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ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

FINESTRA DEL ORO

Barbara Schaefer, MFA

Finestra del Oro

Acrylic on canvas (2017)

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My work in various art forms - dance, choreography, writing, and music - have informed and enhanced my primary work as a visual artist. The interrelationship of these disciplines develops my awareness of the underlying principles that are essential in all art forms. To begin with, all art forms require presence and patience - showing up for the work, even when nothing seems to be happening. Then, listening, observation, decisiveness, but also release are necessary for the creative process. Also, art is not separate from growth as a human being and is often frightening and painful, which above all requires courage and taking risks.

I see my process of painting as being like that of archaeological digging, in which I build up layers and scrape them away, to discover what is there, or what seeks to emerge. By trusting my intuition, I bring forth what is fresh and often surprising.

This process was inspired many years ago by Riane Eisler's *The Chalice and The Blade*. The premise of the work was essentially, "if what we know about history isn't always true, then where does truth lie?" Ultimately truth doesn't lie, but our representation of it can be altered to deceive. This dominator approach to reality is being played out today with the new U.S. presidency and its array of alternative facts.

On the other hand, in partnership with the materials at hand, and with complete presence, I step into the work and let it guide me. If I move into my work with authority and domination, the results are always false and unsuccessful because creativity requires partnership and fluidity. Not force.

Writing, a morning ritual for many years, often surfaces in my paintings. Sometimes words and lines of poetry weave through as part of the textural layering, symbolically and materially holding and building the painting. Other times, a form of automatic writing arises, resembling calligraphic letters from a variety of cultures.

My most recent work with digital photography has evolved from my relationship with the computer and technology. At first the photographic images, printed on film transparencies, were integrated into my paintings. The digital photograph itself then became comprehensive and self-sufficient - with its highly sensitive play of light, texture, and surprise - for my concerns with capturing the invisible becoming visible.

My experience of living in Rome, Italy, for many years, has had a significant impact and influence on my work. The city's beauty has inspired me toward refinement and aesthetic choice, while its omnipresent history, such as the facades of old Rome, weathered with patina, permeates my work. Italian culture and language, so rich and lively, has compelled me to think and act in ways I would not otherwise have discovered. I see this in my work in the richly textured, un-stretched canvases I use, which appear to be part of the wall, and are often reminiscent of Italian fresco paintings. Also, in my more recent photography, a sense of antiquity resides in my work despite the use of modern technology.

Barbara Schaefer is an interdisciplinary artist whose paintings and photographs are exhibited internationally. She obtained a BFA and from the University of Arizona and an MFA from San Francisco State University. She won a Helen Wurlitzer Foundation Artist-in-Residency award in 1997, the New

York Foundation For The Arts Sponsorship in 1996, a grant from the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation in 2004, and an Artist-in-Residency award at the Fundación Valparaiso in 2005. In 2011, Barbara had a solo museum exhibition at the Museo Comunale D'Arte Moderna in Senigallia, Italy, and received a grant from Franklin Furnace. In 2015, Barbara's photography was exhibited at the Louvre Museum in Paris, France and at the Scope Art Fair in Miami. In 2016 she had a solo exhibition in Rome, Italy at Studio Matacotta.

For more examples of her work, please see <http://barbaraschaeferart.com> for paintings and <http://www.barbaraschaefer.me> for photography.

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