

Art & Object

SCAD deFINE ART 2021 Announces Virtual and Location-based Programming



Marcel Dzama, *Dark Before the Bright Exit*, 2018. Gouache, ink, graphite, crayon, and collage on paper.

ATLANTA and SAVANNAH, GEORGIA — The Savannah College of Art and Design presents the 12th edition of *SCAD deFINE ART*, the university's annual program of talks, tours, and exhibitions featuring work by contemporary art's most vital voices. This year's dynamic online programming presented February 23–25, includes a keynote lecture by renowned New York-based conceptual artist and 2021 *SCAD deFINE ART* honoree Sanford Biggers, a Q&A with prominent Brooklyn-based artist Marcel Dzama, and a conversation on Dzama's work with famed comedian Amy Sedaris, among other inspiring talks, gallery tours, and studio visits.

The virtual program complements new exhibitions on view at the SCAD Museum of Art in Savannah and SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film in Atlanta, featuring work by Biggers, Dzama, and other globally recognized artists including Christto & Andrew, Kate Cooper, Helen Frankenthaler, Emily Furr, Carlos Garaicoa, the Haas Brothers, Paulina Olowska, Brandon Sadler, Rose B. Simpson, and Albert Watson. These artists' evocative works present new ideas or different ways of being in the world and encourage greater reflection on the narratives we inherit, the identities we create, and the roles we are expected to play. While many of the artists challenge the status quo, their unique perspectives on art and culture ultimately offer the viewer a sense of hope for the future.



Albert Watson, *Leslie Winer in Yohji Yamamoto London*, 1989. Archival pigment print.

“SCAD deFINE ART 2021 marks another first in the event’s twelve-year history—our inaugural virtual edition,” said SCAD President and Founder Paula Wallace. “In a season of reimagination, SCAD’s renowned fine arts program showcases the shifting explorations and revelations of self. From Sanford Biggers’ ‘future ethnographies’ to Kate Cooper’s representations of the feminine ‘ideal,’ SCAD deFINE ART constructs—and deconstructs—identity through works by internationally celebrated contemporary artists. This year, your home and SCAD museums become one. Take a look!”

Biggers (b. 1970, Los Angeles) will deliver the keynote lecture Wednesday, Feb. 24, at 6 p.m. ET, and participate in programming throughout the three-day event. Biggers' solo exhibition *Contra/Diction* at the SCAD Museum of Art's Walter O. Evans Center for African American Studies functions as a selective survey, bringing together an array of works that spans the past twenty years of his prolific practice. Beyond its compelling visual potency, Biggers' work is a visceral experience and a clarion call to combat racial injustices that threaten the lives of Black Americans.

He communicates feeling rather than a fidelity to history, combining a trove of narratives to form a vision of human experience. "I have a firm belief that art has the power to reach a wide audience and can stimulate change that reflects the current desires of people and culture," said Biggers. "I've dedicated my life, as an artist and an educator, to remind people that art can be both an aesthetic and political act that not only empowers and inspires people but has the ability to operate outside of the system. It is my honor to receive this recognition and be able to connect with young artists in hopes to inspire the power to create and use art as a tool to move culture forward as well as a platform for deeper dialogue."

Dzama (b. 1974, Winnipeg, Canada) creates works rooted in performativity and storytelling. He is widely known for paintings and drawings that exude a storybook charm, while simultaneously confronting viewers with timely political realities. A conversation with Sedaris inaugurates this year's programming Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 11 a.m. The artist's son will interview Sedaris, who will play the role of Dzama. After the dialogue, Dzama joins SCAD MOA associate curator Ben Tollefson to premiere the artist's exhibition *An End to the End Times*, followed by a Q&A with viewers.



Christto & Andrew, *Counter Clock*, 2018. Pigment print on paper.

Tuesday programming is anchored by the virtual opening reception at 7 p.m., hosted by SCAD alumni Kayli Carter and Mojo. Prior to the reception, at 2 p.m., Biggers and Furr, a SCAD graduate, join SCAD MOA curators Humberto Moro and DJ Hellerman for idea-driven conversations on their practices. Based in New York, Furr (b. 1978, St. Louis, Missouri) paints celestial visions that place cool, hard-edged objects within weightless, star-filled voids. Her serialized tropes take the shape of tongues laden with hallucinogenic sugar cubes, sloping conveyor belts adorned with astral points, rocket engines with acutely sharp, almost erotic edges, tubes, chains, and myriad metal hardware. *Star Tap* is her first solo museum exhibition.

On Wednesday, at 11 a.m. ET, Garaicoa, one of the most fascinating artists from Latin America, joins SCAD architecture professor and influential practitioner Christian Sottile for a conversation on the power of architecture and the complexities of urbanism. Based in Madrid and Havana, Garaicoa (b. 1967, Havana) brings a holistic reflection on the fragility and beauty of the spaces in which we coexist in his exhibition *A City View from the Table of My House*. His multimedia works poignantly signal the ways in which more abstract phenomena like power and entropy affect the tangible universe like cities.

