

# NOTES on a LANDSCAPE

New paintings by Elisabeth Condon

USF Public Art  
Judy Genshaft Honors College



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**HIGHLIGHTING THE SPIRITUAL BEAUTY OF THE NATURAL WORLD,** Elisabeth Condon has created two large-scale landscape paintings commissioned for the University of South Florida Judy Genshaft Honors College's new facility with funds from the Florida Art in State Buildings Program. Titled *Notes on a Landscape (in Repose)* and *The Meal*, these works envelop viewers in lush fields of brilliant flora and fauna. Layering the historical legacy of ancient Chinese scroll painting with 20th-century Color Field and Pattern and Decoration art movements, Condon's paintings compress and expand what she calls "liquid space," conjuring fluidity across time, place, and thought.

With her deep understanding of color, Condon meditatively builds the paintings' surfaces through her instinctual wet-on-wet pours of pigments to generate rich, atmospheric depth. She allows the bright fuchsia pigments to fuse with warm yellows, oranges, reds, and brilliant cerulean blues to create delicate, tinted translucent washes and reticulated pools of vivid color. Bold, gestural spatters of paint spill across the luminous backgrounds while painted birds flutter amongst the branches of blossoming peonies at the forefront of the landscape. With light, painterly brushwork, Condon's porous rendering of the botanical forms confounds the dimensional layering of space. Ruffled petals open to reveal floral constellations adorned with crowns of pistils and stamen, functioning as discrete visual landscapes within the larger composition.

For these works, Condon draws from her artistic interest in patterns and motifs from North American interior décor. Inspired by the Honors College's function as a central hub for interdisciplinary and collaborative research and teaching activities on the Tampa campus, Condon references the ancient Tree of Life design, which depicts various

stages of botanical growth. Spanning historical ages and cultures, this symbolic pattern is a metaphor for eternal life and the interconnection among our planet's diverse life forms. In these paintings, Condon references New York artist and designer Charles Steinberg's use of the motif in his vintage fabric as a guide to reflect on the site's function as a space for students' learning, transformation, and development on their journey through the educational phases of their collegiate experience.

Acknowledging the long artistic lineage of commissioned work, Condon positions herself in this context through her research into large-scale commissions by early 20th-century Modernist painters Raoul Dufy and Henri Matisse. Condon recognizes this project as an opportunity "to join the project to something bigger" and explores the concept of decorative painting as more than applied decoration, advancing the idea that art is integral to the overall experience of a space. The commission allowed Condon to revisit floral patterns and motifs from previous work at a larger scale, inspired by the interior murals of Dufy and Matisse and echoing the horizontal format of Chinese scrolls. Condon's work transcends the common notions of decoration and exercises a greater vision for the overall environment to appeal to the viewer across emotional, spiritual, and physical levels.

Condon's paintings installed in the Judy Genshaft Honors College bring new dimension and depth to the USF Public Art Collection. Transcending time and place, her expansive landscapes enliven the interior space by creating panoramic vistas of an imaginary world full of life and energetic potential to be enjoyed by current and future generations of USF students and the community.

— Sarah Howard, USF Curator of Public Art and Social Practice



## ABOUT ELISABETH CONDON

Elisabeth Condon (b. 1959, Los Angeles, CA) is a contemporary painter who incorporates imagery from the natural world with patterns and motifs of North American interior décor to create fluid, abstracted landscapes that transcend time and place. Using bold, vivid pigments poured onto canvas, Condon's layered painting techniques contrast gestural, organic forms with rendered geometric patterns to create lush, dream-like spaces that invite the viewer to wander through her imagined space.

Condon's work is in the collections of Tampa Museum of Art, Perez Art Museum Miami, Hudson River Museum, the United States Foundations of Art in Embassies Program Beijing, and numerous private collections throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. She is a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant, a Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant, and a Florida Individual Artist Fellowship. Condon earned degrees from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago (MFA) and Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design, Los Angeles (BFA). From 2003 to 2014, she was an Assistant and Associate Professor of Painting and Drawing in the School of Art and Art History at the University of South Florida. Condon lives and works in New York, NY and Tampa, FL.



Left: Elisabeth Condon, *Notes on a Landscape (in Repose)* (detail), 2023. acrylic on linen, 48 x 384 inches.  
Right: Elisabeth Condon, *The Meal*, 2023. acrylic on linen, 48 x 144 inches.  
Cover image: Elisabeth Condon, *Notes on a Landscape (in Repose)*, 2023. acrylic on linen, 48 x 384 inches.  
All images courtesy of the artist. Photo: St. Cate Fine Arts.  
Installed at the University of South Florida Judy Genshaft Honors College, Tampa.  
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