

Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC, Offers Works from Johnson Collection

Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC, is presenting *The Mountains Are Calling: High Seasons in the Carolinas from the Johnson Collection*, featuring Southern artworks from the Johnson Collection, on view in the Richardson Family Art Gallery inside the Rosalind Sallenger Richardson Center for the Arts, through Sept. 16, 2017.

Naturalist and poet John Muir once said, "The mountains are calling, and I must go."

Nature's offerings of sublime vistas and quiet reverie captivated not only Muir, but visual artists as well. While Muir's muse was the Sierra Nevada, the ancient monumentality of the Carolinas' Blue Ridge Mountains has inspired generations of painters on this side of the country.

"The Johnson Collection is honored to help celebrate the opening of Spartanburg's newest cultural jewel, the Rosalind Sallenger Richardson Center for the Arts," says Susan Phifer (Susu) Johnson, a Spartanburg philanthropist and community leader who along with her husband, George Dean Johnson, began the Johnson Collection in 2002. "Jerry and Rosalind Richardson are longtime friends with whom we share enduring values, most particularly a devotion to Spartanburg's vitality and to Wofford College, George's alma mater.

"Beyond the inaugural display of mountain scenes on view through the summer, the collection has pledged to lend annual curated exhibitions, drawn from our holdings, to the Richardson Family Art Gallery for the next three years," Johnson continues. "It is our hope that these presentations – like the facility itself, the stunning Chihuly sculptures, the student art showcases and other displays – will support Wofford's mission to provide its students with a broad, rich – and beautiful – liberal arts education."

Wofford President Nayef Samhat says the college's partnership with the Johnson Collection in which students have had the opportunity to curate exhibitions from the collection is enhanced exponentially by the loaned exhibitions in the new center for the arts. "I can't say enough about how important this partnership with the Johnson Collection and Susu and George Dean Johnson is to Wofford students. Now, we will have the opportunity to showcase some of the beautiful and important works of Southern art here on campus for not only our students, but the Spartanburg community. The exposure to this art will enhance the Wofford experience for all students, especially those in our vibrant arts programs."

The featured works in the exhibition are as varied as their makers – from the majestic, highly detailed 19th century panoramas by William Frerichs and Andrew Melrose to the ethereal, impressionistic views by Lawrence Mazzanovich and Margaret Law.

In sweeping scenes atop iconic peaks to vignettes of secluded woodland streams,



"Old Man" by William Halsey

both native-born and visiting artists expressed their reverence for the Appalachian Southern province. The ephemerality of nature offered additional possibilities for creative exploration by considering seasonal changes. Vibrant fall foliage gives way to snow-covered summits before bursting with lively flora and humid haze – all transient conditions rendered permanent by the artist's brush.

The Johnson Collection offers an extensive survey of artistic activity in the American South from the late 18th century to the present day. The Johnson family is committed to creating a collection that captures and illuminates the rich history and diverse cultures of the region. By making masterworks from its holdings available for critical exhibitions and academic research, the collection hopes to advance interest in the dynamic role that the art of the South plays in the larger context of American art and to contribute to the canon of art historical literature. The collection also seeks to enrich its local community by inviting the public to interact with these inspiring works of art. Wofford College and the Johnson Collection enjoy a partnership that includes opportunities for students to serve as visiting curators of exhibits from the collection.

The Johnson Collection participates in the Art in Embassies program, sponsored by the US State Department since 1963. The program plays a vital role in international diplomacy by advancing cross-cultural dialogue through the visual arts. The Johnson Collection supports the exchange program with the loan of "Old Man," created in 1972 by Charleston artist-educator William Halsey, to the American embassy in Bratislava, the capital city of Slovakia. The collection recently received the City of Spartanburg's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Humanities Award presented in January at the annual Unity Celebration.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call Laura Corbin at 864/597-4180, e-mail to (laura.corbin@wofford.edu) or visit (www.wofford.edu).

collection of Dr. Cathy Jones, a professor at Converse College.

"Curating this exhibit has been an exciting and creative exploration of culture, history, politics and more," Curran says. "At times it has been difficult, but the redeeming factors of the project have far outweighed the stress.

"I'm excited that this is one of the first exhibitions in the new center for the arts," she continues, "because it shows that the space can be used by all students – not just art or art history students – and can help foster intercultural conversation about important social and political issues."

To express his concern for damage done to the Medina of Tunis, Hammadi Ben Saad creates collages using trash that he finds as he walks across the city. Using discarded pieces of paper, cardboard and fabric demonstrates his personal conviction of preserving the medina as well as using art for environmental activism.

For Ghalia Khadar, art is an opportunity to study women and their environments. She focuses on female figures, portraying them in the recesses of the medina where they emerge from and recede into their environments. Souad Chehibi also depicts women in her work, but in a manner

that more openly defies the oppression of women. Her women appear in large formats, often bare-breasted with flowing hair, claiming space and protecting one another with arms like wings.

