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**PATRICIA LASPINO UNVEILS NEW MASTERWORK;  
“WATERSHED” ADVOCATES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

**Patricia Laspino**, contemporary American painter, unveiled a new masterwork entitled, “**Watershed**”. The original oil painting on canvas measures 48” x 36” and is the first oil painting in a new series exploring complexities and similarities in nature’s flora and fauna. The series is an expansion of her oeuvre formally known as, the “*Orchid Alliance Project-Bridging Art & Science*”, where her large-scale paintings use orchids as metaphor to raise awareness and advocate for environmental stewardship. Her floral portraits convey the interconnectedness of humanity and the natural world and are designed to be storytellers of nature’s wonders. Over her forty-year career, the artist developed her signature style which interweaves countless layers of transparent oil color glazes over a sculptural groundwork of botanical textures.

Laspino’s paintings hang in many public and private collections including the Smithsonian Institution, the US House of Representatives and Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale among others. Her self-curated national art exhibitions are engineered to provide participants with a richly layered experience of transformative artworks, educational information and artist lectures. She has collaborated and exhibited with numerous prestigious public institutions, such as the Smithsonian Institution, the Missouri Botanic Garden, the American Orchid Society, and the United States Botanic Garden at the Capitol.

**View and learn more about “Watershed” online at:**

**[http://orchidallianceproject.com/PLaspino\\_Watershed.html](http://orchidallianceproject.com/PLaspino_Watershed.html)**

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**ARTIST COMMENTARY on “WATERSHED”  
by Patricia Laspino**

**Original Oil Painting on Canvas  
Dimensions: 48” x 36”**



As an artist, I think of my work as an evolutionary process akin to what occurs in nature. The more I study nature, the more I am deeply committed to conveying its spirituality. My latest painting entitled, “WATERSHED”, expresses the essence of nature’s beauty and wonder by bringing together two striking icons of evolution - the orchid flower and the egret bird.

Beloved friend, collaborator, orchidologist, lecturer and respected writer for Orchids Magazine, Tom Mirenda, introduced me to the Egret Flower. I was instantly inspired by the orchid’s pristine beauty and its striking resemblance to the Great Egret. After extensive research, I was delighted to learn that like orchids, which are perceived to be so rare, egrets are found on every continent except Antarctica.

The painting “Watershed” illustrates that nature is a rich tapestry of complexities and similarities. The human

tendency is to often take nature, all of its beauty and wonder for granted; that everything we value will always be present. We often view nature as a separate entity apart from ourselves, something we can visit on the weekends or holidays to get away and decompress. But do we see, and most importantly feel, how magnificent and vital the natural world around us really is to our physical, emotional and socio-economic well-being?

”Watershed” reveals a transformative moment in the biorhythm of two extraordinary organisms. Both bird and orchid are poised and dressed for seduction sharing the stage of their wetland habitat. Streamlined forms are juxtaposed, one with feathers one with petals, each gracefully beckoning to achieve a living purpose. For the egret, a mate for the orchid a pollinator; both characters share grace, elegance and undisputable powers of attraction to secure the longevity of their species.

Like plants, egrets experience physical transformation during courtship, including extreme changes in the color of their eyes, bills and legs. The most ostentatious is the growth of lacy plume feathers on their backs which are used in an elaborate advertising ritual. In “Watershed”, I emphasize the egret’s optimistic skyward gaze as part of the flamboyant courtship routine called Stretch – Snap. The egret flaunts its fitness with an upward stretch of its long slender neck, (1 ½ times its body length) and then retracts it, all the while fanning its long white feathers, heightening the enticement.

In the painting, the suggestion of soft breezes whispering through airy plumes is mirrored by gracefully swaying stems of the egret orchid. As if they possess wings, the orchids float forward ethereally. The interplay of sunlight and shadow animates their fringed angelic forms. Snow white with fringed oscillating lips, their allure is almost hypnotic. As if their flirtatious appearance wasn’t wildly attractive enough to a pollinator, they bear a long emerald nectar spur which emits an attractive nocturnal fragrance that promises a sweet reward for seeking it out in the darkness.

“Watershed” breathes life into forms that are intertwined with natural patterns of organic textures and shapes, some intended to convey fluttering wings outstretched in flight. Countless layers of vibrant transparent oil color create the painting’s marshland backdrop, which illuminates deep shadows and filtered sunlight. Oil color glaze animates both bird and flower to accentuate their remarkable features.

My artist process and intended message are deeply layered to initiate an uplifting story of grace, hope and promise. “Watershed” illustrates that humans are just one drop in an ocean of complex interdependent relationships within our fragile global ecosystem; albeit the one with the most power to effect change.

I believe we have a moral responsibility at this unprecedented time in our evolutionary history to be altruistic stewards of our planet. My paintings will always seek to inspire wonder and to advocate for preserving nature’s beauty by symbolically using orchids and other species as ambassadors of our interconnectedness. We are the gatekeeper species who can come together to make the difference... we are the watershed.