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By Jeff Mason

Please tell us a little about yourself and the Tracey Morgan Gallery.

Tracey Morgan: I have over 20 years of gallery and research experience, including a dozen years specializing in photographic-based artworks. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Art History from Florida State University and began my career as a curatorial assistant with the now-closed Eaton Fine Art in West Palm Beach, FL. I assisted with the organization of several large scale exhibitions there such as John Marin: The Sea and Celebrating a National Treasure: Selections from the Butler Institute of American Art, among others. I also contributed to the research, writing and editing of multiple exhibition catalogues, including Joseph Stella: Flora and Small is Beautiful: the Issue of Scale. I moved to New York City in 2004, and worked as Director and Associate Director in several prominent galleries, including Yancey Richardson Gallery, Pace/MacGill, Barry Friedman Ltd and Andrea Meislin Gallery. While working at these galleries, I had the opportunity to develop close relationships with a lot of national and international artists, collectors and curators. Which I hope to continue to foster while I am here in Asheville. My husband and I moved to Asheville in the fall of 2015 with the intention of both opening businesses. The gallery specializes in contemporary photography, works on paper, painting, sculpture and installation by emerging and established artists from the United States and abroad. The secondary focus of the gallery is to promote the visual arts in the community by highlighting work created by regional artists or pertaining to Western North Carolina. Each year, the gallery will present a rotation of well-researched exhibitions by individual artists as well as curated group shows that explore historical and contemporary themes.

How long has Tracey Morgan Gallery been open?

TMG opened January 19, 2017

Why did you open an art gallery in Asheville? How will the gallery be different from others in town?

When my husband and I decided to leave NYC, we discussed several cities as options for relocation. Asheville won. It has the perfect combination of all the things we were looking for: a strong artist community, live music and lots of nightlife. When we decided to move to Asheville, I knew that I would be opening a gallery. It just took time to find the right space.

Tracey Morgan Gallery is set up like galleries I have work with in the past. I will have a series of rotating solo exhibitions and curated, researched group exhibitions that explore historical themes. I also plan to focus a large portion of my programming on Modern and Contemporary photography, which seems to be an "emerging" medium here in Asheville.

What sort of art do you plan to feature at Tracey Morgan Gallery? Do you have any sort of philosophy about what makes "good" art?

I plan to show a good mixture of mid-career and emerging work by artists from around the nation as well as a strong selection of work by artists from the region or work about the region. We

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will show photography, work on paper, sculpture, installation and painting. I'd like to eventually add video and perhaps sound in the future.

As far as what makes "good art" it is all subjective. There is no right answer to the equation. I think everyone has their own opinion of what is good, what their tastes gravitate toward. I hope to bring a good variety of art to the area. I will be showing a lot of artists that have established careers, that are in museum collections and have a strong client base.

How do you choose the artists that you represent?

The majority of artists I represent I have a history with, I have either worked with them in the past or I have know them personally and have admired their work. I do have a couple artists that I have met since I have opened and I was over the moon about their work immediately. I have to

focus on art that I am passionate about, I have to believe in the work in order to show it and sell it.

Do you have any favorite artists or photographers? Tons! I love Amy Cutler, Doug Aitken, Bill Viola, Kara Walker, Christian Marclay Yayoi Kusama to name a few. Photographers, Anne Collier, Alessandra Sanguinetti, Diane Arbus, Ralph Eugene Meatyard, Lewis Baltz, Matthew Brandt, Roe Ethridge, Araki, among many others.

Any special experiences that stand-out as highlights from your experiences in the art world?

I worked at a wonderful gallery in Florida for several years. The owner, Timothy Eaton, put on scholarly, museum quality exhibitions and lectures. One year, he hosted a benefit for the Butler Institute of American Art. We trucked down 15-20 masterpieces from their collection, works by Georgie O'Keefe, Marsden Hartley, Saul Bellows, John Marin, Arthur Dove and Winslow Homer. The Homer was his masterwork Snap the Whip, it came down from Ohio in it's own tractor trailer, with armed guards. It was amazing! The show was up for 2 weeks and we took it down and re-installed the previous exhibition. I think it was my favorite show to work on to date.

What can you tell us about the upcoming show opening this Friday, May 5th?

For the upcoming show I've had moveable wall constructed so I can divide the space up and have two artists showing concurrently. Friday we will feature Madison County based photographer Rob Amberg and New York based painter An Hoang.

Rob Amber: Staring is a series of 20 black and white photographs of nomadic youths with bucolic Madison County as the backdrop.

An Hoang: Forest for Trees is a series of abstract paintings referencing the artist's fleeting memories of nature and the urban environment.



What future projects do you have planned?

I am still working out the details of my schedule but the line-up will include Laura Letinsky, Nicholas Hall, Jade Duskow, Andrew Moore, Mike Smith and local artist Kirsten Stolle.

Will you be collaborating with other organizations and venues in town?

I am certainly working towards it!

Are there any important lessons that you have gained from years of working in NYC art galleries to share with local artists? Or advice?

As far as advice I would say, edit, edit, edit. I have experienced so many portfolio reviews where an artist will plop down stacks of photographs for me to look through. It is impossible to look at that

many works at once and even more impossible to make heads or tails of it. It helps to have a cohesive body of work with a distinct narrative when approaching a gallery.

Second, I would say, know how to talk and write about your work. Having a concise artist statement when speaking with a gallery, curator or client is so important!

Anything else you would like to add?

I am excited to be here in Asheville showing the work I love. I hope people will drop in, look at the exhibition, ask questions and ask to see work from our flat files too.

For more information about previous exhibitions, artists represented by TMG and more, visit www.traceymorgangallery.com

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