

EXHIBITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Hilliard University Art Museum

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

710 East Saint Mary Blvd.

Lafayette, LA 70503

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Spiritual Journeys: Homemade Art from the Becky and Wyatt Collins Collection

Guest curated by Gus Kopriva

Featuring more than 200 works by over 100 American artists

Reception: Friday, Feb 3, 6:00-8:00 PM

Exhibition Dates: Feb 3 – Aug 12, 2017

The Hilliard University Art Museum is pleased to announce the exhibition *Spiritual Journeys: Homemade Art from the Becky and Wyatt Collins Collection*. An encyclopedic survey of vernacular Southern art, this exhibition comes to the Hilliard from the Collins' New Iberia home, where they have amassed over 2,000 objects. The exhibition is organized by Gus Kopriva, an independent curator and the owner of Redbud Gallery in Houston, Texas.

Spiritual Journeys will be accompanied by a new publication that features essays interpreting the Collins' collection, including texts by Gus Kopriva, Hillard Museum staff, and collections expert Bradley Sumrall of the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans. Among the many artists represented in this project are Mary T. Smith, Howard Finster, David Butler, Tom "Deacon Man" Steck, Minnie Black, B. F. Perkins, Sam Doyle, Theora Hamblett, Pat Juneau, James "Son" Ford Thomas, Helen LaFrance, Reverend Herman Hayes, Mr. Imagination, Clementine Hunter, Jimmy Sudduth, Rita Fontenot, Prophet Royal Robertson, Tim Lewis, Shawne Major, Burgess Dulaney, and others.



Minnie Black, *Gourd Dog*

In his selections for the show, Kopriva carefully considers the very subjective and social constructions of cultural categories such as "self-taught," "outsider," "contemporary," "folk" and "visionary" art forms. The diversity of materials and backgrounds represented in this exhibition forges a dynamic understanding of place. Spatially, it is organized as a trip through 20 states.

"Becky and Wyatt Collins have simply collected what they enjoy," says Kopriva. "In their quest for outstanding pieces of art, they have travelled all across the south, from remote farms and churches, to festivals and auctions. Theirs is a collection that has been built piece-by-piece, traveling through the backcountry and larger urban areas, forging close relationships with countless artists and craftspeople.

The exhibition also features four documentary films that explore the individual practices of many artists on view. Included are *James 'Son Ford' Thomas: Artist* (2015) by Jeffrey Wolf and Zach Wolf, *MAKE* (2011) by Scott Ogden and Malcolm Hearn, *God's Architects* (2008) by Zachary Godshall, and *Made in Mississippi: Black Folk Arts and Crafts* (1975) by William R. Ferris.

Acknowledgements

Spiritual Journeys: Homemade Art from the Becky and Wyatt Collins Collection has been generously supported by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Upon request, media and press kits are available that include high resolution images and selected literature.

Museum Hours, Admission & General Information

The Hilliard University Art Museum is located at 710 East Saint Mary Boulevard, on the campus of University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Museum Hours are: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm; Wednesday, 9:00 am to 8:00 pm; Saturday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm; closed Sunday and Monday. General Admission: \$5 Adults, \$4 Seniors (62+), \$3 Students (5-17). FREE for Members, UL Students/Staff/Faculty with identification, and visitors under 5. Guided tours of the galleries are available Friday & Saturday at 2 PM, complimentary with admission. For general information, please visit hilliardmuseum.org or call (337) 482-2278.

About the Hilliard

The Hilliard University Art Museum operates on the campus of University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and was originally founded in 1964 as the Art Center for Southwest Louisiana. Featuring a state-of-the-art modern facility that was erected in 2004, the museum houses more than 2,200 objects in its permanent collection, and is the largest art exhibition space between New Orleans and Houston. The Hilliard serves a wide range of educational and cultural needs by fostering cross-disciplinary intellectual discourse on campus and throughout the region. At the core of the Hilliard's mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit the art of our time while celebrating the great diversity of Louisiana's heritage.

