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ARTNOW
EXHIBITION 12/15 - 01/19
EVENT 01/19



***ArtNow* exhibition, event celebrate Oklahoma's contemporary artists**

Oklahoma Contemporary's signature *ArtNow* celebrates Oklahoma's vibrant contemporary art community. The 2018 exhibition, opening Dec. 15, provides a snapshot of Oklahoma's diverse art scene. The exhibit wraps up with an art sale, the "party with a purpose" on Jan. 19.

The event supports Oklahoma artists, who receive a 50 percent commission on each artwork sold. Tickets, sponsorships and the remainder of art sales help keep Oklahoma Contemporary exhibitions open free of charge, year-round.

For this year's exhibition, Curatorial and Exhibitions Director Jennifer Scanlan and guest curator Alyson Atchison have chosen 25 artists with more than 150 works across many media, from jewelry, ceramics and multimedia sculpture to photography, painting and printmaking.

“We work hard to bring in both artists established in the Oklahoma art scene, and many who have never shown before at Oklahoma Contemporary,” Scanlan said. “We don’t include any artists who have shown at *ArtNow* in the past three years. So even if you have been to *ArtNow* recently, you will definitely see something new and exciting.”

Originally from Ethiopia, artist Eyakem Gulilat now lives in Oklahoma City. Five of his photographs are in *ArtNow 2018*, including some from his *Mother’s Prayer* series.

“The gap between my present self and my childhood mirrors the geographical separation between my physical location in America and my childhood home in Ethiopia,” Gulilat said. “I have struggled to describe for others a heritage and homeland I have long been distanced from. My desire through the project *Mother’s Prayer* is to make sense of these gaps and to rewrite my narrative into the current landscape I inhabit.”

Award-winning Karin Walkingstick is a third-generation Cherokee potter from Claremore. “Although I have built traditional pots, creative happiness lies in contemporary pieces that incorporate southeastern woodland designs of the Cherokee homelands,” she said.

Marjorie Atwood says her paintings are about storytelling. “The themes in my work explore the power of feminine energies and their impact on the world around them. Beauty in art can be a refuge from human chaos and devastation, from the helplessness that the process of mortality inflicts on our efforts to do what we know we must do but feel we can never do adequately.”

The exhibition, which had traditionally been 10 days, will run five weeks.

“We have expanded the length of the exhibition because we want *ArtNow* to be a showcase for the best of Oklahoma contemporary art,” Scanlan said. “The exhibition offers a unique opportunity to get people excited about Oklahoma art and to get collectors excited about investing in Oklahoma art.”

Visitors can interact with the exhibit in a variety of ways, including in a hands-on Learning Gallery and on Tuesday Tours. (At 5:30 p.m. each Tuesday, a staff-led tour will offer a behind-the-scenes look at the exhibition. Curators and artists are often on hand to discuss works and answer questions.)

ArtNow culminates with the closing event on Jan. 19, bringing together tastemakers and trendsetters for an evening of art, cocktails and entertainment. In addition to learning from the exhibited artists themselves about their process and the works, local artists will create new works live at the event. Tickets for the event sold out in 2016 and 2017, so eager attendees are advised to purchase theirs early at oklahomacontemporary.org.

ArtNow is both the exhibition and the event. Artistic Director Jeremiah Matthew Davis sums it up: “An annual survey of the arts landscape in Oklahoma, an opportunity to connect audiences to contemporary creativity, a party with a purpose. *ArtNow* is more than an exhibition: The funds we raise for *ArtNow* keep exhibitions free to the public year-round at Oklahoma Contemporary and support the diverse artists creating work across our state.”

Image (from top): Karin Walkingstick’s Grandma’s Garden, 2017’s party, Behnaz Sohrabian’s Smile.

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A media kit, including this press release, a complete list of artists and photos of the artworks listed below, is at bit.ly/ArtNow18 kit. Past press releases and additional information are archived

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at oklahomacontemporary.org/about/media. Interviews with curators and artists can be organized through Director of Communications Lori Brooks (lbrooks@okcontemp.org).

Captions:

Marjorie Atwood, *Rosalia*, 2016.

