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Blackface Meets Whiteface and Urges Viewers to Question Race: Georgia Southern Theatre & Performance to Present 'An Octoroon'

October 31, 2017



What happens when you are an African-American playwright who wants to write a comedy about slavery by adapting the 19th-century abolitionist melodrama *The Octoroon*, and most of your white actors bail on you because they “don’t feel comfortable”? The answer? An Obie Award-winning, radical adaptation of Dion Boucicault’s 1859 melodrama “*The Octoroon*,” where the antebellum south and 21st-century cultural politics collide. The Georgia Southern Theatre & Performance Program presents “*An Octoroon*,” written by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins and directed by Nicholas Newell.

Jacobs-Jenkins highlights the politically insensitive language and character constructions found in the old melodrama and turns the audience’s discomfort to laughter as he deconstructs the ideas of race. As the family of the Terrebone plantation faces foreclosure and fight for their survival quixotic characters like the drunken Irish ghost of the original writer and a mysterious bunny join the crowd on stage.

Stimulating, yet still entertaining, “*An Octoroon*” cleverly highlights the disparities of an entire race with it’s use of language and powerful racial metaphors. In 2014, “*An Octoroon*” won Best New Play at the Obie Awards. “Jacobs-Jenkins writes brilliantly about race in America, and the cultural legacy employed in the service of tyranny since the earliest days of this nation. He knows how to curse through stereotypes and rip apart the fault lines of representation,” says the Chicago Tribune.

“*An Octoroon*” opens Wednesday, Nov. 8, and runs through Wednesday, Nov. 15. All shows begin at **7:30 p.m.** with a **matinee performance on Sunday, Nov. 12 at 2:00 p.m.** There will be no show on **Monday, Nov. 15.**

“*An Octoroon*” features mature themes and language.

Student and youth tickets are \$6. Faculty, staff and community tickets are \$12. All seating is general admission. Group prices are available, contact the box office for information. The house opens at 7 p.m., and we encourage audience members to arrive no later than 7:15 p.m. to ensure good seats. The balcony will serve as late and overflow seating. **Call the Box Office at [912-478-5379](tel:912-478-5379) to make reservations.**

McManus explores divide between the 'born' and the 'made' in Neon Nature

October 31, 2017

Masters of Fine Arts candidate Jessamy McManus' thesis exhibition "Neon Nature" will be on view at the Center for Art & Theatre's University Gallery from Nov. 7 – 14. A reception will be Friday, Nov. 10 at 5 p.m.

McManus paints her interpretation of contemporary nature according to the concept of hypernature, which describes manufactured nature as being better than the real thing. Inspired by her upbringing in suburbia where nature is found manicured and controlled, McManus investigates the divide between the "born" and the "made" through *Neon Nature*, a collection of portraits of her fictional creatures she calls "pseudo-specimens."

"I call my fictitious subjects 'pseudo-specimens' because they are a hybrid of plant, animal, synthetic and human imagery, morphed together like the project of a mad scientist," said McManus. "They are portraits that are not of people, and still-lives that are not necessarily still."

Assistant Professor of Art and gallery director, Jason Hoelscher, recommends all students and faculty, regardless of their interest in visual art, visit McManus' exhibition.

"McManus has grown dramatically as a painter during her three years of graduate studies, from painting things like flowers and other nature scenes—quite well, I might add—to exploring more complex ideas like bio-hacking, genetic engineering, and the increasingly hazy distinctions between the natural and the artificial," said Hoelscher. "I would urge all to come see her thesis exhibition to see a contemporary take on important issues in society and art, presented in thought-provoking and lushly painted form."

All events are free and the public is invited to attend.

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Jessamy McManus

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