5, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Q8hsHUGRpc

Tampa Bay Times Article April 8, 2017 by James Chapin

Review: Dual shows at Leepa Rattner map beauty in Florida and beyond

<http://www.tampabay.com/things-to-do/visualarts/review-dual-shows-at-leepa-rattner-map-beauty-in-florida-and-beyond/2318385>

Writers on Water, Florida's Eden, 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6M8v6uF4Co&feature=youtu.be>

Sirena: Hauschka's Island

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrKkGEdiXv0>

Sirena Rediviva

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uf9FMYlhysk>
