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Exhibition Announcement

INSIDE THE OUTSIDE: FIVE SELF-TAUGHT ARTISTS FROM THE WILLIAM LOUIS-DREYFUS COLLECTION
May 21 – September 4, 2016

Member’s Gallery Talk: William Louis-Dreyfus and Nancy Doll
Friday, May 20, 6 pm
Public Reception, 6:30 pm

The Weatherspoon Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro is delighted to present Inside the Outside: Five Self-Taught Artists from the William Louis-Dreyfus Collection from May 21 to September 4, 2016.

The enigmatic—and often humorous and dramatic—works in this exhibition survey the production of five highly gifted artists: James Castle, Thornton Dial, Nellie Mae Rowe, Bill Traylor, and Willie Young. Prior labels of “outsider” and “visionary” have given way to the more appropriate term, “self-taught” art, though the genre remains one of the most intriguing in modern and contemporary art. Each of these artists has examined an idiosyncratic personal reality to create works full of imaginative and visual power, works that stand beside the canon of the mainstream art world.

Three of the artists of African-American heritage grew up in the Deep South: Thornton Dial on a tenant farm in Alabama, Nellie Mae Rowe on a farm in rural Georgia, and Bill Traylor, born a
slave in Alabama, who only began to draw and paint at age 84. Willie Young, also African-American, participated as a child in a scholarship art class at the Dallas Museum of Art but found his own voice using only pencil as a medium. James Castle was born deaf and spent his entire life at his rural family home in Idaho.

The exhibition includes Castle’s spit and soot drawings of the only home and town he knew as well as Willie Young’s exquisite graphite renderings of imagined architectural forms and plant life. Nellie Mae Rowe’s imaginary world and its inhabitants are spun from bold colors and graphic patterns, while Bill Traylor’s repertoire of male and female figures and animals derive directly from his poor surroundings. Thornton Dial, who recently died, incorporates found materials into his assemblages while his drawings celebrate women, tigers, and birds.

William Louis-Dreyfus began collecting the works of self-taught artists in the 1970s with the purchase of a Bill Traylor drawing. He now owns more than 500 works by these artists, within his over-all collection of 3,500 objects, which includes well-known names such as Jean Dubuffet, Albert Giacometti, Helen Frankenthaler, Red Grooms, and Alice Neel. When asked what caused him to collect self-taught art, he explains that, “I think the answer is not anything different from what propelled me to collect art itself, namely a conviction that the work achieves an inescapable and meaningful artistic presence: the quality that differentiates art from illustration.”

“In addition to providing an in-depth and focused look at the work of five remarkable artists, the exhibition also celebrates William Louis-Dreyfus’s passion for art and his belief in its power to affect lives,” says Nancy Doll, Director of the Weatherspoon Art Museum. His commitment to philanthropy is exemplified by his promise to donate a large group of artworks from his collection to the Foundation, for the future benefit of the Harlem Children’s Zone, a New York City non-profit that provides comprehensive educational support to children and their families from youth to adulthood. Mr. Louis Dreyfus’s daughter, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, produced the film “Generosity of Eye” in 2015; it captures her father’s thoughts on art, collecting, and his promised gift.

A publication with essays by Karen Wilkin and Trenton Doyle Hancock accompany the exhibition. Wilkin, a prolific writer on modern and contemporary art, reflects on the self-taught artist’s career in the context of mainstream art practice. Hancock is a celebrated contemporary artist who uses pop-cultural imagery to build complex narratives that convey symbolic meaning.

The exhibition was co-organized by Darsie Alexander, Executive Director, Katonah Museum of Art and Nancy Doll, Director, Weatherspoon Art Museum. ArtsGreensboro and the Joseph M. Bryan Foundation are sponsors of the exhibition at the Weatherspoon. Thank you to the City of Greensboro for their support of the Fringe on Film Series.


Related Public Programs

Members’ Gallery Talk: William Louis-Dreyfus and Nancy Doll  
Friday, May 20, 6 pm; Public Reception, 6:30 pm  
Free and open to the public. No reservations necessary.
Films: Fringe on Film Series
Thursdays, June 2, July 7 & August 4, 7 pm*
Often considered on the fringe of the art world, the self-taught artists in this summer’s film series demonstrate a creative visual reality that is remarkably unique and contemporary. June 2: *Generosity of Eye* (2015, 63 min.), July 7: *James Castle: Portrait of an Artist* (2008, 53 min.), August 4: *Mr. Dial Has Something to Say* (2007, 60 min.). * Enjoy pre-film refreshments and tours: Complimentary beer and refreshments hosted by the Membership Committee of the Weatherspoon Art Museum (6-7pm); mini tours of Inside the Outside (6:30-7pm). Free.

Noon @ the ‘Spoon Public Tour
Tuesday, June 14, 12 pm
Our 20-minute Noon @ the ‘Spoon tour is a fun way to explore a new exhibition during lunch break. Offered the second Tuesday of the month. Free.

For a complete, updated list of museum programs, visit [http://weatherspoon.uncg.edu](http://weatherspoon.uncg.edu).

About the Weatherspoon Art Museum

Mission
The Weatherspoon Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro acquires, preserves, exhibits, and interprets modern and contemporary art for the benefit of its multiple audiences, including university, community, regional, and beyond. Through these activities, the museum recognizes its paramount role of public service, and enriches the lives of diverse individuals by fostering an informed appreciation and understanding of the visual arts and their relationship to the world in which we live.

History
The **Weatherspoon Art Museum** at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro was founded by Gregory Ivy in 1941 and is the earliest of any art facilities within the UNC system. The museum was founded as a resource for the campus, community, and region and its early leadership developed an emphasis—maintained to this day—on presenting and acquiring modern and contemporary works of art. A 1950 bequest from the renowned collection of Claribel and Etta Cone, which included prints and bronzes by Henri Matisse and other works on paper by American and European modernists, helped to establish the Weatherspoon’s permanent collection. Other prescient acquisitions during Ivy’s tenure included a 1951 suspended mobile by Alexander Calder, *Woman* by Willem de Kooning, a pivotal work in the artist’s career that was purchased in 1954, and the first drawings by Eva Hesse and Robert Smithson to enter a museum collection. In 1989, the museum moved into its present location in The Anne and Benjamin Cone building designed by the architectural firm Mitchell Giurgula. The museum has six galleries and a sculpture courtyard with over 17,000 square feet of exhibition space. The American Association of Museums accredited the Weatherspoon in 1995 and renewed its accreditation in 2005.

Collections + Exhibitions
The permanent collection of the Weatherspoon Art Museum is the only of its kind in North Carolina and is considered to be one of the foremost in the Southeast. It represents all major art movements from the beginning of the 20th century to the present. Of the nearly 6,000 works in the collection are pieces by such prominent figures as Sol LeWitt, Robert Mangold, Cindy Sherman, Al Held, Alex Katz, Henry Tanner, Louise Nevelson, Mark di Suvero, Deborah Butterfield, Nick, Cave, Deb Kass, and Robert Rauschenberg. The museum regularly lends to major exhibitions nationally and internationally.
The Weatherspoon also is known for its adventurous and innovative exhibition program. Through a dynamic annual calendar of fifteen to eighteen exhibitions and a multi-disciplinary educational program for audiences of all ages, the museum provides an opportunity for audiences to consider artistic, cultural, and social issues of our time and enriches the life of our university, community, and region.

Weatherspoon Art Museum
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