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ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

UPWELLING: UNDERWATER GARDEN

Ellen Schillace, MA

Upwelling: Underwater Garden

Acrylic on canvas (2014)

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Upwelling: 1. The act of rising to the surface: an act of rising up from inside the Earth or the body. 2. A process in which cold, often nutrient-rich waters from the ocean depths rise to the surface. 3. A steady surge of something, such as an emotion. 4. An act or instance of rising up from or as if from a lower source.

Synonym: emerging.

I am always in the process of emerging - never stagnant, always begging the question and in constant dialogue with myself. This art process feels itself bursting inside of me; the brush feels like it is outpouring onto the canvas, the paint moving with emotion, the colors dancing with emergent properties, their sum more than their parts. I experience a not knowing where it will take me - just like an upwelling in the ocean - an underwater garden -- that naturally occurring phenomenon which brings the nutrients from the lower part of the ocean up to the surface to nourish life at another level.

In our world of technology, we need authenticity and acceptance. To be authentic is not always politically correct, efficient, nor perfect. We live in a world that is smaller and larger at the same time; a confluence of cultures, information, and immediacy at

our fingertips, we need to be simultaneously authentic and unified in some way. On the one hand, the events at the World Trade Center made our discord and disconnection more apparent; on the other hand, they made our need for unity and connection more pressing.

In the 15 years since that event, we have felt that need for unity and partnership growing and evolving. As our world becomes smaller, our need for a collective unity that arises out of a place of consciousness is clear. At the same time, our need for authenticity and strength in our small villages is more important than ever. Technology has fostered speed, efficiency, consistency, sterility, and an illusion of communication and connection. The question is, how do we connect in a society where we live with so much technology, mobility, and anonymity? How do we connect in the face of our need for authenticity and our inherent diversity? How do we remain strong in our localization while having integrity in a larger community?

One answer is, through art, through nonverbal communication, through our partnership with nature and with each other. This is the balance that I have acquired when I am in the space of connection with my art, with Mother Earth, and with other people, very often in nonverbal ways. My work often leaves me as the mountains and ocean leave me: speechless but completely at peace.

Ellen Schillace, MA, is an artist and realtor. She received a BA in English and Psychology from Salve Regina University in Rhode Island where she also received the University's Mission Award for her work with women in real estate. Ellen currently serves as President of the Women's Caucus of Art (Minnesota) and is the lead curator for the Women and Money Project Exhibition which will be presented by the University of Minnesota Katherine E. Nash Gallery in late 2016.

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