

# Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, SC, Offers Two New Exhibitions

The Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, SC, will present two new exhibitions from July 22 through Oct. 16, 2011. *The Creative Spirit: Vernacular Art from the Gadsden Arts Center Permanent Collection*, organized by the Gadsden Arts Center in Quincy, FL, will be on view in the Main Gallery. The exhibit features paintings, drawings, and sculpture by the foremost self-taught artists of the American South. The exhibit, *In Search of Julien Hudson: Free Artist of Color in Pre-Civil War New Orleans*, was co-organized by Worcester Art Museum and The Historic New Orleans Collection. The exhibition, on view in the Gibbes' Rotunda Galleries, is the first retrospective of the brief - but important - career of portraitist Julien Hudson, one of the earliest documented free artists of color working in the 19th century.

"The complimentary nature of these two exhibitions underscores our desire to present new and interesting juxtapositions to our community. Both exhibitions document the power of the creative spirit in the face of adversity," stated Angela D. Mack, Executive Director.



*The Baptism, n.d.*  
By Alyne Harris (American, b. 1943)  
Acrylic on canvas, 24 x 30 inches (unframed)  
Courtesy of the Gadsden Arts Center

*The Creative Spirit: Vernacular Art from the Gadsden Arts Center Permanent Collection* showcases the expressive artwork created by self-taught artists who are driven by their creative spirit. Centered around works of art by the most acclaimed southern vernacular artist, Thornton Dial Sr., the exhibition also includes other well known self-taught artists such as Lonnie Holley, Joe Light, Jimmy Lee Sudduth, Mose Tolliver, and Purvis Young.

Most of the artists represented in the exhibition are of African-American descent and have lived in rural parts of the Deep South for a significant period in their lives. The artists share many characteristics including growing up in poverty with limited education and exposure to the outside world and a strong religious upbringing and family influence. *The Creative Spirit* demonstrates the communal and therapeutic function that art can play in the lives of artists.



*Everything is Under the Black Tree, n.d.*  
By Thornton Dial, Sr. (American, b. 1928)  
Paint on plywood, 31 1/2 x 48 inches (unframed),  
Courtesy of the Gadsden Arts Center

Discovered by the curator and art collector William Arnett in 1987, Thornton Dial, Sr. is viewed by many curators as one of the great creative minds of our time. He is widely known for his representations of the tiger which he uses as a symbol of the African-American man's struggle for freedom, and for giving new life to found materials through his artwork. He collects old carpet, rope, fence, clothes and more to build his art and then uses paint to finish the piece. For most of his life, Dial was unaware that he was making art; he was just acting on an unconscious need to create things. His art brings attention to such themes as racial

inequality, relationships between men and women, and struggles in the modern world. The Indianapolis Museum of Art is currently touring his first career retrospective exhibition titled *Hard Truths*.

The *Creative Spirit: Vernacular Art* from the Gadsden Arts Center Permanent Collection was made possible in part by Dr. Lou and Mrs. Calynne Hill, Dr. Jim and Mrs. Betty Ann Rodgers, and the Gadsden Arts Endowment Trust, Inc. The exhibition at the Gibbes is sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina.



*Creole Boy with a Moth* by Julien Hudson; 1835; oil on canvas; courtesy of a private collection; photo courtesy of Fodera Fine Art Conservation, Ltd.

*In Search of Julien Hudson: Free Artist of Color in Pre-Civil War New Orleans* explores the influence of free people of color in New Orleans during the 19th century. Historically, free people of color, or gens de couleur libres, were people of African and often mixed Afro-European descent who had either been born into freedom or gained their liberty through other means. The population created a third segment to the racial classification system - occupying a complicated middle ground between whites and slaves.

From the early 18th century to the close of the Civil War, free people of color flourished in several American cities, including Baltimore and Charleston, but New Orleans was home to the largest such population in the nation. In 1810, free people of color represented 29 percent of the city's population. This exhibition - which began its three-city tour in New Orleans - strives to bring the community's influence to the forefront by examining the work of Julien Hudson, his mentors, contemporaries, and competitors.



*Portrait of a Black Man, 1835*, By Julien Hudson (American, ca. 1811-1844) Oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 25 1/8 inches, Private Collection, Pre-conservation photo courtesy of Didier Inc.

Julien Hudson was the first native Louisiana artist and the second earliest-known portraitist of African heritage to have worked in the United States. Born Jan. 9, 1811, Hudson was the son of a property-owning free woman of color and an English merchant. A French-speaking Catholic raised primarily by women, Hudson lived in a city where his racial ancestry and status as a free person of color left him forever straddling the line between freedom and slavery.

