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PAINTING WITH FIRE: WORKS BY BETSY EBY

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YARBROUGH GALLERY

“My sensibilities were hatched in the Northwest where dew, mist, and coastal fog hang like mysterious skeins between you and the world. Form is not crisp; it’s blotted. Edges bleed, boundaries blur. Light is silver and refulgent.”

-Betsy Eby

The medium of encaustic in which Betsy Eby works involves layering heated beeswax and colored pigments using knives, brushes and a blow-torch. Trained as a classical pianist, she creates works that capture the movement and rhythms found in music and the natural world around her.

The word “sanguine” references both the color of blood and a cheerful disposition, and Eby produced the works in the Sanguine



series by soaking string in pigment and then momentarily laying it onto the encaustic, leaving behind brilliant red lines. *La Sonnambula* suggests the title and the music of Bellini's operetta, "the sleepwalker." As the marks in the painting progress across the composition they move from close to the surface to deep in the encaustic, wavering between clarity and haziness. *D'un cahier d'esquisses*, "a notebook of sketches," is a work by Claude Debussy. The marks that fly across Eby's painting of the same title resemble scattered pages in a notebook that has come undone. Other paintings in the exhibition are directly inspired by musical compositions, as well. *Casta Divais* a solo vocal piece from Vincenzo Bellini's opera *Norma*, *Metamorphosen* is the title of a composition by Richard Strauss, and *Spiegel im Spiegel*, or "mirror in mirror," is a piece written for piano and violin by Arvo Pärt.

Eby earned her BFA degree from the University of Oregon, Eugene. She majored in art history, with an emphasis on ancient Greek, Roman, and Asian art. It was during her studies that she first learned about encaustic, a medium that dates to antiquity. She has



spent much of her life on the Northwest Coast, and now divides her time between Columbus, the home town of her husband and artist Bo Bartlett, and their island summer home in Maine.

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Sanguine IX



La Sonnambula



Installation



Installation