Museum opens fall exhibit and Festival Acadiens poster

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Museum patrons wait for the exhibit to open.

The Paul and Lulu Hilliard Art Museum has opened its doors for guests to view the two newest exhibits, “Manifest Destiny, Real and Imagined” and “Art Under The Big Sky,” at this year’s opening reception for the Fall 2015 exhibitions.

The two exhibits were lent to the university museum until Jan. 2. The first exhibit, “Art Under The Sky,” is originally from the Yellowstone Art Museum’s permanent collection and historic works of art from the Northern plains and Rocky Mountain region. “Manifest Destiny, Real and Imagined” came from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

LouAnne Greenwald, museum director since spring 2014, credits the culture of Louisiana for the museum to be able to showcase art from well-known art museums.

“The great thing about Lafayette is that we have so much culture here,” Greenwald said. “This is a culturally rich community. We’re so lucky to have (Acadiana Center for the Arts) downtown that shows a lot of local and regional artists as sort of the museum of region.

“We have 11,000 square feet of exhibition space. (We have) the biggest exhibition space between Houston and New Orleans, and we’re a part of the university, so I feel like it makes sense for us to have a national and even international program to compliment the other programs in town,” she continued.

Greenwald, working in Washington D.C. before taking over her job as director last July, has been in Lafayette for a year now and said she’s enjoyed her time here.

“I’ve eaten some foods that I’ve never eaten before, it’s great and it’s a wonderful community,” she said. “It’s interesting to be in a small town again. I grew up in a small town: I lived on the West Coast for a while and then in D.C. So being in the South is new to me, and it’s been fascinating.”

Linda Dautreuil, a University of Louisiana at Lafayette alumnae, has had her artwork permanently placed in the Hilliard Museum. Currently living in Covington, Dautreuil has reunited with her close friends who live in Lafayette.

“This evening has been absolutely wonderful because there are many people I haven’t seen in 20 years that I have seen tonight,” she said. “There’s a great deal of solidarity in people in Southwest Louisiana, and for those that have remained here and that have attended (UL Lafayette), there’s that great sense of camaraderie and a great desire for the museum to be as successful as it is now.”

Dautreuil said having her artwork permanently in the museum is a gratifying feeling.

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“As an artist, one always hopes that their art is going to be in a venue where it’s allowed to speak the people who visit,” she said. “As well as having a permanent collection means that they are committed to preserving the artwork, and so it feels quite wonderful to be a part of that and know that one’s work will be a part of something bigger.”

Alex Whittington, a freshman chemical engineering and chemistry major, has been interested in art since he started taking class at UL Lafayette through dual enrollment three semesters ago. He said the university museum really got him interested in art. His favorite piece at the gallery was a work done by SCOISinclair.

“The thing about this one (Sinclair piece) that gets me is that it’s got a lot of easy recognizable patterns like the vertical bars of colors but texturally, they have lots of horizontal and diagonal lines that branch against it and I feel that it takes you all around the painting,” he said.

Also part of the fall exhibit reveal, Festival Acadiens et Creoles revealed this years festival poster. This years festival will mark the 250th year since the Acadians came to Louisiana after being exiled from Nova Scotia in 1775.

The reveal of the poster was met with praise and shouts of “Beautiful!” from the crowd awaiting its showcase.

Moriah Istre, Ph.D., an alumnae of the university and festival manager, said she is thrilled about this years festival.

“Last year was the first year we ever had an anniversary stage to commemorate the 40th year of Festival Acadiens et Creoles, and this year we’re commemorating the 250th year of their arrival to Louisiana,” she said. “Barry Ancelet and some of the guys who have been organizing this festival, asked if I would manage the anniversary stage for last year and again this year, so it’s very near and dear to my heart.”