Francis Pavy featured in new UL-Lafayette exhibit

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Lafayette artist Francis X. Pavy's career took a circuitous route, moving through art mediums to find what he finally felt was the perfect balance with painting and printing techniques.

Now, the public has a chance to see a good example of this unique combination, an oversized piece titled "Lake Arthur Lotus," that's on exhibit at the Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum on the University of Louisiana at Lafayette campus.

Pavy graduated from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, now UL-Lafayette, with a degree in ceramics but worked in glass for many years while exploring other artistic genres, particularly painting.

"My friends were painters and I was jealous of them; I wanted to be a painter," he said.

Pavy had studied printing at school and began exploring using blocks for printing as a form of expression and a way to earn some additional money.

"I did wood blocks to investigate other imagery and to have something else to sell," Pavy said. "I felt it was more hands-on."

Francis Pavy uses a stencil to add a layer of color to Jazz Fest 2017 posters, which have been signed by members of The Meters, on Tuesday at his Lafayette studio.

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He ended up with eight or 10 blocks per print, not enough to bring in real income, so he experimented further.

"I was able to incorporate painting and printing together," Pavy said.

The "Lake Arthur Lotus" is a great example, said Laura Blerceau, curator at the Hilliard museum, who along with the museum's educator, Olivia Morgan, and registrar, Misty Taylor, visited Pavy's studio in March to learn more about his printmaking process.

"All three of us were struck by the raw beauty of his CNC-milled linocut blocks," Blerceau said. "As a team, we decided it would be a great educational opportunity to exhibit a few blocks beside the artwork — so as to reveal the artist's process to the audience."

CNC milling is described as a specific form of "computer numerical controlled" machining that uses a rotating cylindrical cutting tool.

"Lake Arthur Lotus" is a painting developed with oil and spray paint, then layered with numerous prints, a piece the museum describes as "psychedelic swampscape." It's part of Pavy's "Third Coast Series" that addresses coastal Louisiana wetlands.

"Usually, I like it (the canvas) stretched, but I really like that piece unstretched," Pavy said of the artwork's mounting.

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"Since Pavy's show will run concurrently with "Tina Freeman: Artist Spaces" in the fall, we thought this closer view into Francis Pavy's studio techniques offered a nice opportunity to consider how artists of Acadiana also customize their own workspaces to accommodate a particular method or technique," Blerceau said.

Pavy has been exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide, including the New Orleans Museum of Art, Contemporary Art Museum Houston and the Institute for Contemporary Art, Boston.

His work has been recognized by commissions and grants, seen on several album covers and seen as background in the film "Now You See Me," among other films and TV programs.

Last month, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation commissioned Pavy to create "Funk Foundation," his third official 2017 Jazz Fest poster.

Pavy's artwork will be included in "The Swamp Witch: A Louisiana Folk Tale," a narrative art installation organized by UL-Lafayette English professor Maurice DuQuesnay, which opens July 8 at Basin Arts of Lafayette.

Artist Francis Pavy, pictured in front of some of his work on Tuesday at his studio in Lafayette.

FROM LEFT: 'Lotus Flower,' hand-carved linoleum block; 'Dragonfly,' CNC-milled linoleum tile block; and 'Egret,' a CNC-milled linoleum tile block.

Lake Arthur Lotus' by Francis Pavy is on display at the Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum.