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Eagle MFA students display diversity in work through Armstrong Campus exhibit

August 29, 2022



A curtain hangs to display a video work produced by Georgia Southern Master of Fine Arts student Jalen Ash. “Outlook: An MFA Showcase” is an exhibition of work by current MFA students at Georgia Southern that is open now through Sept. 9 at the Fine Arts Gallery in Fine Arts Hall on the Armstrong Campus in Savannah.

In 1993, Marguerite McCoy graduated from Georgia Southern University with a bachelor’s in food service management with an emphasis in hospitality administration. She would soon take her talents to San Francisco to attend culinary school.



Margo McCoy

This led to a tour in Europe running bakeries in Germany for the United States Army. She would transition from using ovens for wheat to using them for clay.

McCoy moved back to her hometown of Statesboro, Georgia, with her husband to take care of her family. Once back home, she returned to her alma mater as a teacher’s assistant to instruct students how to use the newly acquired kilns.

Over time, the idea of changing career paths grew stronger.

“It was fun to help teach the students how to use the kilns,” she said. “I thought it was time I did what I wanted to do. I want to teach ceramics on the university level and share my passion with students about ceramics.”

After more than 20 years of working in the food and hospitality industry, McCoy is a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) student and on pace to become a Double Eagle. Her work is currently featured in “Outlook: An MFA Showcase.”

“Outlook: An MFA Showcase” is an exhibition of work by current MFA students at Georgia Southern that is open now through Sept. 9 at the Fine Arts Gallery in Fine Arts Hall on the Armstrong Campus in Savannah.

The exhibition features work ranging from physics-inspired and ecology-inspired painting to identity-focused video, from traditional to experimental ceramics, drawing, photography, paper quilling and 2D sculpture.

“Our graduate program is quite diverse in terms of approach, ideas and medium,” said Gallery Director Jason Hoelscher, Ph.D. “When the opportunity arose to exhibit a sampling of that work I jumped at the chance to offer a glimpse of what the emerging artists of today have in store for their explorations of, and contributions to, the art world of the future.”



Ceramic containers created by Margo McCoy

In addition to McCoy, the exhibition features work by Jalen Ash, Jacquelyn Bolton, Austin Buchanan, Jessica Cartwright, Stephen Harmon, John Lewis, Robert Miller, Amy Nelson, Pam Reynolds, Haley Scarboro, Ashley Smith and Kathy Varadi.



Jalen Ash

Ash, who grew up in Ventura County, California, is the only student focusing on performance art within the program, which includes video and mixed media.

She said being the only student on this path is challenging, but the interdisciplinary nature of the program gives her the flexibility and freedom to explore this path. That has proven to benefit everyone in the program.

“The nice thing is that everybody gets a little taste of everything, whether you do it or not,” she said. “We all critique our work together, so we all go around and talk about each other’s work. We’re kind of forced to interact with it.”

Ash also serves as a teacher’s assistant where she says she was given a lot of autonomy to build her own “dream undergraduate course” for her students.

“I think in art there’s an expectation of what art should be and what real art looks like,” she said. “The biggest thing for me is to diminish these fixed ideas and attitudes surrounding art because most people think art is an untouchable thing. And I’m trying to change that.”

For more information on the MFA program, [visit this website](#).

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