

Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, SC, Features Works by Rory McEwen

The Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, SC, will present *Rory McEwen: A New Perspective on Nature*, on view in Galleries 8 & 9, from Jan. 26 through Apr. 28, 2024.

Presenting the vibrant and varied career of the renowned Scottish artist, Rory McEwen (1932–1982), this exhibition reveals McEwen’s lifelong enquiry into light and color through his remarkable paintings of plants. Bringing a modern sensibility to botanical art, McEwen developed a distinctive style, painting on vellum and using large empty backgrounds on which his plant portraits seem to float. Without shadows and executed in exact, minutely accurate detail, he recorded the imperfect and the unique, as well as the flawless.

McEwen’s work, shown in this exhibition alongside the works of master botanical artists from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, “has had a lasting impact on the botanical art world, where he is recognized as one of the standard-bearers of today’s renaissance in botanical painting.”

The exhibition, *Rory McEwen: A New Perspective on Nature*, is presented by the Gibbes Museum of Art in association with Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (London) and Oak Spring Garden Foundation (Virginia); tour management by Landau Traveling Exhibitions, Los Angeles, CA.

Generous support for this exhibition presentation at the Gibbes is provided by lead



Rory McEwen, Tulip ‘Helen Josephine’ 1975. Image courtesy of the Estate of Rory McEwen

sponsors Cindy and Ben Lenhardt.

The Gibbes Museum enhances lives through art by engaging people of every background and experience with art and artists of enduring quality, by collecting and preserving art that touches Charleston, and by providing opportunities to learn, to discover, to enjoy, and to be inspired by the creative process.

The Gibbes Museum of Art is home to the foremost collection of American art that incorporates the story of Charleston. The Museum connects the city and region’s artistic past to a vibrant contemporary art scene. This is what we believe.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 843/722-2706 or visit (www.gibbesmuseum.org).

City of Charleston, SC’s, Office of Cultural Affairs Offers Exhibition Focused on Enslaved People

The City of Charleston, SC’s, Office of Cultural Affairs is presenting *Sleeping with the Ancestors: How I Followed the Footprints of Slavery* and “Payne-ful” Business, Charleston’s Journey to Truth, on view at the City Gallery, located at Joe Riley Waterfront Park, through Feb. 11, 2024.

The City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs presents two exhibitions at City Gallery that re-examine the lives of the enslaved by their descendants. *Sleeping with the Ancestors: How I Followed the Footprints of Slavery* uses recent photography by a collection of South Carolina photographers to highlight the work of the Joe McGill and the Slave Dwelling Project, a local non-profit that works to preserve extant slave dwellings throughout the country. “Payne-ful” Business, Charleston’s Journey to Truth pairs reproductions of historic advertisements with paintings of the enslaved by artist John W. Jones.

Sleeping with the Ancestors uses more than 40 photographs by a collection of SC photographers to highlight the work of the Slave Dwelling Project. The Slave Dwelling Project, founded in 2010 by Joe McGill, focuses attention on the lives of the enslaved through the examination of the buildings where they lived. The Slave Dwelling Project has reached more than one hundred fifty sites in twenty-five states and the District of Columbia, engaging with diverse audiences at historic locations where experts, including McGill, conduct programs, give lectures, and spend nights in the dwellings. McGill and co-author Herb Frazier recently released the book, *Sleeping with the Ancestors* (Hachette Publishing, 2023), focusing on the history of each location that the Slave Dwelling Project has visited.

The Slave Dwelling Project envisions a future in which the hearts and minds of Americans acknowledge a more truthful and inclusive narrative of the history of the nation that honors the contributions of all people, is embedded and preserved in the buildings and artifacts of people of African heritage, and inspires all Americans to acknowledge their Ancestors.

“Now that I have the attention of the public by sleeping in extant slave dwellings, it is time to wake up and deliver the message that the people who lived in these structures were not a footnote in American history” says McGill.

John W. Jones, legacy preservationist



A view of a few paintings by John W. Jones

and acclaimed artist, has created a powerful series of paintings of the enslaved in the antebellum period in the exhibit, “Payne-ful” Business, Charleston’s Journey to Truth. Drawing on the historical research of Margaret Seidler, fourth great-granddaughter of domestic slave trading auctioneer William Payne, Jones references the descriptive text gleaned from newspaper advertisements as he respectfully brings to life the people who were vital to the success of this community and beyond. For this exhibition, Jones has created over 40 paintings; each is accompanied by the textual images of the supporting newspaper advertisement, including its archival provenance.

Seidler’s upcoming book, “Payne-ful” Business, Journey to Truth (Evening Post Books, February 2024), incorporates Jones’ compelling images in support of the historical interpretation of her recently discovered ancestors. The artist takes the Payne newspaper ads offering for sale blacksmiths, cooks, child nurses, brick masons and dozens of other talents, and transforms their trades, skills, and labors into a compelling visual narrative of the pervasiveness and magnitude of the contributions of the enslaved.

Born May 11, 1950, in Columbia, SC, John W. Jones has been a freelance artist and illustrator for more than 25 years. His former clients include Time Life Books, IBM, Westinghouse, Rubbermaid, NASA, Gaddled Space and Flight Center, and the

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