Concurrent Exhibitions at the Hilliard University Art Museum

December 9 – May 13, 2017. *Spotlight on Shawne Major*

December 27, 2016 – May 6, 2017. *Sandra Eula Lee: Make of / Make do*, guest curated by Dr. Christopher Bennett, UL Lafayette Art History professor in the Department of Visual Arts

February 3 – May 13, 2017. *Yun-Fei Ji: Looking for Lehman Brothers*, guest curated by Dr. Christopher Bennett, UL Lafayette Art History professor in the Department of Visual Arts

Free Public Programming in Spring 2017 related to *Spiritual Journeys: Homemade Art from the Becky and Wyatt Collins Collection*

Wed Jan 18: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

"Mapping the Spirit of Place"

featuring Paddy Bowman of Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education

Artists show us places through their responses to the world around them. They are in a conversation with a community as well as those who view their art. This presentation inaugurates the museum's seasonal theme, "The Politics of Place," through a folk art lens in preparation for the upcoming exhibition of the extensive collection of Wyatt and Becky Collins, "Spiritual Journeys," opening February 3. Exploring how some folk artists approach their work and express their aesthetics will segue into mapping boundaries, unique spaces, and cultural symbols of Acadiana. This interactive presentation includes a sneak peek at the artwork featured in our spring 2017 exhibitions.

Wed Jan 25: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

"God's Architects" a film screening followed by Q&A with Director Zack Godshall

The documentary *God's Architects* tells the stories of five divinely inspired artist-architects and their enigmatic creations. The film details how and why these oft-marginalized creators, with neither funding nor blueprints, construct their self-made environments. Featuring Floyd Banks Jr. of Greenback, Tennessee; Reverend H.D. Dennis of Vicksburg, Mississippi; Kenny Hill of Chauvin, Louisiana; Leonard Knight of Niland, California and Shelby Ravellette of Omaha, Arkansas.

Fri Feb 3: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Spring Season Opening Reception

Join us in celebration of four new exhibitions! Drinks and light refreshments generously provided by Bon Temps Grill and Republic National Distributing Company.

Sat Feb 4: 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Gallery Tour with Becky and Wyatt Collins

An informative walk-through of "Spiritual Journeys: Homemade Art from the Becky and Wyatt Collins Collection", led by the passionate New Iberia art collectors who have made this exhibition possible.

Wed Feb 8: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Local Author Spotlight

"Expressions of Place: The Contemporary Louisiana Landscape", a conversation and book signing by John R. Kemp

Travel the rural and urban landscape of Louisiana through the eyes, imaginations and talents of thirty-seven artists located across the state. In this special program, Hilliard Museum curator Laura Blereau engages author John Kemp in discussion about the visual research in his latest book project.

Wed Feb 15: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Hallelujah! Gospel Night at the Museum

Celebrate Black History Month with an evening of inspirational R&B gospel music by Eric Joseph, performed live in the exhibition galleries of "Spiritual Journeys: Homemade Art from the Becky & Wyatt Collins Collection".

Wed Feb 22: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Artist Talk with Tina Freeman: Lamentations

Explore the adventurous work of New Orleans based photographer Tina Freeman, whose latest projects thoughtfully pair the icy landscapes of Antarctica and the Arctic with Louisiana's wetlands. This event is generously supported by the UL Friends of the Humanities.

Wed Mar 8: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Artist Talk with Shawne Major

Kick off your celebration of Women's History Month with a discussion of mixed-media assemblage by Opelousas based artist Shawne Major. Nationally recognized by the Pollock-Krasner Foundation and Joan Mitchell Foundation, she will share a slide show of her recent work. This event includes a tour of her three large-scale hangings on the museum's second floor.

Wed Mar 29: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

The Art of the Blues

An evening of live guitar and more from UL Lafayette's Department of Music, featured in the exhibition galleries of "Spiritual Journeys: Homemade Art from the Becky & Wyatt Collins Collection". Organized by Dr. Jeffrey George, Professor of Guitar Studies.

Wed Apr 12: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

"Politics of Place" Panel Discussion

Stay tuned for details on this conversation rooted in the ideas of artists featured in our spring season of exhibitions. The discussion engages local community voices on the interrelated topics of geography, ecology, history, and culture.

Wed Apr 26: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Guided Tour of Spring Exhibitions

Take one last trip through the exhibition galleries with a tour led by Hilliard Museum staff.