



April 1, 2022

For Immediate Release

Contact: Donald Russell, University Curator: drusse10@gmu.edu, 202-213-6272

Michele Greet, Director, Art History Program: mgreet@gmu.edu, 703-993-1250

The Gillespie Gallery presents:

La vie quotidienne: Haitian Paintings from the David A. Kravitz Collection, 1970-2000
and

Highlights from the GMU Art Collection

Opening Reception: Wednesday, April 13, 6:00–8:00 p.m.

Gallery Talks by GMU students: April 15, 22, and 29, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Dates: April 8-30, 2022

Location:

Gillespie Gallery, Art & Design Building, first floor (Building 4 on [GMU Map](#))

George Mason University

4400 University Drive

Fairfax, VA 22030

Phone: (703) 993-8950

Web: <https://www.masonexhibitions.org/>

Gallery Hours: Monday – Friday, 10 am – 5pm

Paid parking: Shenandoah Parking Garage (Building 43 on [GMU Map](#))

All events are free and open to the public.

La vie quotidienne: Haitian Paintings from the David A. Kravitz Collection, 1970-2000

La vie quotidienne showcases 29 painting and 2 sculptures by 23 artists from Haiti, donated or on loan to George Mason University by David A. Kravitz, retired Professor in the School of Business. Kravitz was the son of the late Boris Kravitz, who assembled the collection, and founded the Haitian Art Company (HAC) in Key West, Florida, which he ran from 1980 until 2009. The gallery acquired and sold a variety of original Haitian art, including paintings, sculptures, and spirit flags used during Vodou ceremonies. Made by

a range of internationally renowned, nationally respected, and virtually unknown artists from Haiti, the paintings in the exhibition showcase only a small selection of the rich array of talent the gallery represented. Painted in vibrant colors, the works present an idyllic vision of Haiti, emphasizing lush tropical landscapes, picturesque maritime imagery, quaint scenes of everyday peasant life, and themes from Haitian Vodou rituals. Created primarily for the tourist market, the works belie any hint of political turmoil, poverty, or religious conflict that marked Haiti's history and instead present timeless vistas of Caribbean life. To complicate this narrative, students researched Haitian history and religion, the history of art making and scholarship in Haiti, and the impact of the tourist market on artistic production in the region. Their texts on these topics will complement the display of paintings in the gallery and will be included in a short catalogue of the exhibition. *La vie quotidienne: Haitian Paintings from the David A. Kravitz Collection, 1970-2000* thus attempts to both celebrate and contextualize Haitian painting made in the last two decades of the 20th century.

Artists:

H. Altenor, Michel-Ange Altidort, Gesner Armand, Gabriel Bien-Aimé, Saint Louis Blaise, Dieudonne Cedor, Anatol Charles, E. Cherisme, Osmin M. Christophe, Obès ("OB") Faustin, Lafortune Felix, M. Germain, Jacques-Enguerrand Gourgue, Calixte Henri, Saincilius Ismaël, Accinéus James, Carlos (Charles André) Jean Baptiste, Carlo Jean-Jacques, F. Joseph, Louines Mentor, Simeon Michel, Benson Myrthil, Louverture Poisson

Highlights from the GMU Art Collection

The George Mason University Art Collection encompasses a rich and eclectic range of objects, including photographs, prints, paintings, and sculpture from across time periods and world regions. The first donations to the university were received in the early 1980s and include lithographs by the surrealists Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró, and the magnificent *1 Cent Life Portfolio* that contains 62 original lithographs by renowned masters of Pop art and hard-edged and biomorphic abstraction such as Karel Appel, Alan Kaprow, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, and Andy Warhol. Without a collecting budget, museum, registrar, or even an appropriate storage space, the GMU Art Collection has grown over the years to include over 3000 objects, including 240 works of African art, 378 pottery shards, and around 70 plaster casts on loan from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The collection also includes a significant number of Chinese prints, stone rubbings from Cambodia, nineteenth-century paintings from the Neapolitan School, and lithographs by American illustrator Norman Rockwell. Many important women artists, such as Renée Stout and Stella Waitzkin, are represented in the collection as well. The university also owns multiple works by local artist Lee Atkyns and Armenian abstract painter Stephen Sacklarian. Chosen according to student interest and ranging from the well-known to the obscure, the works in the exhibition are just a small sample of the rich array of objects in the collection. Student research on the objects they selected highlights their significance to the George Mason University Art Collection.

About the Project:

During the spring semester of 2022, undergraduate and graduate Art History and Arts Management students in Dr. Michele Greet's "Curating an Exhibition" seminar partnered with Gillespie Gallery to organize this exhibition. Working in a real gallery setting with the unique artworks in the University Art Collection was an unprecedented opportunity for both the students and the faculty. Students participated in every aspect of the curating process, including choosing the exhibition theme, writing the exhibition proposal, creating a checklist and selecting objects, designing the exhibition layout, conducting archival research, writing wall text, designing and writing a short exhibition catalogue, creating marketing materials, planning educational programs, installing and de-installing the show, and giving gallery tours. Showcasing the art in the GMU collection introduces these works to new audiences of Mason students and Northern Virginia residents, and highlights Mason's dedication to cultural pursuits.

About the Gillespie Gallery at George Mason University:

The Gillespie Gallery at George Mason University is committed to the presentation of innovative new art and creating a forum for active dialogue, research, and engagement with contemporary visual ideas and artistic practices. Located in the School of Art (SOA) on the Fairfax campus of George Mason University, the Fine Arts Gallery offers a diverse program of exhibitions by emerging and established contemporary artists, thesis exhibits by current MFA candidates, and a semiannual SOA undergraduate senior exhibition. [The gallery is named for Gardner and Stevie Gillespie, patrons of Mason's School of Art.](#)

####