

Myth and Art: Carnegie 'Myth in Form' exhibit features works by 27 female artists

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By Catherine Godbey Staff Writer



Using a variety of mediums, from the conventional art forms of watercolors, acrylics and oils to the nontraditional materials of bicycle wheels, cedar fencing and a taxidermized rabbit, 27 female artists tackled the topic of myth.

“Myths do not have to be stories of old. All the objects we make are based on the stories we tell,” artist Cynthia Ford said. “We need these myths to communicate and describe the way we think the world works or should work.”

The exhibit “Myth in Form” featuring works by members of the Alabama Women’s Caucus for Art is currently on display at the Carnegie Visual Arts Center in downtown Decatur.

The roots of the collective show began when member Corinna Nicole expressed a desire for an exhibit that did not narrow the art down to a particular subject, ideology or technique.

“The exhibition committee began to discuss what subject would be so universal that every submission, no matter what image it resembled, or what form it took, would fit,” said Kimberly Hart, president of the Alabama Women’s Caucus for the Arts.

The pieces range from abstract to surrealism to expressionism.

From Huntsville artist Lauren Passwater is “Lilith,” a taxidermized rabbit on top of a stand of paper mâché skulls and surrounded by a cage.

From Kristy Brown, of Huntsville, is “Object Impermeance,” which features two bicycle wheels beneath a blue canvas. Look closely at the canvas and a figure starts to appear.

From Susie Garrett, of Huntsville, is “Skeleton in Your Closet.” Made from latex house paint, the piece features a skeleton peeking out from inside a closet.

Taryn Chase Jackson, an analog collage and mixed media artist out of Tusculumbia, used found images and objects to create “Goddess Brigid” and “Opium Eater” — her two pieces on display at the Carnegie.

“My pieces can sometimes be whimsical or dark and often a blend of the two,” Jackson said. “‘Goddess Brigid’ is a representation of the Celtic goddess known as the patron of spring and motherhood, as well as fire, wisdom and poetry. ‘Opium Eater’ uses more haunting imagery to represent the ways in which women throughout history have struggled and endured hardships.”

Cullman painter Laura Walker addressed the surreal and symbolic in her pieces “The Eye Never has Long Enough,” featuring a bouquet of eyes and ears, and “Whatever You Do,” featuring skeletal hands surrounded by herbs and with the words “What so ever your hand finds to do ... do it with all your might.”

“In ‘Whatever You Do,’ I was showing that I want to try to do my best in everything I do, whether that is making art, loving my children or dealing with strangers in traffic. The skeletons represent the core of my being. I surrounded the skeletons with herbs that aid in focus and brain work,” Walker said. “All of my art is about emotion, meaning and my soul. I want to encourage others to connect with them emotionally.”

The exhibit also features photographs from Ford, who painted realistic images as a child and experimented with ceramics in college.

“I love photographing people and then messing about with the image until it can be unrecognizable from the image in a good way,” Ford said. “A myth of personal self. That was what I was exploring in two of my photos. They both have reflective militant and tough

images reflected in the glasses. They mask a person's inner soul that can show vulnerability."

Along with Passwater, Brown, Garnett, Jackson, Walker, Hart and Ford, the exhibit also features art by Lexie Austin, Amanda Banks, Kimberly A. Brown, Sylvia Bowyer, Kana Clark, Anna Sue Courtney, Margaret Dukeman, Sarah Joy Dunlap, DaNeal Eberly, April Harris, Devona Hawkins, Tara Lee, Leanna Lesley, Cindy Miller, Corinna Nicole, Lucy Pike, Aynslee Smithee, Samantha Tallichet, Cynthia Wagner and Kami Watson.

The exhibit will remain on display through Nov. 4. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday to Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday. Admission is free with donations accepted.

A reception for the artists will take place Friday from 6 to 7:30 pm. at the Carnegie, 207 Church St. N.E. Admission is free for members and \$5 for nonmembers.

Founded in 2015 by UAH and Alabama A&M art professors and Huntsville artists, the Alabama Women's Caucus for Art supports female artists, advocates for gender equity in the arts and is committed to social activism. For more information on the Alabama Women's Caucus for Art, visit alwca.org.