At 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Sadler, also a SCAD graduate, takes viewers on a tour of his Atlanta studio. Sadler (b. 1986, Atlanta) is well known for murals that balance ancient and modern techniques, incorporating text, illustration, and painting. His work is prominently featured in the film *Black Panther* and is currently on view in the SCAD FASH exhibition *Ruth E. Carter: Afrofuturism in Costume Design*. Inspired by African masks and Nigerian textiles, Sadler's work connects Carter's celebrated costume designs across various time periods and themes within the overarching concept of Afrofuturism.

SCAD FASH also proudly presents Watson's first U.S. solo museum exhibition, *The Light Behind the Lens*, which features more than 50 works curated from the artist's extensive photographic archive that showcase his signature style, expert use of light and shadow, and the wide range of his career. One of the most prolific photographers of our time, Watson (b. 1942, Edinburgh)—whose striking photographs have graced more than 100 covers of *Vogue* and major campaigns for Chanel and Prada — joins President Wallace in conversation Wednesday at 3:30 p.m.



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND DAVID CASTILLO, MIAMI.

Sanford Biggers, *Ghettobird Tunic*, 2006. Bubble jacket and various bird feathers.

On Thursday, Feb. 25, at 11 a.m. ET, Cooper, Christto & Andrew, and Olowska give a series of artist talks, sharing insight on their intriguing works in varied mediums on view at SCAD MOA. Cooper (b. 1984, Liverpool, U.K.), who is based in Amsterdam, creates CGI videos with a glossy aesthetic that examine the collapse of the threshold between physical human bodies and virtual worlds. Her exhibition *Symptom Machine* presents four films projected simultaneously within a multiscreen installation with sound design by musical artist Bonaventure. Based in Doha, Qatar, and Copenhagen, Denmark, Christto & Andrew (Christian Sánchez Díaz, b. 1985, San Juan, Puerto Rico; Andrew Jay Weir, b. 1987, Johannesburg, South Africa) use a surreal style to portray the effects of structural systems like history, politics, and the economy, as well as popular culture at large.

In *A Message from Venus*, the duo's first U.S. museum exhibition, the artists present recent photographs that speak to our globalized culture at a time when our relationships to and experiences of image-making technology are dissimilar. Olowska (b. 1976, Gdansk, Poland), a renowned Polish artist, draws out the psychosexual and sociopolitical constructs of female experience in positively feminist, nostalgia-laden paintings. With *Mainly for*

Women, she brings the domestic act of playing hostess into the space of the gallery, inviting several other women artists to exhibit alongside her. The collective presentation takes on an almost mythic, séance like quality, with many of the featured works drawing from imagery related to pagan mythologies.

At 2 p.m. on Thursday, international art stars the Haas Brothers join legendary gallerist Marianne Boesky for a conversation exploring the symbiotic relationship between artist and gallerist and the brothers' SCAD MOA exhibition *Beast in Show*. The Haas Brothers (b. 1984, Austin, Texas) are nimble cross-pollinators in creative disciplines including fashion, film, art, and design. Their works explore aesthetic themes related to nature, science fiction, sexuality, and psychedelia, and are typified by the artists' uniquely clever use of materials, ranging from brass, porcelain, and fur to highly technical resins and polyurethane.



Carlos Garaicoa, *Las raíces del mundo: The Roots of the World*, 2016. Wood table, laser-cut stainless steel, and knife handles.

For the finale event Thursday at 5 p.m., Simpson (b. 1983, Santa Clara Pueblo) discusses her practice from her studio on the Santa Clara Pueblo in New Mexico. Simpson comes from the Pueblo, a tribe noted for the ceramics its women have produced since the 6th century AD. In *Countdown*, a major new commission presented in the SCAD MOA Jewel Boxes, Simpson combines her inherited tribal belief systems with high art concepts and apocalyptic science-fiction forms.

Prints by Frankenthaler, recently acquired for the SCAD Museum of Art Permanent Collection, are also on view in Savannah and demonstrate the artist's major contributions to

the medium. Widely known for her work as a painter and experimentations with ceramics, textiles, and sculpture, Frankenthaler (b. New York, 1928–2011) was a leading voice in the development of the second generation of Abstract Expressionism in the U.S. and considered by many to be one of the most important artists of her time.

“Through *SCAD deFINE ART* and other year-round public programming, SCAD museums enlighten minds and elevate dialogue,” said Kari Herrin, vice president for brand experience and head of exhibitions. “This year’s programming and corresponding exhibitions explore art and design practices including painting, architecture, photography, fibers, motion media, and film, all of which directly relate to our university’s top-ranked degree programs. We are proud to offer this dynamic event, allowing audiences in our SCAD communities and around the world exclusive access to these creative leaders.”