

The Durham Arts Council and Arts Guild in Durham, NC, Features Works by Members of the Southeastern College Art Conference & Meredith College Art Faculty

The Durham Arts Council and Arts Guild in Durham, NC, is presenting the exhibit, *Collisions: Where Past Meets Present*, featuring works by members of the Southeastern College Art Conference, on view in the Allenton and SunTrust Galleries, through Oct. 20, 2012. A reception will be held on Oct. 19, from 5-7pm.

"The theme was inspired by Durham itself," said Mulvaney, a Meredith College professor of art history and chair of the 2012 Southeastern College Art Conference. "I lived on Durham's West Main Street and saw the collisions of new ways meeting old ways and making old buildings habitable for new purposes."

The nonprofit organization, which brings together art educators in higher education from the US and abroad, began in 1942. One of its activities is this annual meeting, which this year takes place in Durham, Oct. 17-20. One hundred and nine members submitted 282 works for consideration.

Charles Joyner, Professor of Art and Design at NC State University, chose 45 works from 40 artists. The works fill the Allenton and SunTrust Gallery. The building's third gallery, the Semans, is showing the artwork of the Meredith College full-time and adjunct art professors.

"It is very exciting for the Meredith teachers to be represented in downtown Durham," Mulvaney said. "There are sculptors, painters, ceramicists, fiber artists, and a weaver. It is a great variety for as small as we are."

Raleigh, NC's Meredith College, a private, women's college chartered in 1891, is hosting the conference.

"The Durham Arts Council was pleased to work with the conference on their annual juried exhibition because it provided the opportunity to introduce artists that might not otherwise be seen by the Durham community," said Margaret DeMott, director of artist services at the council. "Also, it allows us to introduce all that is great about downtown Durham to the conference membership."

The collision is inspiring. There is something here for any art admirer.

"Visitors will see traditional methods and works from artists who are pushing the boundaries," Mulvaney said. This is another riff on the collision theme.

Mulvaney said that there will be about 800 conference attendees, equally divided between studio artists and art historians, and that while none of the conference artists will be on hand for the first reception, a second is scheduled during the conference on Oct. 19. Some Meredith faculty artists will be at both receptions.

A member of the conference since 1995, Mulvaney has often taken students to the

meeting and the art exhibit.

"I want my students to know that I am not the sole source of art history. They need to hear other voices. The same is true for artists," Mulvaney said. "You are committing a grave injustice for students if they think your way is the only way to work. The more they see, the better they see."

One work that will certainly keep tugging at viewers with tastes modern or traditional is *Unequal Justice*, by Barbara Stubbs.

The bronze, iron and steel sculpture consists of scales with a pear on each scale. With an antiquated patina, it appears like a relic excavated from the depths of Greek soil. It says so much in its simplicity.

The pears, identical in every way, do not sit evenly on their scales, but rather one is higher than the other. Who knows what the artist is conveying but as with any intriguing art piece, it lends complexity and interest to our lives to consider this question.

Holly Fischer, a Meredith College adjunct art professor who teaches studio art, installed the show, and has done an exceptional job unifying a show that has such a broad organizational theme.

"It was like Christmas unwrapping all of those boxes," Fischer said. "The day we installed was the first day I had seen any of the pieces. It would have been a conflict for me to be involved in choosing since I was also an applicant."

Serendipitously, Fischer's extraordinary sculpture, *Galatea*, was chosen. Sculpted in low-fire white clay and unglazed, the mid-thigh to shoulder piece is about 3 feet tall. *Galatea* represents for Fischer part of what she tries to teach her students, that there are many days when she goes backward instead of forward. "But I follow my vision and eventually I make what I want to make." The viewer instantly knows *Galatea* is a female but again, there is much here to ponder. Her upper torso slices apart and opens apart in sections.

Much of Fischer's recent work has been on a smaller scale than *Galatea* as Meredith's kiln is on the smallish size. Fischer recently bought a kiln for her home that enabled her to return to making larger scale work. This has brought her immense satisfaction but also some trying times.

"I think that it is good for artists to put themselves in uncomfortable situations to remember what it is like to struggle and fail. I had to build her three times. The first two times she collapsed," Fischer said. "That humbling experience of getting it right for the first time makes me a stronger educator and an artist."

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