

PRESS RELEASE

Hilliard University Art Museum

University of Louisiana at Lafayette
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Artist Talk with sculptor Kate Clark.

**Wednesday, August 24, 2016
6:00 PM**

Free and open to the public

Kate Clark. *She Gets What She Wants* (2013). Zebra hide, foam, clay, rubber eyes, thread, pins.

Lafayette, LA, August 4, 2016- The Hilliard University Art Museum is pleased to announce a new Fall season of public programming, which kick offs on Wednesday, August 24, with a slide lecture by Brooklyn-based sculptor Kate Clark. This free event includes a public discussion of her recent solo exhibition, *Mysterious Presence*, which opened June 10 at the Hilliard University Art Museum. *Mysterious Presence* features eight works crafted from wild animal hides, and marks the debut of Clark's latest creation: a mask appearing in the new music video for "Panda", a breakout hit by 19-year old hip-hop recording artist Designer. The exhibition will remain on view through August 27.

Kate Clark is internationally acclaimed, and uses portraiture to explore a theatrically-charged visual relationship between humans and animals. In *Mysterious Presence*, "the viewer is confronted by hybrid forms that challenge our willingness to accept difference", explains Mónica Ramirez-Montagut, curator of the exhibition and Director of the Newcomb Art Museum in New Orleans. In each figure, juxtapositions of facial and bodily features complicate the viewer's reading of species, geographic origin, and gender. The sculptures appear familiar yet strange, evoking an animal kingdom of cosmopolitan inter-species crossovers. For example, the hides of three gemsbok antelope in *Ceremony* (2013) are male and African in origin, however their facial treatment in the installation reveals characteristics of a human female from Asia or Europe.

Clark's work strikes a balance between artificial and natural systems, while tapping into the powerful psychological constructs of myth, personal identity and cultural narrative. "When I made my first piece that really resembled the human face, I realized that the ideas it brought up were not only scientific and intellectual, but also primal and emotional," says Clark. By emphasizing hyperrealistic renderings of facial expression, she stages a cycle of nonverbal communication with the audience.

In the process of making her work, Clark first creates a three-dimensional study of a live model in a polymer clay, and then applies sections of shaved hide to match the model's facial structure. The fur is later trimmed, so that viewers might relate to the oily, porous features recognizable in human skin. As Clark explains, "The leather I use to build the human face originated as the skin that once covered the animal's face." Sections of the skin are sewn together and then fastened using generic sewing pins, making this process visible, and thus acknowledging the artifice of representation.

Clark intentionally chooses to work with animal hides that are slightly damaged or dry. These materials are less desirable for traditional taxidermists who do not want to repair them, especially if the face is in poor shape. By placing emphasis on repair and material transformation, Clark's work signifies cultural evolution and personal growth. She doesn't participate in hunting, or request for specific animals to be hunted for her artwork.

Biography

Brooklyn-based sculptor Kate Clark (b. 1972) earned a BFA at Cornell University and MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art. Recognized internationally, her work is part of many public and private collections including JP

Morgan Chase, 21c, the David Roberts Art Foundation in London, and the C-Collection in Switzerland. She is the recipient of a 2014 Fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts, and a 2013 grant from the The Virginia Groot Foundation. Clark has also been awarded residencies from the Marie Walsh Sharpe Studio Program in New York, the Jentel Artists Residency in Wyoming, and the Fine Arts Work Center in Massachusetts.

Past solo and group exhibitions of Clark's work have included the The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT; Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, TN; Musée de la Halle Saint Pierre, Paris, France; Islip Art Museum, East Islip, NY; Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Peekskill, NY; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, NV; Mobile Museum of Art, Mobile, AL; VOLTA, New York, NY; Winnipeg Art Gallery, Manitoba, Canada; David Winton Bell Gallery at Brown University, Providence, RI; the Newcomb Art Museum at Tulane University, New Orleans, LA; Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI; Hudson D. Walker Gallery, Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA; The Lodge, New York; Claire Oliver Gallery, New York, NY; Shore Institute of the Contemporary Arts, Asbury Park, NJ; Tabla Rasa Gallery at the Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation, Brooklyn, NY; Abrons Art Center, New York, NY; Museum of Fine Arts at Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL; and the Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA, among other spaces. Her sculptures have also been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *Art21:Blog*, *The Village Voice*, *PAPERmag*, *The Atlantic*, *Wallpaper*, *VICE*, and other publications.

Acknowledgements

Kate Clark: Mysterious Presence originated at the Newcomb Art Museum of Tulane, New Orleans, and was curated by museum director Mónica Ramirez-Montagut. Its organization in Lafayette has been facilitated by Laura Blereau, a curator for the Hilliard University Art Museum.

Upon request, press and media kits for *Kate Clark: Mysterious Presence* are available and include high resolution images, selected literature and video clips.

Upcoming Programs:

August 31 – City of Memory Film Screening

September 7 – Meet the Makers: Francie Bishop Good & Oliver Wasow

September 14 – Curator's Tour with Laura Blereau

Museum Hours, Admission & General Information

The Hilliard University Art Museum is located at 710 East Saint Mary Boulevard, on the campus of University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Museum Hours are: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm; Wednesday, 9:00 am to 8:00 pm; Saturday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm; closed Sunday and Monday. General Admission: \$5 Adults, \$4 Seniors (62+), \$3 Students (5-17). FREE for Members, UL Students/Staff/Faculty with identification, and visitors under 5. Guided tours of the galleries are available Friday & Saturday at 2 PM, complimentary with admission. For general information, please visit hilliardmuseum.org or call (337) 482-2278.

About the Hilliard

The Hilliard University Art Museum operates on the campus of University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and was originally founded in 1964 as the Art Center for Southwest Louisiana. Featuring a state-of-the-art modern facility that was erected in 2004, the museum houses more than 2,200 objects in its permanent collection, and is the largest art exhibition space between New Orleans and Houston. The Hilliard serves a wide range of educational and cultural needs by fostering cross-disciplinary intellectual discourse on campus and throughout the region. At the core of the Hilliard's mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit the art of our time while celebrating the great diversity of Louisiana's heritage.

Concurrent and Upcoming Exhibitions at the the Hilliard University Art Museum

Face to Face: A Survey of Portraiture by Louisiana Artists, featuring Willie Birch, Douglas Bourgeois, George Dureau, Elizabeth Kleinveld & Epaul Julien, Aubrey Edwards, Deborah Luster, Rashaad Newsome, Tameka Norris, Gina Phillips, Jennifer Shaw, Jonathan Traviesa, and Heather Weathers.

Guest curated by Jane Hart

Sep 9, 2016 – Jan 7, 2017

Oliver Wasow: Hudson Valley Studio Portraits

Guest curated by Jane Hart

Sep 2, 2016 – Jan 14, 2017

Francie Bishop Good: Comus.

Guest curated by Jane Hart

Sep 9 – Dec 10, 2016

Spotlight on the Collection: Portraiture, featuring Delaney Burgess, MC “5 Cent” Jones, Jules Lion, Sister Gertrude Morgan, Sultan Rogers, Adolf Rinck, James “Son” Thomas, and a mask from Mali

curated by Laura Blereau

Aug 5 – Dec 3, 2016

Cajun Dance Halls and Zydeco Clubs: Then and Now

Organized by Festivals Acadiens et Créoles

Sep 9 – Oct 16, 2016

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