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[Georgia Southern University to Highlight Work of Master of Fine Arts Candidates this Semester](#)

February 7, 2018

Georgia Southern University's Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art (BFSDoArt) will host exhibits featuring the work of six Master of Fine Arts (MFA) candidates this semester at the Center for Art and Theatre on the Statesboro Campus.

The exhibitions will highlight the works of BFSDoArt students Dontay Farley, Courtney Ryan, Usman Oladeinde, Glenda Militano, Cyndy Epps and Kyle Hooten. From examining the environmental impact of consumerism, to erasing the stigma of mental illness, the exhibits use art to shed light on issues of great importance to the candidates.

"The thesis exhibition is a key part, if not *the* key part, of obtaining an MFA degree," said Jason Hoelscher, the BFSDoArt Gallery Director. "After years of work and multiple reviews, the MFA thesis exhibition is a showcase of the distinct style, approaches, and aesthetic concerns each student has developed and taken on as their overall agenda. It is with their thesis show that, for all intents and purposes, the student moves on from being a student and becomes an emerging artist or designer."

Three phases of exhibitions will be held. The first exhibits will be held Feb. 12-19, followed by the second exhibits held Feb. 23-March 2. The final exhibits will be held March 8-23. All events are free, and the public is invited to attend.

[MFA Exhibition: Dontay Farley](#)

In "Millions Like Me," MFA candidate Dontay Farley aims to erase the stigma of mental illness and depression. Utilizing greens and blues to convey unity and nature, Farley uses his artwork as a way to make a connection with the public and alter the way people think.

"As a graphic designer, I understand that I cannot cure mental illness or rid the world of depression, but I can create awareness," Farley said. "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."

Farley's exhibition will be on view Feb. 12-19 in the University Gallery at the Center for Art and Theatre. A reception will be held at 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 16.

[MFA Exhibition: Courtney Ryan](#)

"Irrational Aggregates" is a ceramic exhibition by MFA candidate Courtney Ryan that examines the environmental impact of consumerism. Ryan transforms clay into sculptures, which suspend and amplify natural and consumerist relationships with the materials and artifacts we display in

our homes. The artwork focuses on the theme of nature changing along with society's consistently evolving urban and suburban environments.

"It can often be considered mundane and trivial, but the everyday object or experience can bring inspiration into my studio," Ryan said. "It's refreshing to interpret my experiences through my hands in ceramic and sculpture."

Ryan's exhibition will be on view Feb. 12-19 in the Contemporary Gallery at the Center for Art and Theatre. A reception will be held at 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 16.

MFA Exhibition: Usman Oladeinde

"In Search of Communication" features a series of paintings created by MFA candidate Usman Oladeinde. Oladeinde, who was raised in Lagos state, Nigeria, uses his artwork to alter Arabic text into unclear shapes for viewers to interpret from their own perspective. Oladeinde uses elements of family, spirituality and history to connect to his artwork, and to create an aesthetic space of contemplation within a culture bombarded by information.

"My process is deeply grounded in intuition, then resolved with a slower, more reflective approach," Oladeinde said.

Oladeinde's exhibition will be on view Feb. 23- March 2 in the University Gallery at the Center for Art and Theatre. A reception will be held at 5 p.m Friday, March 2.

MFA Exhibition: Glenda Militano

In "Resilience," MFA candidate Glenda Militano explores the complexity and beauty of the human mind. Militano uses color, shape and mixed media to examine internal mental processes and the nerves and tissues related to behavioral learning. The artwork consists of multiple materials such as wood, paper and fabric, along with numerous layers of paint and inks.

"I wanted to know why people make certain decisions, and how to make better decisions," Militano said. "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's exhibition will be on view Feb. 23- March 2 in the Contemporary Gallery at the Center for Art and Theatre. A reception will be held at 5 p.m Friday, March 2.

MFA Exhibition: Cyndy Epps

In "Considering Perspectives," MFA candidate Cyndy Epps gives ordinary items and spaces new meaning. Epps joins multiple images of the same subject from different viewpoints and asks the viewer to not only contemplate the different ways unnoticed objects and spaces can be viewed, but also the multiple ways to feel toward them. Beyond changing the way a subject is seen, Epps also aims to awaken an emotional reaction toward these ordinary things.

“When considering our society today, it seems strange to me that in spite of our cultural diversity, we often hold fast to the idea that there is only one way to look at things—ours,” said Epps. “Perhaps if we can reconsider the value of things we view with disregard, we can begin to explore the idea that there is more than one way to view people or issues in today’s world as well.”

Epps’ exhibition will be on view March 8-23 in the University Gallery at the Center for Art and Theatre. A reception will be held at Friday, March 23 at 5 p.m.

MFA Exhibition: Kyle Hooten

In “Deconstructing Abject Complacency of Ascribed Gender,” MFA candidate Kyle Hooten shines a light on the social constructs surrounding gender. Hooten uses materials commonly considered explicitly masculine or feminine, such as baseball cards and glitter, to examine the ways society uses objects to reinforce stereotypes based on a person’s sex assigned at birth.

“‘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 Hooten. “I want this show to break barriers in as many ways as possible.”

Hooten’s exhibition will be on view March 8-23 in the Contemporary Gallery at the Center for Art and Theatre. A reception will be held at 5 p.m Friday, March 23.