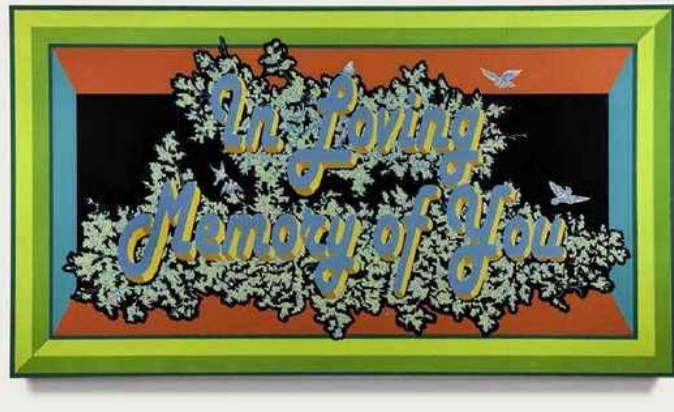


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Kemper Museum acquires work by Archie Scott Gobber

By ALICE THORSON and WARD TRIPLETT



"It's looking smashing," Rachael Blackburn, director of the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, says of the museum's new acquisition by Kansas City artist Archie Scott Gobber.

Earlier this week Gobber's enamel on wood panel painting "In Loving Memory of You" (2007) went on display in the museum atrium. The artwork was a museum purchase, with funds from the Collectors Forum and the Sosland Acquisition Fund.

Members of the Collectors Forum, a membership group formed four years ago to encourage collecting and support the museum, voted to acquire the work.

"This year it has evolved to the point where we were able to use a portion of their dues for an acquisition for the museum that they voted on," Blackburn said.

Gobber's piece was one of five works by area artists (the others were by James Brinsfield, Deanna Dikeman, David Ford and Jaimie Warren), that Blackburn and the museum's curatorial staff presented to the group.

"We chose a range of artists who are at different points in their career; they were all artists whose work we felt was of museum quality and ready for a place in the museum's collection," Blackburn said.

"We had what we called 'Selection Tuesday' where we met and viewed the works and talked to the group about each artist and made sure they understood who the artist was and how this particular work would fit into the context of our collection. They voted by secret ballot."

Blackburn said one of the goals of the program is to bring along the next generation of collectors, and "It's even better when we have an area artist involved in the loop."

Gobber, a 1988 alum of the Kansas City Art Institute, is known for eye-catching works that employ clever wordplay as a vehicle for social and political commentary.

Inspiration comes from history, current events, daily life and, in the case of "In Loving Memory," the vernacular.

"I started noticing this phrase, 'in loving memory of so and so,' on cars," Gobber said. "People have these strange memorials, where they have vinyl cut and put them on their vehicles, alluding to people in the war or a murder victim or something like that.

"That's what sparked it."

In the painting the words appear in dimensional blue and yellow letters against a flowery backdrop with flying birds.

"The background is created from an old font book that I have," Gobber said. "(It had) these really elaborate letters made out of tree logs, and they had this beautiful leafy pattern to tie them together. That's where the floral images and birds come from, and I updated the font to an almost disco-era font."

The Kemper's new acquisition was part of Gobber's one-person show at the **Marty Walker Gallery** in Dallas earlier this year. He is represented in Kansas City by the Dolphin Gallery.

(pictured above, **Archie Scott Gobber's** *"In Loving Memory of you"*)