

MMFA

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 15, 2019

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Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts announces the special exhibition
Cal Breed: Signs of Lift

On View October 26, 2019 through January 12, 2020

In this body of work, Fort Payne, AL glassblower and paraglider literally and figuratively explores air, wind, water, clouds, and flight

Montgomery, AL – A group of infinitely intriguing works of Studio Glass are presented in the exhibition *Cal Breed: Signs of Lift*, on view at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) from October 26, 2019 through January 12, 2020. This first exhibition of the Alabama artist's work to be presented in the state's Capital, *Signs of Lift* brings together Breed's "meditations on breath and water," with fourteen new works made for this exhibition. Sponsored by the James W. Wilson, Jr. and Wynona W. Wilson Family Foundation, this exhibition is one of the concluding celebrations of the state's three-year commemoration of its Bicentennial.

For more than two decades, Breed has developed his formidable skills as a glassblower in some of the nation's most prestigious Studio Glass workshops, studying with the leading master glass artists of the movement. Of Breed's work, MMFA Curator Jennifer Jankauskas says "In his work, Cal adroitly adapts lessons learned from masters of contemporary glass including Alabamian Cam Langley and Italians Lino Tagliapietra and

Pino Signoretto, among others. He melds their methods with his own techniques developed over the past 25 years to create stunning vessels and sculptures that are simultaneously a reflection of the beauty around us and an attempt to examine natural phenomena.”

MMFA Director Angie Dodson added, “This group of work will look and feel right at home in the Museum, which, for the last quarter century has highlighted art glass through exhibitions and by acquiring works for the collection.” She continued by saying “We are quite fortunate to be able to bring this breathtakingly beautiful work to the MMFA and thank Cal for his artistic genius and generosity, Jennifer for her always-spot-on curatorial eye and mind, and the Wilson Family for enabling us to invite the River Region’s residents and visitors to the Museum for an memorable encounter with art—one that will call us to take a break from the chaos of our twenty-first century lives, to be present to these marvels which explore the finest details and most wondrous curiosities of our world.”

Highlights

For his “meditations on breath and water,” Breed draws inspiration from the nature which surrounds his mountaintop studio located in Northeastern corner of the state.

Breath

An emerging paraglider, flight now affords Breed newfound perspective on how the wind moves leaves in the trees, birds in flight, clouds moving across the sky, the undulating landscape far below. For the artist-pilot, air and flight are like inhaling and exhaling...that which is essential to sustain life. Pieces like *Signs of Lift*, from which the exhibition takes its name, clearly derive from Breed’s many hours observing the land and sky from far above. Breed fused, carved, and fire polished glass to form a five-foot diameter bullseye which he overlaid with a wooden form. Each wooden compartment holds select objects such as small glass igloos, feathers, and hives that encapsulate the artist’s enchantment with nature.

Water

Other pieces have their origins in Breed’s fascination with the changing forms of another essential element—water. For the artist, water and its changing states represents the movement and flow of life. *Drizzle*, its companion piece, *Mist*, and *Cumulus*, an inversion of those two pieces, all stand as examples of the artist’s abiding fascination with water in its many forms—liquid, gas (vapor), and solid (ice). Breed evokes all of these elements by playing with both transparent and opaque glass, polishing and carving into the material, and using various techniques to create the illusion of water.

The Artist

Born in Tuscumbia, AL, in 1972, Breed attended Auburn University, initially to study marine biology. A lifelong love of making things inspired Breed to take a stained glassmaking class and, through the research he conducted during this course, he became fascinated with another form of glassmaking—blowing glass. He apprenticed with Alabama glass artist Cam Langley before furthering his newfound passion at Ohio State University where he received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1997. Breed continued to take graduate classes at Illinois State University in 1998-99 and further developed his skills at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts and Pilchuck Glass School by studying with master glass artists Paul Cunningham, Dante Marioni, and Lino Tagliapietra. In 2002, he opened his own studio, Orbix Hot Glass, in Fort Payne, AL.

Studio Glass at the MMFA

Studio Glass refers to art glass made since the early 1960s by individuals or small groups in studio spaces rather than by large teams of workers in a factory setting. The advances in technology that enabled glass artists to work at a more intimate scale also allows them to work with this challenging material in evermore innovative ways.

For the last 25 years, the MMFA has highlighted Studio Glass through exhibitions and by acquiring works by the masters of this medium for the collection. With this collection, the Museum hopes to bring attention and appreciation to the accomplishments of the leading artists involved in the Studio Glass movement and to illustrate the breadth and depth of the changing landscape of glass.

Related Programs

On Friday, November 15 at noon, Breed and MMFA Curator, Jennifer Jankauskas discuss the work on view as part of the symposium, *Bearing Witness: Art of Alabama*. To register for this free event, visit <https://mmfa.org/discover/adults/bearing-witness/>

MMFA Background

The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts was founded in 1930 by a group of local artists as place for both exhibiting art and space for art education. The original intentions of our founders—to exhibit and teach—continue to inspire and inform every action and activity here at the Museum which, since 1988, has shared the 277-acre Blount Cultural Park with our partners across the lake at the celebrated Alabama Shakespeare Festival.

Today's MMFA visitors stroll art-studded grounds and permanent collection galleries. They see compelling changing exhibitions and learn about art by playing in our interactive gallery, Artworks, making art in its bustling studios, or by participating in other engaging events and programs. And, as of late September 2018, MMFA visitors can now relax and recharge in the serenity of our stunning new three-acre sculpture garden.

While the Museum's collection is still home to the art of many of the regional artists who first established it, over time, it has become known for its strength in American art and Old Master Prints. Recent, important acquisitions of art made by African-American and Asian artists and works inspired by images and themes related to the experiences of these groups represent the breadth and depth of the lives and concerns of those who now call Montgomery and the River Region home. Through the exhibition of this work as well as the programs and events that help connect our communities with it, the MMFA is recognized as a leading arts and cultural resource here in the state and Southeastern region.

The MMFA is a department of the City of Montgomery and is supported by funds from the City of Montgomery, with additional funds from the Montgomery County Commission and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Association. Programs are made possible, in part, by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts.

General Information

What: *Cal Breed: Signs of Lift*

When: October 26, 2019 through January 12, 2020

Where: Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
Wynton M. Blount Cultural Park
One Museum Drive
Montgomery, AL 36117

Information: www.MMFA.org or 334.625.4333
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Hours:

