

EXHIBITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Hilliard Art Museum
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
710 East Saint Mary Blvd.
Lafayette, LA 70503

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Twenty Years of Marais Press: Imprinting a Campus and a Collection

Exhibition Dates: September 10, 2021 – August 20, 2022

Featuring art donated to the Hilliard Art Museum’s permanent collection, this exhibition is the result of over 260 collaborations between students and artists in the Marais Press service learning program at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Department of Visual Arts. Over the last 20 years, professor, artist, and master printmaker Brian Kelly has invited artists to create fine art print editions of their work in collaboration with his students. In this environment, students are exposed to the creative processes of established artists. They also have the opportunity to advance their knowledge of highly technical printmaking processes like aquatint, Chine-collé, drypoint, engraving, etching, lithography, and others.

“This exhibition of prints from the Marais Press offers a deep look at significant works on paper from the Hilliard Art Museum collection documenting the important collaborative work among visiting artists and students in the UL Department of Visual Arts printmaking program,” says Curator Ben Hickey. “Encompassing a broad range of subjects and techniques, *Twenty Years of Marais Press* offers the viewer a glimpse of contemporary artistic practice in the 21st century.”

Collaboration and service to others is important to printmaking as an artform because the practice requires a great deal of equipment and a team of people to finish a print edition. This willingness to work together and share ideas inspired the creation of the UL Print Club, a student-run organization emphasizing educational demonstrations and partnerships with organizations like the Baton Rouge Arts Council, Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana, and Baton Rouge Children’s Advocacy Center. The annual faculty-led symposium, “This Print Thing We Are Doing: An Undergraduate Symposium,” is another example of how the spirit of the Marais Press helped create a collaborative educational community. Each year, the symposium is hosted by a different university art department in Louisiana. These activities represent the influence the Marais Press has within the print community and across institutions.

The Hilliard Art Museum has benefited from the Marais Press’s collegial nature in the form of hundreds of donations of fine art prints to its permanent collection. This generosity, as well as

the press's educational mission, is the guiding principle for this exhibition. The Hilliard's relationship with the printmaking community has grown as a result of *Twenty Years of Marais Press*. For example, the museum staff has worked with current students and alumni on many facets of this exhibition and introduced them to aspects of museology, including research, exhibition design, framing and mounting, copy editing, and more. This collaborative and mentoring approach mirrors that of the Marais Press, helping to prepare students for a career in the arts. In addition, The Pat Terry Visual Arts Endowed Scholarship was established in 2012 and is open to students registered as full-time sophomores majoring in the Visual Arts in the College of the Arts.

The exhibition also opens a conversation with the campus community about how the history of art is written and maintained. Normally, professional historians evaluate art and artists based on their skill, reputation, and the evaluator's taste or knowledge. Because of this, it is difficult for many artists' work to be admitted into museum permanent collections. The Hilliard's acquisition process for the Marais Press Collection is quite different because Brian Kelly, an artist and the head of the Marais Press, oversees the creation and acquisition of individual works of art. Kelly is directed less by a sense of history or an artist's reputation, and more by his connection to a community of artists. He has many reciprocal relationships with other university printing presses across the country, making the Hilliard's Marais Press Collection more about documenting a broad community of printmakers than about forming a collection based on restrictive criteria or connoisseurship. In an era where museums are being criticized as elitist ivory towers, this is a model worthy of consideration for its openness and inclusivity.

A companion publication *Twenty Years of Marais Press: Imprinting a Campus and a Collection* will explore the processes, creative concepts, and learning opportunities that stem from contemporary printmaking and its inherently collaborative nature. It will be published by UL Lafayette Press and sold in the Hillard Museum Store.

Upon request, press and media kits are available that include additional high resolution images and selected literature.

Museum Hours, Admission & General Information

The Hilliard Art Museum is located at 710 E. Saint Mary Blvd. on the campus of University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Museum hours are: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Wednesday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Sunday and Monday. General admission is \$7.50 for adults, \$6 for seniors (62+), \$4.50 for students (5-17), and FREE for members, UL students/staff/faculty with identification, and visitors under 5. For general information, please visit HilliardMuseum.org or call 337-482-2278.

About the Hilliard Art Museum

The Hilliard Art Museum operates on the campus of University of Louisiana at Lafayette and was originally founded in 1964 as the Art Center for Southwestern 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. 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 enhance the education of University of Louisiana at Lafayette students and inspire creativity through engagement with the arts for the Acadiana region.

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