



## AMoA Gets Out of the Ordinary With New Spring Exhibitions

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March brings a fresh new spring exhibition period to the Alexandria Museum of Art, with two new shows featuring artists from the Southeast, including two well-known Arkansas artists. In addition to an interactive peek into the Alexandria Museum of Art's Permanent Collection with Treasured Gifts: Recent Acquisitions, which will include selections from the Louisiana Department of Culture and Tourism donation, visitors will be amazed with the assemblages in the Out of the Ordinary collection, showcasing the works of artists Les Christensen and John Salvest, who work primarily with discarded items re-imagined into works of art.

Art can come from just about anything. Out of the Ordinary invites you to rethink your junk drawer and maybe even your trash. Artists John Salvest and Les Christensen transform the ordinary into the extraordinary, turning what most think of as trash or junk into thought-provoking and beautiful sculptures and installations. Both artists work in education at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. Salvest is a Professor of Art, and Christensen is the Director of the Bradbury Art Museum. Christensen and Salvest have exhibited throughout the South and beyond in group and solo exhibitions.



John Salvest's work has been presented in solo and group shows throughout the United States, and his work has been reviewed and featured in numerous publications. Salvest received a B.A. in English from Duke University and an M.A. in English literature and an M.F.A. in sculpture from the University of Iowa. He resides in Jonesboro, Arkansas, where he is Professor of Art at Arkansas State University.

Due to his interest in art and literature, Salvest often incorporates words into his work. An example of this is Forever, a large sculpture incorporating 4,000 paperback romance novels to spell out the word "FOREVER". His sculptures begin in two different ways: collecting materials without a specific work in mind; and the inspiration for a sculpture, which inspires the accumulation of material to complete it. In either case, the final work and the original material have important meaning together, often challenging the value (or lack thereof) inherent in the material through the final product. Forever does not mock the romance novel or its readers; it honors the effect these novels have on a large segment of the population. Through the repurposing of novels, which are sometimes considered to be dying in our

# MORGAN LEHMAN

535 West 22nd Street, New York, New York 10011

modern age, he creates a work that honors the books themselves and raises them to a higher form of art.



Les Christensen's art objects and installations have been presented in numerous solo and group shows including exhibitions at the New Orleans Museum of Art in Louisiana. Her work has been recognized with awards and grants including a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship Award in Sculpture and an Arkansas Arts Council Fellowship Award in Sculpture. She received her BFA in sculpture from the University of Iowa, spent a year of graduate school at the Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht in the Netherlands and then received her MA in sculpture from Arkansas State University. She currently lives in Jonesboro, Arkansas where she is the director of the Bradbury Art Museum at Arkansas State University.



Les Christensen works in a similar style, creating sculptures that comment on life and its complexities. Her work often takes the form of motifs such as hearts, wings, or even maps; which are made up of a complex grouping of materials. Christensen's works are beautiful at a distance, enticing the viewer to examine the work closer, which leads them to discover the building blocks of the sculpture which often convey feelings directly opposing the initial impressions. Envy, which was exhibited in the 18th September Competition at the Alexandria Museum of Art, is a heart made up of copper tacks with the points facing out. The combination comments on love, combining a common symbol associated with the emotion with a material that could cause pain. Her sculptures are crafted so intricately and beautifully that the viewer is drawn to closer examination, revealing the deeper meaning, and inviting the viewer to appreciate each work on multiple levels.

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Additionally, two programs will be offered in support of the Out of the Ordinary exhibition, including "Once an English Major..." where accomplished Artist and Professor John Salvest, discusses the use of text and narrative in his work in this free presentation on March 31st from 5:30pm to 7:00pm. "Studio Time with Les Christensen and John Salvest" will be offered in our studio, where the artists will prove that art truly can come from just about anything. This class will focus on conceptual building with a variety of everyday objects, resulting in a textual, sculptural and original works of art. The class will be offered April 2nd and will be \$70.00 for non-members, and \$50.00 for AMoA supporting Members.

Speaking of the AMoA Permanent Collection, you are invited to get to know it even better in our latest AMoA 4.0 Beta Exhibition, Treasured Gifts: Recent Acquisitions. If you visited during the winter exhibitions, you were invited to curate your own virtual Max Papart collection at our interactive kiosks throughout the gallery. Treasured Gifts will have interactive opportunities throughout the Treasured Gifts exhibition, giving our visitors a chance to let us know what you think about the art on exhibit. We want you to have an active role in the permanent exhibit of the Alexandria Museum of Art, so please let us know what you think!

Treasured Gifts features works of art that have been donated to the museum since 2011. These works include a variety of themes, styles, and mediums. Some were donated by artists after they had an exhibit at AMoA, and some were donated by private collectors. This exhibition will also include more examples from the 99 piece donation by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor and the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, the Office of Cultural Development, in the Division of the Arts in the State of Louisiana.

The work of the Alexandria Museum of Art depends heavily on acquisitions to our permanent collection. AMoA strives to identify, collect and display the best work by leading 20th and 21st century artists of Louisiana and the South, as well as artists who worked in, were influenced by, or influenced art in the South. This mission helps the museum to establish a permanent treasury of our region's creative heritage. In order to accomplish this mission, the Alexandria Museum of Art seeks works which have a high degree of historical, cultural, and artistic significance to the region.

These exhibitions open on Friday, March 4th at the Member Preview and Opening Reception, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Members are invited to attend. The exhibitions open to the public on Saturday, March 5th at 10:00am, and will be on display until May 21st. AMoA would like to thank Sayes Office Supply for their support of this exhibition.