"All three artists explore artistic topics that were in many respects off limits under the authoritarian regime of Ben Ali and traditional artistic conventions. Powerful, yet understated, these artists' pieces exhibit the accessibility of activism; they subtly refuse to be complicit in situations of injustice," Curran says.

"In the current political climate of negative attitudes toward Middle Eastern and North African countries, I think it is important to engage positively with unfamiliar cultures to challenge our misconceptions," Curran adds. "I hope *Printemps des Arts: Subtleties of Resistance and Renewal* will be a part of a greater resistance in the United States – one challenging ignorance and misunderstanding in a society driven by Islamophobia and fear of the 'other.'"

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Hampton III Gallery in Taylors, SC, Features Works by Darell Koons

Hampton III Gallery in Taylors, SC, will present *Darell Koons (1924-2016): In Memoriam*, on view from June 22 through Aug. 5, 2017. An opening will be held on June 22, from 7-9pm. The artist's family will be in attendance and will engage in an informal discussion beginning at 8pm.

Hampton III Gallery presents a collection of works by one of its founding artists, Darell Koons. The paintings span several periods of the late artist's life and represent a variety of mediums including graphite, etching, lithograph, watercolor and acrylic. Described by art critics as a "magic realist painter", Koons is best known for his intricately rendered rural scenes.

Koons was born in Albion, MI, on Dec. 18, 1924, and spent most of his childhood in the Albion-Homer area of Southern Michigan. Koons once noted, "An artist must know something about his subject, or he will surely have difficulty painting it. I believe my experience as a child and youth living in rural Michigan has given me knowledge of my subjects, thus the opportunity to record this passing history of Americana."

In 1955, after receiving his Master of Arts degree in art education from Western Michigan University, Koons moved to Greenville to begin his forty year career at Bob Jones University. Alan Ethridge, the director of Greenville's Metropolitan Arts Council, remarks that "[Koons'] tenure at Bob Jones inspired hundreds, if not thousands of students now located throughout the world. He was absolutely committed to being sure that young artists had a place at the table."

Koons' work has been compared to that of Andrew Wyeth, although Koons himself believed his greatest influences were the shadows and simplicity of Edward Hopper and the straight lines of Mondrian. In 1970 Jack Morris wrote in *Contemporary Artists*



Work by Darell Koons

of SC, "With an absolutely clear vision, Koons continues to evolve the precise, sharp-edged barns and farm houses which have made him the most readily recognized artist within the state."

Koons considered his process a direct approach to painting: "Some artists make numerous sketches prior to the actual paint. I believe that is time-consuming and the freshness of the painting might be lost when using this approach. Many believe I try to duplicate nature. Actually, I try to simplify my subjects, sometimes to their purest shape or form."

In the 70's Koons joined teaching associates Emery Bopp and Carl Blair along with Koons' neighbor, Richard Rupp, to found Hampton III Gallery in Taylors, SC, one of the first commercial galleries in the Upstate and now the longest surviving gallery in the state. The name Hampton III was chosen to symbolize the three artists' friendship.

The location of Hampton III Gallery is on Wade Hampton Blvd., in Gallery Centre, Taylors, SC, (a couple miles from downtown Greenville).

For further information check our SC Commercial Gallery listings, call the gallery at 864-268-2771, e-mail to (sandy@hamptoniiiigallery.com) or visit (www.hamptoniiiigallery.com).

Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC, Offers Works by Three Tunisian Artists

Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC, is presenting *Printemps des Arts: Subtleties of Resistance and Renewal*, an exhibition which challenges ignorance, misunderstanding by three Tunisian artists, on view in the Richardson Family Art Gallery, inside the Rosalind Sallenger Richardson Center for the Arts, through Aug. 19, 2017.

Wofford College sophomore Meghan Curran hopes that an exhibition that she curated of art by three Tunisian artists will go beyond its artistic appeal. She wants to challenge ignorance and misunderstanding.

"I hope this exhibit will expose Spartanburg's community to aspects of Middle Eastern and North African cultures that often are ignored in lieu of discussions about terrorism and violence," says Curran, a French and intercultural studies double major from Florence, SC. She also is a participant in Wofford's Middle Eastern and North Africa (MENA) program.

The exhibition, *Printemps des Arts: Subtleties of Resistance and Renewal*, is her MENA capstone project. She chose to curate the exhibit rather than write a 25-page paper.

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Work by Hammadi Ben Saad

The exhibit includes contemporary art from three Tunisian artists, Hammadi Be Saad, Ghalia Khadar and Souad Chehibi. "Together, their pieces exemplify art as a form of activism, whether for environmental protection or freedom from oppression," Curran says. "The theme of resistance is clear as is the theme of renewal; while these artists tackle profound social and political situations, they also reclaim a sense of power and express hope for an improved future."

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