Exhibition draws attention to gender stereotypes

January 29, 2018

STATESBORO, Ga.—Using his own experiences as inspiration for his artwork, Master of Fine Arts candidate Kyle Hooten shines a light on the social constructs surrounding gender in his exhibition “Deconstructing Abject Complacency of Ascribed Gender” which will be on view March 8-23 at the Center for Art & Theatre’s Contemporary Gallery on the Statesboro Campus. A reception will begin at 5 p.m. on March 23.

By using materials commonly considered explicitly masculine or feminine—such as baseball cards and glitter—Hooten examines the ways society associates gender with objects to reinforce stereotypes based on a person’s sex assigned at birth. Hooten draws from his personal experiences as a transgender man to choose materials that best illustrate the concept of breaking away from society’s expectations and standards.

“‘Deconstructing Abject Complacency of Ascribed Gender’ is really meant to show that gender is whatever we make it out to be and that we only believe it to be true because that’s what someone told us to think,” said Masters of Fine Arts candidate Kyle Hooten. “I want this show to break barriers in as many ways as possible.”

Although culture today focuses primarily on physical changes for transgender people, Hooten’s artwork goes deeper into the emotional and social changes people encounter. Through his work, Hooten aims to recreate a feeling of emotional detachment that mirrors his own feelings of detachment from the world, and to provoke viewers to rethink and revise their opinions of gender being placed into two categories of female and male.

“Kyle’s work is challenging on multiple levels,” notes BFSDoArt Gallery Director Jason Hoelscher. “On the one hand, his focus on the ways gender is defined and understood at both the personal and societal levels poses deep questions about how ideas of selfhood and normativity are defined, reinforced and rendered malleable. At an artistic level, Kyle’s work poses interesting questions about how artistic expression operates when the subject being expressed is not one of essence, but of transformation and change.”

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research institution founded in 1906, offers 142 degree programs serving more than 27,000 students through nine colleges on three campuses in Savannah, Statesboro, Hinesville and online instruction. A leader in higher education in southeast Georgia, the University provides a diverse student population with expert faculty, world-class scholarship and hands-on learning opportunities. Georgia Southern creates lifelong learners who serve as responsible scholars, leaders and stewards in their communities. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.
Graduate exhibition explores the strength of the human mind

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STATESBORO, Ga.—Using the fields of cognitive psychology and neuroscience as inspiration, Master of Fine Arts candidate Glenda Militano’s upcoming exhibition, “Resilience,” focuses on the complexity and beauty of the brain. Using color, shape, and mixed media to examine internal mental processes and the nerves and tissues related to behavior and learning. The exhibition will be on view from Feb. 23 – March 2 in the Contemporary Gallery at the Center for Art & Theatre. A closing reception will begin at 5 p.m. on March 2.

“I wanted to know why people make certain decisions, and how to make better decisions,” said Masters of Fine Arts candidate Glenda Militano. “The more educated I became about the decision-making process and how it affects our emotions, the more research I did on the human brain.”

Militano relates the human brain to a computer, where information is received and the brain works to generate a response. The process of creating Militano’s work consists of multiple materials such as wood, paper or fabric along with numerous layers of paint and inks. Through the multiple layers of material and laborious process, Militano’s work aims to illustrate the resilience of the human mind, its beauty and its vulnerabilities.

In her artwork, Militano depicts intense conflicts that humans encounter today through a mixture of fragmented images of technology and the human figure. Through endurance, Militano is adamant that anyone can overcome any situations or life choices they have made, if they never give up.

“Glenda has taken on a big task with commingling aspects of psychology and neuroscience with her work. That these are both fairly abstract topics to begin with lends them a type of potency when translated into abstract imagery,” says BFSDoArt Gallery Director Jason Hoelscher. “The dynamism and layers in Militano’s work is a nice visual echo of the processes at work within the viewer’s mind.”

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Exhibition shares artist’s connection to history, spirituality and family

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STATESBORO, Ga.—“In Search of Communication” features a series of paintings created by Master of Fine Arts candidate Usman Oladeinde. The exhibition will be on view at the Center for Art & Theatre’s University Gallery from Feb. 23 – March 2. A reception will be held on March 2 at 5 p.m.

Oladeinde uses his artwork to integrate Arabic text into imagery, by altering it into unclear shapes that viewers must interpret from their own perspective. With the use of acrylic paint and images, Oladeinde creates these shapes on backgrounds similar to landscapes, which portray an artistic element retreating into space.

“My process is deeply grounded in intuition, then resolved with a slower, more reflective approach,” said Oladeinde. “As an artist who lived and was raised in Lagos state, Nigeria, Africa, I wake up to the Athan to solat (which means the call to prayer) from the mosques and worship voice from churches in my neighborhood. Having traveled far from home, my connections to my history, spirituality, and family is tested and seems to be fading because I don’t hear this Athans (call) anymore.”

