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When ***"Fulton Ross • Fresh Paint"*** opens January 11th 2007 at The Thrasher Horne Center for the Arts (THCA), Orange Park, Florida, it will be an important event for both the artist and the presenting organization. For Sarasota resident and working artist Fulton Ross, the exhibition will be her first in Northeast Florida; for THCA the event will be the first exhibition by an African/American artist to be produced in the Center's three-year history.

THCA Executive Director Tony Walsh says, "Race is only mentioned within the development of this exhibition to demonstrate that fine art - true art - transcends racial barriers. This is extremely important in a community such as Clay County that is 87.4 percent white."

Fulton Ross defines herself as "an *American* artist who paints what I know, what I live and what I understand." Tony Falcone, "*Fresh Paint*" exhibition curator explains, "Her statements on art, race and gender generally reflect the fact that she feels labels and categories not only restrict us but create distance and division. The most important part of this exhibition is that when viewing the works of Fulton Ross we experience emotions that are truly universal."

"When I first started painting, I used my heritage to present a figurative response to my community's lifestyle and struggle. Since that time, although still loving the face and the figure, I have moved towards controlling color and form. I find both capable of monumental expression", says Fulton Ross.

Falcone adds "Comprised mostly of abstract paintings developed from sketches created on site in Europe this past summer, *'Fresh Paint'*" is an opportunity to understand Fulton Ross's process and to *feel* all that is 'monumental', original, spontaneous and exciting about art which was created...in the scope of eternal time...only a moment ago."

About her process, Fulton Ross explains, "I begin with small watercolor and mixed-media studies. In this format I work out the arrangement of my palette, brush orchestration and where to put the appropriate black. The studies dictate the shape and size of my canvases. When I am ready, I begin one painting; stop action; and begin another. I keep moving and painting which allows my creativity to move beyond the bounds of the limiting field."

As the head of a visual and performing arts center and spending a great deal of his life doing or making theatre, Tony Walsh references words from Stephen Sondheim's *"Sunday In The Park With George"*, " 'Art isn't easy.' It takes extraordinary dedication...perhaps a life of little recognition and even less in terms of financial rewards. Art making is something you are compelled to do. It is who you are."

Fulton Ross expands, "Today's art world is nothing like the romanticized life of Picasso or the glamorous trendy world of Warhol. Artists are not in their ateliers starving for the sake of their work...and those that are will most likely remain invisible. Today's market is driven by hedge fund billionaires. Artists are not born they are created. You can only be a bohemian artist in Paris...America is driven by brand and household names. Frankly if you do not come from money or have a generous benefactor this is a very hard road; unless, of course you teach. I do not teach, I do not have a benefactor, and I don't come from money. I have however, been painting for over forty years and time has brought me a great list of collectors and a small amount of recognition."

And so, on January 11th when "***Fulton Ross • Fresh Paint***" opens in the Lee Adams Florida Artists Gallery at Thrasher Horne Center for the Arts, a great deal will be achieved: THCA will enhance its commitment to its mission to represent through the performing and visual arts the multi-cultural nature of the world we live in; the works of Fulton Ross will reach a new audience from Jacksonville to Daytona; and, viewers will have an opportunity to experience works of art the likes of which are as fresh to their eyes as the freshness of the vision painted by Fulton Ross.

"Fulton Ross • Fresh Paint" runs through April 5th 2007: exhibition hours are Monday-Friday, 10 am to 4 pm at THCA. For more information about the exhibition and THCA visit its web site at www.thecenter.org.

Fulton Ross' commitment to other's whose art and work is their life is best demonstrated by her act of creating the Fulton Ross Fund for Visual artists in 1996 which annually awards a \$10,000 grant to mid-career working artists in the state of Florida

Works by Fulton Ross have been exhibited throughout the United States from Sarasota (The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art) to New York (the galleries of Chuck Levitan and Essie Greene), to Boston (Gallery Bershad), to Sante Fe (Crossroads Contemporary Gallery) to Los Angeles (Stella Jones Gallery), as well as galleries and museums in Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, Michigan, and Paris. Her work is included in the collections of the American Museum of African American Artists, the Women's Museum of Art, North Carolina Central University, University of Seattle, La Vista Del Boca, The Martin Luther King Center, and the private collections of Whitney Houston, Mrs. Jackie Robinson, David Jerome Morrow, The Wurlitzer Family and the estate of Thurgood Marshall.

