

Night Vision brings 1980s party vibe to Georgia Southern's Contemporary Gallery

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Chicago-based artist Claire Ashley's large-scale inflatable paintings/sculptures combine humor, acidic color, and pop culture references in rebellion to art world tradition.

STATESBORO, Ga. – Inspired by Grace Jones' iconic 1981 album "Nightclubbing," Chicago-based artist [Claire Ashley](#)'s "Night Vision" uses humor, acidic color and absurd pop culture references to create large-scale inflatable painting/sculpture-hybrid work that rejects longstanding art world traditions. The exhibition will be presented at Georgia Southern University's Contemporary Gallery at the Center for Art and Theatre from Feb. 15 – March 17. A lecture and reception will be Feb. 15. The Artist Talk will begin at 5 p.m. in Art Building, room 2071, with the reception to follow immediately after, from 6 – 7:30 p.m. at the Center for Art & Theatre.

"I wanted to bring Claire's work here because it's got a good combination of being challenging, while at the same time being fun and engaging. Art that poses big questions like what is art? or why is this art? Can sometimes be dull or stuffy, but Ashley's work is anything but," said Gallery Director Jason Hoelscher. "The notion of a painting as an inflatable surface (rather than a flat plane) is an interesting one from a theoretical point of view, but is also just plain fun to engage: who doesn't feel a bit like a kid again when surrounded by big, weird, inflatable objects?"

Ashley's work is deeply feminist, and is particularly invested in exploding the structural possibilities of abstract painting, expanding kinetic possibilities for monumental sculpture and enlivening the dialogue around contemporary art by utilizing a deliberately egalitarian collection of humorous and formal entry points for multiple communities to engage with her work. "Night Vision" will transform the gallery into a nightclub-like setting using projections and internally lit inflating/deflating "breathing" painted sculptures.

"Claire Ashley's work combines large scale—often considered, or at least intended to be read as, a sign of big, serious art—with a sense of fun and engaged interaction. The objects are painterly in ways that light up an art critic's brain with interesting questions and problems, while also lighting up

the pleasure or fun center of the brain. Much fun art is shallow, much 'deep' art isn't necessarily fun or viscerally interesting, but Ashley's work manages to bridge these divides," said Hoelscher. "For that matter, as more and more of our cultural objects dissolve into the immateriality of screen space, there's a real, visceral pleasure in being around objects and tangible things. With Ashley's work the fun becomes serious, the serious becomes fun, and the two combine to pose important questions about, and challenges to, what we have come to expect from art experiences in this second decade of the 21st century."

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

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