Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art News

August 1, 2010

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The Circus, Greatest Show on Earth Opens August 16, 2010
Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art, Georgia Southern University

The Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art is proud to announce The Circus, Greatest Show on Earth, an exhibition of paintings by faculty emeritus, Joe Olson, inspired by the rise and fall of the circus. The exhibition will run from August 15- September 10, 2010 in the Contemporary Gallery at the Center for Art & Theatre, Georgia Southern University.

The public is warmly invited to attend an Artist Talk on Wednesday, September 8, 2010 from 5 - 7pm. Olson will be discussing the images and ideas that shaped his recent work. The department will also host a reception on Friday, September 10, 2010 from 5-7 pm at the Center for Art & Theatre, Georgia Southern University, where visitors will have the opportunity to meet and discuss art with Professor Olson.

Growing up in Philadelphia, Olson was fortunate to be exposed to diverse art forms through his many trips to major museums. He states, “Painting is an integral part of my life and represents the means by which I can most readily express my thoughts and feelings.” As a student working from life, Olson learned to “focus on the big things and leave out the unimportant details. As a result, the focus of my work has dealt with capturing the essence and spirit of things seen, felt, imagined and remembered.”

The circus has always been a fond memory that Olson revisits often in his paintings - he started off by drawing monkeys in the margins of his mother’s cookbooks. As a child, he loved the “3-Ring” circus and would frequent it annually. Then, the circus was held in massive tents that not only contained the high wire, trapeze,
and numerous animals, but also thousands of patrons. Onlookers were over-stimulated by the commotion, exciting acts, colors, noise and adrenalin - all of which are represented in Olson's paintings. With the increase of motion pictures, animal rights, and the shift of residences to suburban homes the circus became an overlooked relic of America's past. This adverse decline is captured in the expressions and interactions of the animals and figures Olson painted.

Olson began his career in art in Philadelphia where he received his Master of Fine Arts from Tyler School of Arts, Temple University. He also earned an M.Ed. from Temple University before receiving an invitation from Lamaar Dodd to pursue his D.Ed. at the University of Georgia. In 1969, Olson joined the Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art, Georgia Southern University where he taught various studio art courses including Art Education and Art Appreciation. After 19 years as a faculty member, Olson retired and remained in Statesboro with his wife, Mary. Even now, Olson continues to play an active role in the community as an artist and citizen. Olson has exhibited work all over the eastern seaboard; he has works in both private and permanent collections such as Purdue University, Frank Center Advertising Agency in New York City, Scottish Heritage Society of Statesboro and the Botanical Gardens at Georgia Southern University.

Contacts:

Marc Mitchell, Gallery Director
marcmitchell@georgiasouthern.edu
(912) GSU-ARTS

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Center for Art & Theatre
233 Pittman Drive
Statesboro, Georgia 30460
[ map ]

912.GSU.ARTS
artdept@georgiasouthern.edu

Hours: Monday - Friday: 9am - 5pm

All events are free and open to the public. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Georgia Southern University will honor requests for reasonable accommodations. For more information contact the Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art at (912) GSU.ARTS or online at http://class.georgiasouthern.edu/art