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Hudson's own story reveals the mobility available to some free people - or more specifically, native-born free men - of color. He began studying painting as a young man in the mid-1820s. In New Orleans, he trained first with itinerant miniaturist Antonio Meucci and later with German painter François (Franz) Fleischbein, but he also took two trips to Paris, where he studied with well-known French painter Alexandre-Denis Abel de Pujol. Unfortunately, Hudson's career was short - he died in 1844 at age 33. The circumstances surrounding his death are a mystery. All that remains of his body of work are five paintings by his hand and two attributed to him by stylistic affinity. This exhibition marks the first time that his complete catalogue will be displayed. Approximately 30 additional works by Hudson's contemporaries and mentors are included in the exhibition, along with a special showing of miniature portraits from the Gibbes collection.

*In Search of Julien Hudson: Free Artist of Color in Pre-Civil War New Orleans* is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts' American Masterpieces: Three Centuries

## Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, SC, Offers Exhibit by Summer Students

Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, SC, will present the *2011 Summer Art Institute Exhibition*, featuring works by students, on view from July 14 - 23, 2011. A reception will be held on July 14, from 5-8pm.

This exhibition features oil paintings, etchings, block prints, monoprints, screenprints and sculptures created by 30 talented Charleston County high school students who were selected to have three weeks of intense training in painting, printmaking, and sculpture. This is truly a unique experience in the students' high school career.



An objective of the Summer Art Institute program is to provide visual art experiences, instruction and production beyond the scope of the regular visual art curriculum for public high school students with exceptional visual art talent. Their instructors this year were Tony Cavas, Conrad Guevara and Tina Hirsig. All Summer Art Institute instructors are professional working artists. These instructors have devoted their lives to the visual arts, thus creating a vibrant and energetic environment that encourages students to recognize and use their talents in high school and beyond.

It is amazing to see what students can do when they are provided the opportunity, enthusiasm and materials to pursue a life in the arts. The growth of each student is immeasurable. The energy and passion that developing young artists have for their studio practice is a source of inspiration for those who work directly with them, and for those who have the opportunity to witness their rapid progress first hand. Their ambition for their art and the fearlessness with which they approach learning is an example to everyone.

For the students, the Summer Art Institute is an introduction to a community of artists who will form the foundation of their professional network. They will gain confidence as a result of mentorship and support. They will experience, first hand, how groups of individuals collaborate to create art and exhibit it to the public. This understanding will be critical in helping them discover how they can contribute to the arts community of Charleston and

of Creative Genius. Initial research was funded by a grant from the Terra Foundation for American Art.

In conjunction with the exhibition, The Historic New Orleans Collection has released *In Search of Julien Hudson*, featuring more than 60 full-color reproductions of paintings, sculptures, and drawings by Hudson, his mentors and contemporaries. The publication was written by art historian and guest curator William Keyse Rudolph and historian Patricia Brady.

Established as the Carolina Art Association in 1858, the Gibbes Museum of Art opened its doors to the public in 1905. Located in Charleston's historic district, the Gibbes houses a premier collection of over 10,000 works, principally American with a Charleston or Southern connection, and presents special exhibitions throughout the year. In addition, the museum offers an extensive complement of public programming and educational outreach initiatives that serve the community by stimulating creative expression and improving the region's superb quality of life.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 843/722-2706 or visit ([www.gibbesmuseum.org](http://www.gibbesmuseum.org)).

beyond.

The Summer Art Institute is an educational program presented in cooperation with the Charleston County School District for high school students with talents in the visual arts. Each year, 30 talented high school students are selected to have three weeks of intense training in painting, printmaking, photography, drawing and/or sculpture. The disciplines change each year for repeat students. An objective of the program is to provide visual art experiences, instruction and production beyond the scope of the regular visual art curriculum for students with exceptional visual art talent. In this program, students take away the importance of building relationships and being around dedicated artists. They form new relationships that will carry through the rest of their lives. Most importantly, students who go through this program have a professional art portfolio prepared for applications to College, Advanced Placement Art Classes, and Governor's School.



Redux Contemporary Art Center is a nonprofit organization committed to the fostering of creativity and the cultivation of contemporary art through diverse exhibitions, subsidized studio space for artists, expansive educational programming, and a multidisciplinary approach to the dialogue between artists and audience. Housed within a 6,000 square foot warehouse are two galleries, fifteen private artist studios, print shop, darkroom, woodshop, classroom, and film-screening area. Redux is committed to showing artwork by national and international artists, supporting local artists, and enriching the Charleston community by offering adult and youth education programs. As the only arts organization in Charleston providing these much needed opportunities, Redux maintains an ambitious schedule of exhibition, outreach, and studio programs to accomplish our goals. Redux is also in the process of an expansion project.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Center at 843/722-0697 or visit (<http://reduxstudios.org>).