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Three decades of contemporary art to be assembled in “Art of the City”

Exhibition programming to feature bike tours, book club sessions and gallery talks with featured artists

March 2019 | New Orleans, Louisiana—When The Historic New Orleans Collection celebrates the grand opening of its third campus at 520 Royal St. April 6 and 7, 2019, the site’s inaugural changing exhibition will immerse visitors in the city as seen through the eyes of its contemporary artists. [“Art of the City: Postmodern to Post-Katrina,” presented by The Helis Foundation](#), will be THNOC’s first major exhibition of contemporary art.

The Crescent City’s endurance and resilience have given rise to a thriving contemporary art scene. The “Louisiana ‘Major Works 1984’” exhibition at the 1984 Louisiana World Exposition provides a rough starting point for a renewed cultural consciousness that gained further impetus after Hurricane Katrina and continues to this day.

In “Art of the City,” New Orleans interdisciplinary artist, curator and educator Jan Gilbert—along with THNOC President and Chief Executive Officer Priscilla Lawrence as assisting curator—assembles the diverse perspectives of artists reacting during three decades of strife and progress in the layered city that fueled their inspiration.

“The fecund and tumultuous climate of this period in the life of this city steeps artists and their visions,” said Gilbert. “For THNOC to showcase this recent explosion of the New Orleans contemporary art culture, here at this tricentennial moment, is to recognize its importance as history in the making and is a significant commitment to the future of art in this city.”

The exhibition, made possible by a significant gift to THNOC from The Helis Foundation, will include a robust programming schedule and components that live outside the gallery walls, some of which were introduced early in 2018. Admission to the exhibition and all programming will be free.

“The Helis Foundation is proud to support this important exhibition celebrating New Orleans’s finest contemporary artists responding to our rich cultural history,” said David Kerstein, president of The Helis Foundation. “THNOC is uniquely positioned to tell this story within the context of 300 years of significant artistic achievements highlighted in its collection.”

“Art of the City” will feature the work of more than 75 artists, both homegrown visionaries and devoted visitors, in the newly constructed Tricentennial Wing of the campus. It includes established masters like Krista Jurisich, Douglas Bourgeois and Luis Cruz Azaceta; familiar names like Candy Chang and Gina Phillips; and rising stars like Zarouhie Abdalian, Brandan Odums and Rontherin Ratliff.

“In few cities do the historic and the modern commingle more naturally than in New Orleans—this harmony guided us as we both renovated the historic Seignouret-Brulatour Building and added to it with the new construction,” said Lawrence. “We hope ‘Art of the City’ and its arresting assembly of contemporary art brings the citywide conversation about past and present to the fore.”

The exhibition will run for six months at THNOC's new, \$38 million exhibition center at 520 Royal St., set to open April 6, 2019. The center was made possible in part through generous donations from the institution's local, national and international supporters and will be open Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. and on Sunday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Admission to the exhibition center and “Art of the City” is free. See below for more information on the exhibition's first round of programming. Additional programming to be announced at a later date.

Related programming

Grand opening block party

Sunday, April 7

1–5 p.m.

Admission is free.

Held in the 500 block of Royal Street in the heart of the French Quarter, the block party will feature live music, food and beverage vendors, and more, with both of THNOC's Royal Street campuses open to the public free of charge. Performing bands include Javier Olondo and Asheson, Bon Bon Vivant, the Confetti Park Players, and Detroit Brooks, with food by Café Cour, THNOC's new museum café; Antoine's Restaurant and Country Flame, and drinks from Cuban bar Manolito.

Portage Bike Roll 2019

Saturdays and Sundays, May 11–June 2

10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Admission is free, with bicycles provided by Blue Bikes. Reservations are required and may be made through my.hnoc.org. Participants must be 16+ years old.

The Portage Bike Roll is a bike tour that can be taken with or without a guide and will reach outside of the gallery walls to bring participants face to face with the art, architecture, and history of the city.

“Art of the City” book club

May 15, June 26, July 17 and August 28

Each session takes place 6–7:30 p.m.

Admission is free. Reservations are required. Visit my.hnoc.org to reserve seats.

Host of public radio's “The Reading Life” Susan Larson will host a monthly conversation with authors, artists and audience members in conjunction with “Art of the City.”

- May 15, 2019: “We Cast a Shadow” by Maurice Carlos Ruffin with artist Brandan “B-mike” Odums
- June 26, 2019: “The Futilitarians: Our Year of Thinking, Drinking, Grieving, and Reading” by Anne Gisleson with artist Michael Deas
- July 17, 2019: “Unfathomable City: A New Orleans Atlas” by Rebecca Snedeker. Artist TBD.
- August 28, 2019: “Vengeance: A Novel” by Zachary Lazar with photographer Deborah Luster

Stoop Stories

Saturdays on May 11, June 15, July 20, August 24 and September 14

1–4 p.m.

Admission is free.

Stoop Stories is a series of informal gallery talks with artists featured in the exhibition. The stoop is inspired by multiple pieces in the show, including Dawn Dedeaux's “Steps Home” and Willie Birch's “Uptown Memories.”

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About The Historic New Orleans Collection

Founded in 1966, The Historic New Orleans Collection is a museum, research center and publisher dedicated to the study and preservation of the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South region. For more information, visit www.hnoc.org, call (504) 523-4662, or follow THNOC on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).