

EXHIBITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Hilliard University Art Museum

University of Louisiana at Lafayette
710 East Saint Mary Blvd.
Lafayette, LA 70503

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Spotlight on Shawne Major

Exhibition Dates: Dec 9, 2016 – May 13, 2017

Reception: 6:00-8:00 PM, Friday, Feb 3, 2017

Artist Talk: 6:00 PM, Wednesday, March 6, 2017

The Hilliard University Art Museum is pleased to announce *Spotlight on Shawne Major*. This display on the museum's second floor features three large scale works by the Opelousas-based artist: *Bud Sport* (2008), *Nadir* (2011) and *Vestige* (2001). Her mixed-media assemblage work is also represented in the concurrent exhibition *Spiritual Journeys: Homemade Art from the Becky and Wyatt Collins Collection*.

Biography

Shawne Major was born in New Iberia in 1968. She earned a BFA in painting in 1991 from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now known as the University of Louisiana at Lafayette). In 1995, she also earned an MFA in sculpture from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

The recipient of many awards, Major has been recognized with many residencies including the Hermitage Artist Retreat in Englewood, Florida (2017); Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans, LA (2016); Robert Rauschenberg Foundation in Captiva Island, FL (2015); Art Omi in Ghent, NY (2009); Sculpture Space in Utica, NY (1997); Corporation of Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, NY (1995); and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine (1992). She has also received fellowships and grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (2008) and the Dieu Donne Papermill in New York (1996).

Major's work is collected privately and publicly. It is held by the Hilliard University Art Museum, Lafayette; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.; New Orleans Museum of Art; the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans; Frederick Weisman Foundation, Los Angeles; Francis Greenberger Collection, New York; the City of New Orleans Permanent Collection; and the US Art in Embassies at Brazzaville, Congo.

Featured in the 2008 Prospect 1 New Orleans citywide art triennial, Major's work has also been shown at the Chicago Cultural Center, Atlanta History Center, Dallas Contemporary, Mobile Museum of Art, North Dakota Museum of Art, Walter Anderson Museum of Art, Kirkland Art Center, the Longwood Arts Gallery, Jamaica Center, the LSU Museum of Art at the Shaw Center, the Louisiana Arts and Science Museum, Alexandria Museum of Art in Louisiana, River Oaks Art Center, the Opelousas Museum of Art, and Acadiana Center for the Arts. Articles on Major's work have also been featured in *Artforum*, *Art In America*, and *ARTnews*, in addition to other periodicals, newspapers, and NPR.

Artist Statement:

I am interested in how the perception of reality is colored by dreams, memory, superstition, religion, bias, prejudice, and fear. My mixed-media works, in general, refer to the overlay of belief systems



Shawne Major. *Nadir*, 2011
© Shawne Major

created by the individual to piece together their personal paradigm.

My vocabulary—a combination of kitsch, ersatz and craft materials, junk and personal objects—is re-aesthetized into accumulated forms that serve as metaphors for the build-up, organization and assimilation of information. The personal objects are evidences of pain, happiness, loss, guilt, shame—all the material detritus of the everyday human experience.

The vernacular (as a language of objects indigenous to my class and culture) is used here to subvert the hierarchy of high art. The kitsch of popular culture is transformed—through collage and intense manual labor—into the elite fine-art object. By evoking the elitism inherent to the idea of the hand-crafted object, these mass-produced articles become the raw materials that are employed in the "hand-crafting" of the art piece.

I choose particular materials for their visceral qualities, as well as their symbology and real-world references. The power of the fetish object intrigues me. The methods by which disparate elements are connected are as integral as the objects themselves. All materials, as words in a paragraph, are treated in a more-or-less equal manner and bring their own bits of signification and narrative to the visual "story."

Upon request, media and press kits are available that include high resolution images and 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 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 6, 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

February 3 – August 12, 2017. *Spiritual Journeys: Homemade Art from the Wyatt and Becky Collins Collection*, guest curated by Gus Kopriva

Free Public Programming related to *Spotlight on Shawne Major*

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.

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 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.