Oladeinde creates his artwork to ideally represent Qibla, the direction of the sacred building in Mecca that Muslims turn to at prayer. He uses the elements of family, spirituality, and history to connect to his artwork, to create an aesthetic space of contemplation within a culture bombarded by information. However, Oladeinde allows his artwork to communicate with viewers without restricting them to one topic.

The landscapes in his artwork pique his interest in how opposite qualities can be represented at the same time, such as chaos and calm. There are also shapes that are utilized in his artwork to portray centeredness and memory.

“Oladeinde’s paintings tackle multiple painterly problems at once,” says Jason Hoelscher, the BFSDoArt Gallery Director. “The abstraction of textual forms that are already fairly abstract to begin with, at least to those not literate in the language, suggests the idea of communication, without communicating any one particular idea--without forcing on the viewer a particular message, in other words. The work is highly participatory in a way, like a choose-your-own-adventure book heavily abstracted and rendered into an image. The paintings are highly compelling, comprising dense fields of lush mark-making that operate at the midpoint between the alphabetic symbol and the painterly brushstroke.”

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Ceramic exhibition examines the environmental impact of consumerism

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STATESBORO, Ga.—Master of Fine Arts candidate, Courtney Ryan’s thesis exhibition “Irrational Aggregates” will be on view at the Center for Art & Theatre’s Contemporary Gallery from Feb. 12-19. A reception will be held on Friday, Feb. 16 at 5 p.m.

Through excessive attention to detail and a strong sensitivity to surface, Courtney Ryan transforms clay into sculptures that she imagines have emerged organically from their surroundings. Her sculptures both suspend and amplify our natural and consumerist relationships with the materials and artifacts we display in our homes in order to create a sense of domesticity and belonging.

“It can often be considered mundane and trivial, but the everyday object or experience can bring inspiration into my studio,” said Courtney Ryan, Masters of Fine Arts candidate. “It’s refreshing to interpret my experiences through my hands in ceramic and sculpture.”

While Ryan’s artwork may not appear similar in shape or material, they all are focused on the same theme, which is nature changing along with society's consistently evolving urban and suburban environments. Tea cups, knick-knacks, and other materials have a vital role in the artwork, creating a discussion about nature developing and over-taking society’s personal environment while humans themselves consume their own urban territory.

Ryan is actively involved within the community as well as outside of Statesboro, Ga. She painted an eagle that is outside of Howard Lumber & Hardware, and has also painted a mural at the lumberyard. Outside of Statesboro, Ryan’s artwork has been featured at multiple universities and in magazines as well. Currently, she is a teaching assistant at Georgia Southern University.

“Courtney is a dynamo of ideas and activity, and is relentless in experimenting and pushing her work into new territory,” says Gallery Director Jason Hoelscher. “That the range of forms and approaches she takes all emerge from a shared set of concerns and concepts makes her ceramics all the more compelling, and I look forward to seeing the work collected into one gallery.”
Graduate exhibition focuses on erasing taboo on mental illness, depression

January 29, 2018

STATESBORO, Ga.—Dontay Farley’s Master of Fine Arts thesis exhibition “Millions Like Me” will be on view in the Center for Art and Theatre’s University Gallery from Feb. 12-19. A reception will be held Friday, Feb. 16 at 5 p.m.

Through a collection of posters, billboards and other graphic design mediums, Farley uses this exhibition as design activism to create awareness about depression and mental illness. Using the simple things in life as an inspiration, Farley’s artwork aims to encourage kindness and compassion through words of encouragement and acts of goodwill.

“As a graphic designer, I understand that I cannot cure mental illness or rid the world of depression, but I can create awareness,” said Farley. “Instead of designing to show the problem and the statistics associated with mental illness, my work focuses on solutions that help decrease depression, such as support, encouragement, patience and positive human interaction.”

He uses his artwork as a way to make a connection with the public and alter the way people think. Utilizing greens and blues in his artwork, Farley uses these colors to convey unity and nature, which are necessary elements to move on from depression to being mentally secured.

The use of space in Farley’s design is to portray new opportunities or beginnings, while it can also be seen in an unfavorable way by the absence of decorative elements so the message can be obvious to viewers.

“Dontay’s design work is important in that it not only highlights or explores problems but is not afraid to propose possible solutions,” says BFSDoArt Gallery Director Jason Hoelscher. “It is too easy to focus on problems without looking for a way out, without reframing the context in which the problem arose. Dontay has explored these issues from a variety of vantage points over the duration of his studies here at Georgia Southern, and the insight of his ideas, combined with the strength of his graphic design talents, should make for a very compelling and thought-provoking exhibition.”

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