University Art Museum remembers Marquis de Lafayette

by Michael Dambold

The Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum at UL Lafayette held its Spring Exhibition Reception on Friday, Feb. 9 to commemorate its newest shows.

On the night of the reception, the air was crisp and calm. The waterfall in front of the museum shimmered with azure light that came dancing across it from the large glass panels of the front side of the building. As I walked down the sidewalk, I saw the old museum, a two-story sentry of things past. The white Acadian house sat quietly in front of the new museum entrance of the museum, and I felt as though I was suddenly a part of a large family simply upon entering the building. The blue light emanating from the panels above cast very cool tones upon the crowd, no doubt bringing them into a calmer state as if to prepare them for the works presented further in.

Wine and cheese were served (as is the usual custom for receptions), and the feeling of instant importance was given to those who entered the building. Once the small talk and mingling were through within the crowd, I ventured into the exhibits themselves.

The main exhibitions that were presented that evening were as follows:

**Paris:** Photographs by Eugene Atget and Christopher Rauschenberg.

**Pattern and Language:** Clothing as Communicator

Anti_Dog Copywriting
Unwanted Sentences
by Alicia Framis
2003

(Submitted Photo)
Techniques and Styles: A sampling of paintings, drawings and prints from the Georgia Museum of Art.

The first exhibition to the right was the Paris photography exhibit. As I entered the large room, I noticed that the lights were dim, and immediately to the right was a sign explaining that this was for preservation of the photographs. Even so, the dim lighting served to transport me nearly 100 years back in time as they went from photo to photo. The photographs themselves documented the architecture and life of Paris as far back at 1908, before any World War or destruction had reached its borders. Photos showed early 20th Century Parisians going about their lives: sweeping the doorways of their shops, buying and selling, and other simple day-to-day tasks that the modern viewer would find fascinating.

The exhibition also served as a link of Louisiana's heritage. A reminder of things past and the French influence on the Acadians that reaches forward into modern day and gives Acadiana its unique culture.

As I left the photography exhibition and entered the Pattern and Language: Clothing as Communicator exhibit across the hall, it is as if I was transported back into the present, observing works of art that comment, suggest and even satirize the modern day culture, such as Anti_Dog Copywriting Unwanted Sentences. Moving from work to work, I sensed

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83, Rue de Fauberg Saint Antoine
Christopher Rauschenberg
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each individual artist's motive and his comment on society and both its problems and virtues.

As the more chaotic exhibition, it is placed in such a way in hope to challenge the viewer about society, and not just allow him or her to view without participation of some sort.

As I moved upstairs into the Techniques and Styles Exhibit, I noticed the variety of works presented. Everything from newer art movements of Neo-Geo to older art movements of Post-Impressionism were presented, including a famous sketch by James McNeill Whistler. Screen prints, paintings, drawings, lithographs and others were present, continuing the variety of shapes, colors and textures that are sure to intrigue the eyes.

As the crowd assembled toward the end of the reception, the curators of the museum presented one of the artists that is being shown, Christopher Rauschenberg.

Rauschenberg walks before the crowd, and in a very humble voice said "We are honored to be able to show our work with the celebration of the 250th birthday of the Marquis de Lafayette and the history of Acadiana."

Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette, is celebrated for his contributions to American democracy, including the joint French-American victory of the Battle of Yorktown in 1781 against invading British forces. His life and achievements will be honored at the 250th celebration of his birthday as an ode to French influence on Acadian culture.

The Paris exhibit will be open until April 14, and the other two exhibits will be open until April 28. The University Art Museum will welcome any guests who wish to view the exhibits. For admission prices and exhibition information, visit the Art Museum's Web site at www.museum.louisiana.edu or call the museum at (337) 482-2278. It is highly recommended that all who love Louisiana view these exhibits to catch a glimpse of the past and present of Louisiana's culture and heritage.