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# McManus explores divide between the ‘born’ and the ‘made’ in Neon Nature

October 16, 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.

The Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art (BFSDoArt) is committed to offering quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs that prepare students to become professional artists, designers, art historians and industry leaders. The BFSDoArt is recognized as an accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). For more information, visit [GeorgiaSouthern.edu/art](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu/art).

The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) is the largest of the eight colleges that make up Georgia Southern University, and it plays a central role in every student’s core of knowledge. CLASS, also described as the University’s College of the Creative Mind, prepares students to achieve academic excellence, develop their analytical skills, enhance their



Jessamy McManus

creativity and embrace their responsibilities as citizens of their communities, their nations and the world. CLASS offers more than 20 undergraduate degrees and several interdisciplinary minors from its 11 departments and five academic centers. CLASS offers eight master's degrees, two graduate certificates and one doctoral degree. For more information, visit [class.georgiasouthern.edu](http://class.georgiasouthern.edu).

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# BFSDoArt alumna exhibition tells story of ‘Roach Town’

October 16, 2017

Created by artist Xed Blankenship, a 2017 alumna of the Georgia Southern University Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art, “Visit Beautiful Roach Town” explores an imaginary world where cartoon roaches wear suits, visit hotels, and run town halls. Presented by the Averitt Center for the Arts and the BFSDoArt, “Visit Beautiful Roach Town” will be on view at the Averitt Center’s Rosengart Gallery, 41 West Main Street, from Nov. 3-24. A reception will be held during First Friday from 5-7 p.m. on Nov. 3.

“The Roach Town body of work is a creepy-cute look at a town made for and by roaches, focusing on the feelings of a small town and the politics and culture that brings, despite the species difference,” said Blankenship, who brings the quaint town of insects to life through a combination of cardboard and ink sculptures and watercolor drawings.

Blankenship won “Best in Show” for her “Roach Motel” in last spring’s Juried Undergraduate Exhibition, a show that granted opportunities for students to showcase their artwork. As a result of this success, she was awarded a solo exhibition at the Averitt Center for the Arts for the 2017-2018 school year.

“Blankenship has a creative drive that, coupled with her urge to explore ideas, is a marvel to see,” says Gallery Director Jason Hoelscher. “Given her ability to realize concepts in two and three dimensions, and based on complex backstories, I expect her exhibition at the Rosengart Gallery to be very cool and compelling.”

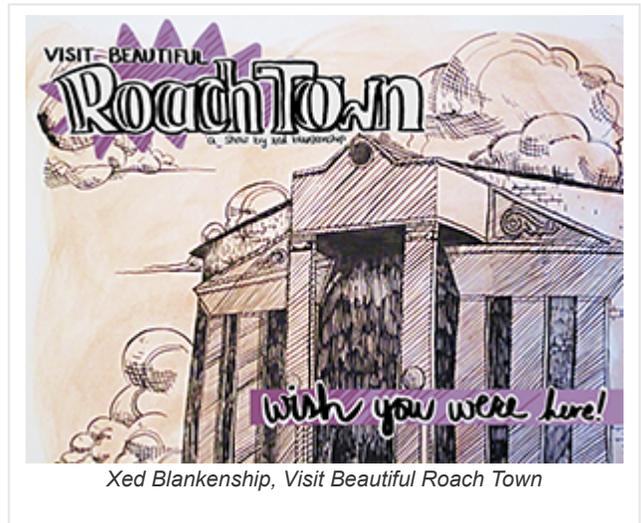
Blankenship is currently working on freelance art projects and manages social media for a marketing firm.

If you are interested in Blankenship and her work, feel free to check out [her portfolio](#) or follow her on instagram, [@XedBlankenship](#).

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

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