



\*\* For Immediate Release

## Dr. Barbara and Leroy Hodges Open First Exhibition at New Community Gallery Space

*The Washington Theatre and Patterson Community Center are pleased to announce the premiere of “Spring Into the Arts” (2019), an exhibition of modernist paintings by Murfreesboro-based artists and community advocates Dr. Barbara Hodges and Leroy Hodges. “Spring Into the Arts” is the first exhibition to open at the new art gallery and community project space in the lobby of the Washington Theatre.*

MURFREESBORO, March 28, 2019 - Dr. Barbara Hodges and Leroy Hodges premiere *Spring Into the Arts* (2019), an extensive exhibition of modernist paintings at the newly launched gallery and community project space in the lobby of the Washington Theatre at Patterson Park Community Center. Featuring an extensive selection of paintings the artist-couple has produced together and independently over the last several years, the exhibition celebrates their robust arts practice and contribution to Murfreesboro’s creative community.

*Spring Into the Arts* (2019) surveys the Hodges work related to community, time, and music, with particular emphasis on work that denotes the regeneration, renewal, and the metamorphosis associated with various phases and moments of life. Says the Hodges, “This exhibition...signifies the passion, joy, and hope found with springtime. The observer determines the story as it relates to their life...It is our hope that the viewer finds these artworks to be inspiring, uplifting, and empowering.”

Working with intense and colorful palette choices—which the artists’ describe as “brilliant, poignant, bold, and textural”—the Hodge’s respective creative practices converge in *Spring Into the Arts* (2019) with a shared vibrancy of color and subject matter. Working between a number of Modernist stylistic references—from drip and slash painting, cubism, and color fields to abstraction—the breadth of the Hodges technical mastery with paint is further underscored by their ability to unify these divergent styles on canvas.

Through their continued commitment to arts programming and education in the community, Dr. Barbara and Leroy Hodges exemplify the intent of the new gallery to better serve the community through art, and have been foundational to the creative environment that has enabled its emergence. With the desire to continue to foster an environment of exchange where different voices and experiences are represented across experimental and traditional mediums, the new gallery exhibition programming will highlight young, emerging, and established local and regional contemporary artists.

Currently unnamed, the gallery space is an interdepartmental partnership between The City of Murfreesboro’s Washington Theatre and Patterson Park Community Center. It is the mission of the gallery to offer a decentralized platform for the local community to engage in the production of, and ideas generated by, contemporary art through exhibitions, dialogue, educational programming, and community events. This project space showcases and supports novel art and ideas that promote accessibility, inclusion, and creative growth in a manner appropriate to the community space in which it resides.

***Spring Into The Arts* is open March 16, 2019 — April 27, 2019. The public is invited to attend the opening reception on Saturday, April 6 (3:00pm - 5:00pm) at the new Washington Theatre gallery space located in Patterson Park Community Center. The artists will be present during the opening reception.**

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Artist Statement: Leroy Hodges

Arts allows me to express what I feel, think, and experience. I grew up during the Civil Rights era in Meridian, Mississippi—a time of change, filled with challenges, perils, hopes, dreams, uncertainty, and great sacrifices. My parents shielded my siblings and I against the harsh realities and negative influences during that time. Yet, we were

exposed to these harsh realities through the media—television, radio, and newspaper. Some things could not be shielded against; harsh realities and disparities in the education system and access to medical care.

Growing up in Meridian, I learned to appreciate the beauty of life and nature despite challenging times and events. “Nature with all its beauty reflects a moment in time. Through painting, I can capture not only the beauty in nature, but also what can be imagined, the struggle, joy, and pain of the Human Spirit”. Art allows me to express my God given abilities in ways the world have not seen before, and to unlock nature’s unique shapes and creations.

My paintings are designed to capture not only the beauty in nature but also what can be imagined, the struggle, joy, and pain of the human experience. Oil painting is my preferred medium. My art is meant to be expressive, thought provoking, and imaginative. My art offers the viewers possibilities into the human experience.

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Artist Statement: Dr. Barbara Hodges

Creating art that invites the viewer to ponder and explore is Barbara Hodge’s primary goal. With a passion for hope, excellence, beauty, and things spiritual, Barbara’s paintings also reflect her love for bold brilliant colors, textures, light, and mystery. Most importantly, Barbara’s artwork is intricately narrative and layered with symbols of “social consciousness”.

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About The Washington Theatre:

The Washington Theatre is an accessible performance and event space in Patterson Park Community Center. Home to Perform Murfreesboro—a professional youth theatre education program—The Washington Theatre facilitates community arts programming, theatre education, and rental space for private and public productions.

For more information about the new gallery space, The Washington Theatre, or *Spring Into the Arts* (2019), please contact Susan Hicks at: [shicks@murfreesborotn.gov](mailto:shicks@murfreesborotn.gov)