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The Butler Institute

OF AMERICAN ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BUTLER INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN ART TO EXHIBIT LARGE SCALE REALIST PAINTINGS BY DOROTHY CHURCHILL-JOHNSON

“Dorothy Churchill-Johnson: PATTERN and REALISM, in Search of the Big Picture”

Opens March 14, 2021



Dorothy Churchill-Johnson, 2019. *Country Meets Mid-century Modern*. Diptych 72" x 96".

Youngstown, OH, March 2021—**The Butler Institute of American Art** on Wick Avenue in Youngstown will open a new exhibition of large-scale surrealist paintings by Dorothy Churchill-Johnson March 14, 2021. The exhibition will be on view in The Butler’s Giffuni Gallery on the second floor through May 30 of this year.

Dorothy Churchill-Johnson: PATTERN and REALISM, in Search of the Big Picture is comprised of three themes of large-scale oil paintings on canvas. Kaleidoscopes, both fabric and nature, evoke the power of centrifugal force that runs the universe. Pavement and groundscapes express natural patterns and present the microcosm as a metaphor for the macrocosm. Surreal Landscapes have both waxing or waning transitional light evoking

unique juxtapositions and a sense of isolated consciousness in a constantly changing universe. All the paintings are a synchronization of realism and abstraction through tiny details of ordinary things and expanding them to establish extremes. When viewing these works, the combination of color and enormous size can result in the viewer feeling as if they are looking at something familiar for the first time. Through juxtaposition, space, pattern, and design, Churchill-Johnson points to the ephemeral nature of all human events. The realism displayed in these works is infused with influences from neo-pop and op art with a touch of surrealism and hyper realism.

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The Butler's Director and Chief Curator, Dr. Lou Zona describes Dorothy Churchill-Johnson as *"simply one of America's premier painters. Few artists, past or present, have reached that level of skill which Churchill-Johnson has achieved. The exhibit at the Butler Institute is a must see for anyone who loves narrative painting. It's a knockout!"*

Admission to the museum is free to the public. Hours for visiting The Butler are Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm and Sunday 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm. The Butler is closed Mondays and major holidays. Masks are required to enter the museum and visitors must follow social distancing protocol.

In her artist statement, Dorothy explains her work as *"meticulously rendered by hand without digital assistance. She continues, "I start all my paintings with a red undercoat and build the image with many layers of thin glazes, sometimes allowing the color underneath to show through to achieve complex but subtle variations. My hope is that the combination of color and enormous size will make the viewer feel as if he is looking at something familiar for the first time. "*

Dorothy cites a quote from an art critic for *The New Yorker* that strikes a chord with her: *"Something Peter Schjeldahl wrote in his recent memoir in the New Yorker struck me as very applicable to my attitude toward my work. '...stalk the aesthetic everywhere: cracks in a sidewalk, ... The aesthetic isn't bounded by art, which merely concentrates it for efficient consumption. If you can't put a mental frame around, and relish, the accidental aspect of a street..., or really anything, you will respond to art only sluggishly'."*



The Little Bang Theory, 48"x 48"



Wind at the Dorr, 48" x 72"

ABOUT DOROTHY CHURCHILL-JOHNSON

Dorothy is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and has been a working artist in Santa Barbara since 1976. She is known for mural-size contemporary realist oil paintings in which she seeks to synthesize representation with other contemporary influences such as pattern and decoration; neo-pop; surrealism and abstraction. Churchill -Johnson's work has been collected by museums, major corporations,

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five-star hotels and private collectors nationally and internationally. Dorothy is a founding board member and president emeritus of [Santa Barbara Studio Artists](#), a not-for-profit trade organization of professionals who maintain working studios in Santa Barbara.

For more information about Dorothy Churchill – Johnson and her art, visit [churchill-johnson.com](#) .

ABOUT THE BUTLER

The Butler Institute of American Art (BIAA) in Youngstown, Ohio, is known worldwide as “America’s Museum”. Founded in 1919 by businessman and philanthropist Joseph G. Butler, Jr., the Butler is the first museum dedicated to American art. The original museum structure, constructed of Georgian marble in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, is considered a McKim, Mead and White architectural masterpiece, and is listed as a landmark on the National Registry of Historic Places. The Beecher Center, housed in the south wing of The Butler, is the first museum addition dedicated solely to new media and electronic art. For over 100 years The Butler has served as a center for cultural enrichment, making great American art accessible to all people pro-bono through its free admission policy and art programming. The museum relies on the support of contributions from the community and the nation to meet its cultural mission—to preserve and collect works of art in all media created by citizens of the United States. Its holdings now exceed 22, 000 artworks, and pieces from The Butler Collection are loaned to museums throughout the world.

For more information about The Butler, visit the website [ButlerArt.com](#) or contact Wendy Swick, Director of Public Relations at 330-506-7401 or email wendyswick@butlerart.com .

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Museum Hours

FREE ADMISSION

Tuesday - Saturday: 11 am – 4 pm
Sunday: Noon – 4 pm
Closed Monday and major holidays

Museum Parking

Free parking is available on site.

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