Clemson University’s Life Sciences building is now home to hundreds of newly commissioned art pieces by a San Francisco artist.

"The Clemson Genus Project" is composed of 600 vivid petri dish paintings covering walls on three floors of the $50 million facility, which officially opened last spring. The building houses classrooms, research spaces and faculty offices for faculty and students engaged in microbiology, genetics and related disciplines.

Artist Klari Reis and assistant Nico Barredo spent months mixing and adding the plastic-based polymers, pigments and industrial dyes into unique combinations resembling bacteria and other microscopic life. The dishes are arranged in various groupings throughout the building and attached to steel rods of varying length to suggest depth.

Atelier InSite, a Creative Inquiry program dedicated to placing public artwork around Clemson properties, was tasked with finding artwork for the 100,000-square-foot building. More than 200 artists responded to the initial request for proposals.

Reis has used petri dishes to create biologically inspired work for several years. She leaped at the chance to bring her work to the Clemson campus.

“When I first saw the call for entries, it seemed to be meant to be in a way,” Reis told a reception in the building’s atrium Friday afternoon.

Atelier members spent most of a semester reviewing entries, but Reis impressed them from the start.

"Klari went above and beyond in her proposal," said sophomore Kayla Smith.

Senior Brittany Lamont agreed.

“Even from her initial application, among the 218, her attention to detail pulled our attention," Lamont said. "She always found ways to intrigue us, conspicuously and inconspicuously.”

Reis’s portfolio can be viewed at www.klarireis.com.

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