

MMFA

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTGOMERY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF COMMUNITY TOGETHERNESS PROJECT

Alabama artists Chris Hardy, Nystasha Kelly, Marguerite Gilbertson and Tony Veronese to create two collaborative works of art reflecting matters related to the COVID-19 pandemic.



From left to right: Chris Hardy, Nystasha Kelly, Marguerite Gilbertson, and Tony Veronese

Montgomery, AL, March 10, 2021 – The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts is excited to share the news of the upcoming Community Togetherness Project: Art for Our Future. Local artists were invited to submit proposals for either a sculpture or a mural created to reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic. The selected proposals are currently in production, and the final creations will be installed in the Museum’s John and Joyce Caddell Sculpture Garden in April.

Chris Hardy and Nystasha Kelly were selected for their mural proposal that emphasizes communal growth, highlights Montgomery’s diversity, and celebrates the overwhelming kindness experienced across communities during the pandemic. Marguerite Gilbertson and Tony Veronese were selected for their interactive sculpture proposal that addresses feelings of disconnection faced during the pandemic, and also invites participants to join—at a distance—and reflect on new norms.

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Director Angie Dodson states, “Our hopes for this project were to provide support for local creatives during a challenging time and to create spaces within the Museum filled with art designed to make us think a bit about our individual and communal responses to the many disruptions, anxieties, and wondrous moments this pandemic has brought. We invite the River Region's residents and visitors to come take a look as we begin to envision post-pandemic life—what pandemic lessons and experiences do we want to take with us into the future? What pre-pandemic activities are we most eager to resume? For many of us, art and artmaking provides an opportunity to do that thinking, that imagining.”

In an exciting partnership with the Montgomery Biscuits, midsummer, the interactive sculpture will move downtown to the Montgomery Riverwalk Stadium inviting further engagement from across the community. “The Biscuits always strive to be impactful, and to become embedded in our community away from the ballpark,” said Mike Murphy, General Manager of the Montgomery Biscuits. “We are excited to partner with the MMFA on this unique project that will allow us to be involved in the arts in our community while also having the opportunity to showcase the sculpture at Riverwalk Stadium.”

Chris Hardy and Nystasha Kelly

Chris Hardy is a designer and illustrator who resides in Montgomery. He seeks to make art that is both beautiful and functional. Hardy often draws from his passion for history as he crafts modern narratives—including images from Black vernacular, pop culture, and sports—to invite viewers into conversation.

Montgomery-based artist Nystasha Kelly is a graphic designer and photographer whose initial artistic visions keep her attuned to both the design as a whole and the message to be conveyed. She appreciates the artful simplicity of design that belies its underlying complexity. Her art emphasizes the value of feeling comfortable in one's own skin and questions the idea that society dictates confidence.

Marguerite Gilbertson and Tony Veronese

Marguerite Gilbertson is an interdisciplinary sculpture and performance artist who teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery. Her technical proficiency ranges from working with traditional materials to today's technology. Her artwork is rooted in her experiences growing up on a cash crop farm in Wisconsin and often explores stereotypes of agriculture and tools as being strictly masculine.

Tony Veronese also teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery and, as a painter, uses visual and contextual incursions to develop his work. Inspired by his suburban upbringing in Montgomery and curiosity about society, remarks become restructured within paintings.

Support for this project was provided by the Wells Fargo Foundation.

RELATED EXHIBITIONS

Community Togetherness Project: Student Response to the Global Pandemic

On view March 25 through July 16

ArtWorks Corridor Gallery at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

An exhibition of student art offering reflections of personal experiences during the COVID-19 crisis from students across the River Region and beyond.

Support for student exhibitions is provided by Regions.

RELATED PROGRAMS

While we are glad to welcome visitors back to the Museum, we also maintain our commitment to supporting and keeping connected with those who are not yet ready to return to the Museum and those who've come to value their online access to the Museum. With this in mind, the programs associated with these exhibitions will all be accessible online.

Local Artists Live

Saturday, March 13, 10–10:30 AM

Instagram Live (<https://www.instagram.com/montgomerymfa/>)

Artists Marguerite Gilbertson and Tony Veronese will take over the MMFA's Instagram account and go live from their workspace to give viewers insight into the process of creating a sculpture collaboratively, as well as share some about their own individual works and artistic backgrounds.

Local Artists Live

Saturday, March 27, 10–10:30 AM

Instagram Live (<https://www.instagram.com/montgomerymfa/>)

Artists Nystasha Kelly and Chris Hardy will take over the MMFA's Instagram account to offer a live, behind-the-scenes glimpse of their collaborative mural artwork, and discuss how their own artistic processes and visions united for this project.

Community Togetherness Project Artist Panel

Thursday, April 15, 5:30–7 PM

Facebook Live (<https://www.facebook.com/montgomerymfa>)

MMFA Curator of Art Jennifer Jankauskas will lead a panel with local artists Chris Hardy, Nystasha Kelly, Marguerite Gilbertson, and Tony Veronese in a discussion about the conceptualization and creation of their artworks installed in the Caddell Sculpture Garden, and how experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic have affected their lives and work, as individuals, artists, collaborators.

FOR YOUR SAFETY | COVID-19

We remain committed to serving our members and visitors in a safe and responsible manner, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To this end: To facilitate **social distancing**, we have limited the number of people allowed in the building; To address **cleaning and disinfection** of our facility, we have implemented new practices in accordance with CDC, EPA, and OSHA guidelines. Additionally, hand sanitizer will be available for visitors; And, all Museum visitors over the age of six are required to **wear a mask or face covering** during their visit. Please stay at home if you are feeling ill or have been exposed to COVID-19 in the fourteen (14) days prior to your visit. All Museum staff have their temperature taken each day and are required to wear masks.

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: *Community Togetherness Project*

WHEN: Works on view this April
Local Artists Live: Saturday, March 13; 10–10:30 AM
Local Artists Live: Saturday, March 27; 10–10:30 AM
Community Togetherness Project Artist Panel: Thursday, April 15; 5:30–7 PM

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

INFORMATION: mmfa.org
334.625.4333
@MontgomeryMFA

HOURS:
Galleries, Mondays, Closed
Sculpture Garden, Tuesdays–Saturdays, 10 AM–5 PM
Terrace, and Store: Sundays, Noon to 5 PM
Last entry at 4:45 PM

ADMISSION: Free! With ample, free parking.

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MEDIA CONTACT

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