Newsroom

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Georgia Southern University

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"Visit Beautiful Roach Town," an exhibit by Georgia Southern alumna Kathleen "Xed" Blankenship ('17), will be on display Nov. 3-24 in the Averitt Center's Rosengart Gallery, 41 West Main Street, Statesboro. The public is invited to a reception from 5 to 7 p.m., Nov. 3 during First Friday downtown.
Presented by The Averitt Center for the Arts and the Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art (BFSDoArt), "Visit Beautiful Roach Town" explores an imaginary world where cartoon roaches wear suits, visit hotels and run town halls.

"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" creation 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," said University 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 managing social media for a marketing firm. Some of her work can be viewed at https://www.xedblankenship.com/ or on her Instagram, @XedBlankenship.

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.

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 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 GeorgiaSouthern.edu/class.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers 118 degree programs serving 20,673 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered and hands-on approach to education. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.
Georgia Southern earns honorable mention for Second Nature’s 2017 Climate Leadership Awards

OCTOBER 23, 2017

Georgia Southern University has received an honorable mention designation from Second Nature and the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) for the 2017 Climate Leadership Awards, announced earlier this month.

Georgia Southern’s designation of honorable mention is the second highest an institution can receive in the nation. The pool of finalists included only nine four-year institutions, among them, Furman University, Duke University, two Ivy League schools and three universities from California, all widely...
known and supported for their commitment to sustainability. Loyola University Chicago was the winning university in the Four-Year Institution category.

Lissa Leege, Ph.D., director of the Center for Sustainability (CfS), says the honorable mention is the most impressive sustainability recognitions Georgia Southern has received yet.

"I could not be prouder of Georgia Southern for this accomplishment. To be recognized as one of the top two schools in this select group of high-achieving universities is a testament to the power of partnership among Georgia Southern’s students, faculty and staff in creating a more sustainable campus, and ultimately a more sustainable world,” Leege said.

She believes strong student involvement and a shared commitment to sustainability helped the University garner such a high recognition.

"All Georgia Southern students take an Environmental Science course, and the student-initiated sustainability fee supports innovative sustainability advances on campus,” Leege added. “Many students engage in environmental service-learning, having contributed more than 10,000 hours of service to the environment since 2015.”

Bottle-filling stations, bicycle parking facilities and repair stations, an electrical vehicle charging station, and tree plantings on the University’s golf course are just a few of the projects the CfS has funded in efforts to make Georgia Southern a greener campus.

"From an operations perspective, we have made excellent progress toward sustainability goals with energy reduction, water conservation and alternative transportation on our campus over the past several years,” Leege added. “We are one of the state's top participants in Georgia Power’s Commercial Energy Efficiency Rebate Program. We irrigate with a cutting-edge reuse water system, and we are ranked No. 1 nationally for the number of passengers on our buses per mile.”

Former University President Bruce Grube signed the Climate Commitment in 2007 for Georgia Southern, paving the way for the University's national recognition since then.

The Climate Leadership Awards recognize advanced leadership in sustainability, climate change mitigation and resilience at college and university campuses that are part of Second Nature’s Climate Leadership Network. Second Nature is a national nonprofit that works to accelerate climate action in, and through, higher education.

"The Climate Leadership Network continues to drive innovative solutions, which is the only way the sector and the nation will continue to remain globally competitive,” said Tim Carter, president of Second Nature. "This demonstrates to students – our next generation of leaders – what a commitment to climate action looks like.”

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Georgia Southern MFA candidate’s thesis exhibition on display at University Gallery

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Masters of Fine Arts candidate Jessamy McManus’ thesis exhibition, “Neon Nature,” will be on view at the Center for Art & Theatre’s University Gallery Nov. 7-14. The public is invited to attend a free reception at 5 p.m., Friday, Nov. 10.

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-lifes 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.”

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We're excited to welcome civil rights activist, attorney and political commentator Bakari Sellers for the 2018 MLK Celebration! Sellers will present on intersectional activism Wednesday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center. ow.ly/QoPn30hj2cx
Online master's degree in sport management ranked No. 10 in the nation

OCTOBER 23, 2017

Georgia Southern University’s online master’s degree in sport management was recently ranked No. 10 by Best College Reviews in the survey “30 Top Online Masters in Sports Management Degree Programs 2017-2018.”

According to Best College Reviews, Georgia Southern offers one of the top online master’s degree programs in sport management that provide students with the flexibility to enhance their career.

“Rankings provide context and data for strategic planning, help us focus on quality and assist us in determining how we are performing,” said Katherine Thomas, Ph.D., school chair and professor in the School of Health and Kinesiology.

A total of 70 colleges and universities were selected and ranked by Best College Reviews. To determine the order of ranking, points were awarded to sport management programs which provided a curriculum both relevant to the industry and which had previously received accolades or other noted recognition in the field. The ranking also included the program’s industry connections and tuition rates.

“Certainly it is an honor to be grouped with these 30 programs including University of Massachusetts, Texas A&M, University of Florida and University of Memphis,” said Thomas.

The 36-credit online program was designed to provide academic preparation and practical experience in the skills and techniques necessary to be successful in the sport business and leisure field. Students are able to complete the program in an average of two years.

Upon completion of the program, graduates are prepared to work in sports marketing, promotion and advertising; sports information, media and communications; The Olympic Movement, state and county sports commissions, athletic leagues and associations, sport facilities and event management, and professional teams or collegiate athletic departments.

For more information on the online master’s degree in sport management, visit http://chhs.georgiasouthern.edu/hk/undergraduate/sport-management/.

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When Georgia Southern graduate student and staff member Nancey Price stepped off the plane and checked her phone after a week of being disconnected from internet access, the last thing she thought she’d see was a personal message from the freelance art director of O Magazine.

In fact, she never imagined she would come home to a series of messages asking her to commission an original piece for the magazine. Paul Naughton, the art director, found Price’s collage artwork on Etsy and reached out to her while she was volunteering overseas with the organization she founded, the Malawi Girl Project. Naughton sent messages to Price’s Etsy shop, Facebook page and even reached out to her siblings to get in touch with her.
“When I read that the people at O wanted me to contribute an original piece, I immediately thought it was a scam,” said Price. “The thought of having my art associated with someone as influential as Oprah Winfrey was too good to be true, so I originally didn’t believe it. However, after confirming its legitimacy, I got really excited.”

Price was not only challenged to create an original piece, but she also had the challenge of tying in her artwork with a book review for Henry Louis Gates Jr.’s “100 Amazing Facts About the Negro.”

Price stepped up to this challenge and for two weeks spent countless hours emailing editors, running to and from a print shop and cutting out dozens of images to find the perfect arrangements.

“I had to tailor [the collage] to the parameters of that review, which was something I had never done before. It was definitely the hardest piece that I’ve worked on up to this point,” she said.

“Instead of creating a piece that I, alone, thought would go great with the review, I had to make a piece that included all of the historical figures featured in the write-up. That meant finding a way to make seemingly unconnected individuals like General Sherman, Mansa Musa, Harriet Tubman, Anne Spencer and the Sambo caricature, come together in a cohesive work of art.”

Finally, she created a piece she describes as a “whimsical family portrait,” that made it into the November issue.

This opportunity has opened many doors for Price, and she is eager to keep moving forward as an artist. The Girard, Georgia, native has been making artwork since she was a young girl and began leisurely making collages just last year, but it wasn’t until this opportunity that she considered her skill a future career.

“Collaging has always been a hobby and a means of relaxation for me, and because I still consider myself a novice with no formal training, I never expected this hobby to garner such a massive audience,” said Price. “However, my art being featured in O has me reconsidering just how important collaging will be in my life moving forward.”

Price plans to graduate in the fall of 2018 with a Master’s in Public Administration with a concentration in nonprofit management which she will use to continue her efforts with her Malawi Girl Project.

"Being commissioned by the magazine has prompted me to finally create a website to centralize everything that I do as far as writing, collaging and my humanitarian work. Oprah has exposed me to a massive audience, so I hope to expose that audience to everything that I do,” she said.

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Grayson Usrey never anticipated his passion for boating and bowfishing would be anything more than recreational. But when the call came for hurricane relief in Texas, Usrey didn't hesitate to put his skills and equipment to use in an unexpected way.

When Usrey stumbled upon a Facebook post from Bowfishing Association of America calling for volunteers for hurricane relief in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, he called his friend, pulled together some funds, and they made plans to take the 16-hour trip halfway across the country. Usrey called his parents, spoke with his professors, and packed his bags (and his friend’s airboat) for the trek.

Once they arrived in Texas, Usrey and his friend met up with members of the Cajun Navy, a grassroots group of volunteers from Louisiana, founded after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. With their own supplies and service-driven hearts, the volunteers swept the area for days conducting search and rescue missions and checking on homes and businesses.

"We were literally driving boats down Interstate 10," said Usrey. "We went through neighborhoods and just saw tops of houses."

The long days and tough calls never stopped Usrey from feeling compelled to help. Despite the working conditions, Usrey and his friend forged ahead, sleeping in local churches in different locations night after night. Each day, with nothing more than their basic boating essentials (life jackets, bottled water, etc.), Usrey made his way through towns and neighborhoods searching for anyone...or anything in need of help.

On the way back from a long day of searching, Usrey heard noises in the distance. Amid the rising water and hectic winds, the sound was masked and faint. But Usrey wasn't going to take a chance on leaving something behind. He swept an entire neighborhood searching for the sound. As the boat drew closer, he saw what appeared to be an animal on top of a car.

He pulled up his waders and swam to find a soaked, shivering dog cabled to the wheel of a vehicle, climbing to avoid the waters underneath her. Usrey rushed over to calm the dog as he freed her from the car.

Late one night, in the downpour of freezing rain, Usrey came across a mother with two young children fighting to stay safe near their vehicle. The current was getting faster, and Usrey could tell the mother was terrified of her children being swept away. Once again, with nothing more than determination and a good boat, Usrey pulled the family to safety.

Usrey returned home from Texas with a much deeper understanding of service and a true appreciation for his fellow volunteers.
"You never know when it could be you," he said. "We all had the means to do it, so I felt the need to help my country and community out...If I was in that situation I'd want help too. Everything came out of pocket, but knowing that we got people out and possibly saved their lives made it worth it. This was something bigger than myself."

Now Usrey, currently an undeclared major, is changing the way he looks at his academic career.

"This trip really opened up my eyes into future careers," he said. "I realized how much I enjoy serving my community and providing aid and services. Now I'm looking at going somewhere along the criminal investigations route, ending up as a detective or in forensic analysis."

He values the life lessons and experience as a whole, but the true highlight from the trip for Usrey was an unexpected souvenir, one he is thankful for every day.

The Blue Lacy (incidentally the state dog of Texas) which Usrey rescued that dreary day in Texas, is now his newest companion. Milli, as he calls her, is a constant reminder of the good of people.

"For me personally the takeaway is that despite the divide the media portrays, I saw people come together for the common good. Everybody was helping out, no matter race, gender or creed. It was just good people doing good stuff, and Milli reminds me of that every day," said Usrey.

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