Atwood is an Oklahoma-based contemporary painter who focuses on the female figure in forms that represent the mythical and contemporary woman.

Elyse Bogart, *#401 Cuff Bracelet*, 2016. Sterling silver, 14k pink, yellow and green golds, lapis.

A member of the Society of North American Goldsmiths, Bogart has taught jewelry-making classes at the Firehouse Art Center in Norman since 1982.

Jeremy Dylan Cavin, *Pilgrimage Void*. Acrylic, 24 x 36 in.

Cavin, an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation, says he's has been drawing as long as he can remember. He lives in Norman.

Emily Chase, *Relative Bearing*, 2016. Hand-cut paper and vellum in a black walnut box, LED lights.

Chase is a paper sculpture artist working in Tulsa, where she is currently part of the Tulsa Artist Fellowship. She is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and a 2013 Windgate Fellow.

Jason Cytacki, *Out of the Blue*, 2017. Oil on canvas.

Cytacki is an assistant professor of painting at the University of Oklahoma. His paintings examine the American character and its construction through history, popular culture and mythology.

Douglas Shaw Elder, *SCAPE LXXXVI #86*, 2015. Polychrome plywood.

Elder, executive director of the Firehouse Art Center, is a working artist, primarily producing drawings and sculpture. A U.S. Army veteran who received his MFA from Boston University, Elder is also an arts educator and visual arts advocate.

Eyakem Gulilat, *Untitled* (detail from the *Mother's Prayer* series), 2016.

Gulilat's art has won several prestigious awards and is included in nationally recognized exhibitions and collections.

Katherine Liontas-Warren, *Autumn Skies*. Watercolor.

Cameron University Professor Liontas-Warren, recipient of the Oklahoma Governor's Art and Education Award, has exhibited her works of art in more than 400 exhibitions throughout the United States. Her works are in permanent collections in museums and institutions throughout the nation.

Michael Nicholson, *Medicine Creek*, 2015. Acrylic and graphite on gessoed 140 lb. HP arches.

Nicholson says, "My preoccupations, provocations and the focus of my paintings have their origins in the world outside."

Tomoaki Orikasa, *Hang With Me*, 2017. Copper, steel, polymer resin.

Orikasa was born in Chiba, Japan, in 1973. He has been a freelance jeweler and sculptor since 1999 and an employee of the Crucible Foundry since 1999.

Behnaz Sohrabian, *Smile*, 2016. Oil on canvas.

Born and educated in Tehran, Iran, Sohrabian started painting as a child and continued her passion professionally from the age of 13. Behnaz received a BS in Applied Chemistry, a BA in Painting and a

Master of Arts in Art Studies. After receiving her master's degree, she immigrated to Oklahoma to be near family.

Karin Walkingstick, *Grandma's Garden*. Coil-built, red earthenware clay, heavily incised, stone burnished, kiln fired, black underglaze applied and re-fired, painted with acrylics and sealed with acrylic sealant.

Walkingstick is an award-winning Cherokee potter from Claremore. Her passion for art began early, and she has explored many types of creative expression. Since 2013, she has committed her time exclusively to pottery, using techniques that echo her culture.

About Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center

Oklahoma Contemporary ignites creativity. An arts center for learning currently located at State Fair Park, our mission is to encourage artistic expression in all its forms through education, exhibition and performance. We focus on living artists, the art of now and the art of what's next. We are committed to providing accessible, inclusive arts experiences for everyone by hosting free exhibitions, events and performances year-round and by offering low-cost, high-quality arts classes and camps for youth and adults.

Oklahoma Contemporary is in the midst of building a spectacular new arts education and cultural resource on a 4.6-acre site at NW 11th and Broadway. In addition to providing a world-class facility for exhibitions, performance and education and a breathtaking addition to the OKC skyline, the new campus will become a "creative commons," a place for community to gather, create and experience art. Our Studio School will tell the stories behind the art of now and teach the skills to create what's next. Incorporating programming from our community partners, Oklahoma Contemporary will be a hub for artistic experiences of all kinds and offer the city an event space like no other.

Oklahoma Contemporary is a regional 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization founded in 1989 by businessman and philanthropist Christian Keese and Kirkpatrick Foundation Director Marilyn Myers.