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**NWLA ARTIST ELLEN SOFFER’S EVOCATIVE USE OF COLOR ASKS SOMETHING OF THE VIEWER**

(Shreveport, LA) Northwest Louisiana Artist **Ellen Soffer** is well known for her brilliant use of color--bright, powerful, emotive greens, yellows, reds, blues, oranges, pinks—color that compels you to pause, respond, to feel something. The titles of many of her pieces are also an homage to her passion for color: “Pink Shell, Blue Fish,” “Green Alphabet,” “Pink Slice,” and “Blue Bird.” There is a unique intensity of color and an awareness of form throughout her newest works. Experience more than 60 new works by Soffer in the exhibition, **“Ellen Soffer: Pink Sky,”** opening Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 5 p.m. The exhibition is hosted by the Shreveport Regional Arts Council (SRAC) at artspace at 708 Texas St. in downtown Shreveport and curated by Professor of Art & Humanities at Bossier Parish Community College, Kelly McDade.

Soffer says that she creates intuitively, not always knowing how a piece will come together, but certain that color and its intensity will be driving forces. According to Soffer, when she is making new work, she is inspired by previous work, visually and formally, and the titles for the pieces come afterward as she carefully reflects on how a painting might relate to her current and past series of work. Soffer says, “My intention is to capture the impressions and sensations left behind from dreams, emotions, or memories without being limited to the specific details of the events, leaving room for viewer participation and interpretation.”

Emily Wilkerson, professional critic, writer and curator based in New Orleans, recently reviewed Soffer’s work during SRAC’s annual showcase of Northwest Louisiana Art and Artists Critical Mass X (2022). Wilkerson said, “In Ellen Soffer’s painting *Summer Light, Blue Lake*, the artist’s bright, beautifully mixed pigments create a dynamic tension between abstract shapes and natural, undulating edges.”

Kelly McDade, curator for “Pink Sky,” says that Soffer’s paintings ask something of her audience—that they pause, absorb, think and ultimately make something meaningful of the works for themselves. McDade’s goal with this exhibition is to celebrate and recognize the work of Ellen Soffer who she believes is one of the most prolific, meticulous, and focused artists she knows. “To become absorbed in Ellen’s imagery is a thrilling and moving experience for the viewer, as she communicates with such bold brushwork and intense color,” says McDade.

McDade goes on to describe Soffer’s work as intuitive, while also being very analytical. “When I look at her paintings, while they have a sense of spontaneity and freedom within them, I can tell that nothing is haphazard—every brush stroke and color combination is strategic, which ultimately requires that the viewer engage in a ‘conversation’ with her work. This newest body of work reflects Ellen’s ability to be responsive to how light, color, and shape interact in a very moving way, visually. I see her work as an invitation for critical thinking and individual emotion,” says McDade.

Soffer creates on canvas and paper using mainly oils, but also gouache, acrylic, and watercolor. She has had solo exhibitions in Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Texas and Georgia and has been featured in numerous group exhibitions including Mary Tomás Gallery in Dallas and the Longview Museum of Fine Arts, among many other venues. She is a recipient of the Shreveport Regional Arts Council’s Visual Arts Fellowship and has been awarded residencies from the Ragdale Foundation and Skowhegan. Soffer earned her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her BFA from the Philadelphia College of Art.

When asked what she hopes to convey to those seeing the “Pink Sky” artspace exhibition, Soffer says, “I look forward to sharing my work and the viewers of the exhibition having the chance to see a large body of my work together. I invite those who see the work to engage with and interpret my paintings in their own way.” The public will also have the opportunity to engage further with Soffer about her work during an Artist’s Talk, Thursday, March 9 at 5:30 p.m. at artspace. This event is free and open to the public.

Don’t miss “Ellen Soffer: Pink Sky,” a substantial exhibition of more than 60 new paintings created in the past four years (2019-2022) by artist Ellen Soffer, opening January 26, 2023, at 5 p.m. at artspace in downtown Shreveport. The exhibition includes works of gouache and watercolor on paper, as well as large scale oil paintings on canvas that feature vibrant color, organic shapes, and dynamic patterns. “Pink Sky” remains at artspace at 708 Texas St. through April 8, 2023.