The Walsh Gallery Debuts “Mounds, Piles, and Masses” Exhibition at Seton Hall University

Wednesday, September 25, 2019
By Devon Mancini

On September 9, the University's Walsh Gallery debuted "Mounds, Piles, and Massings," a group exhibition curated by artist Greg Leshé in collaboration with the Pierro Gallery in the Village of South Orange. Several artists showcased sculptures, photography, digital media, and paintings displaying examples of the human tendency to collect and build. Participating artists brought up relevant, controversial issues with their work, inspiring visitors to find new meaning in everyday displays of human behavior.

The Walsh Gallery collaborated with curator and artist Greg Leshé from the Pierro Gallery in the South Orange Baird Community Center to showcase various artworks by Cat Alden, Noa Charuvi, Kate Dodd, Deborah Jack, Vandana Jain, Daren Kendall, Robert Lach, Ann LePore, Greg Leshé, Darren Lee
Miller, John Pfahl, Elizabeth Riley, and Kathryn Vajda. While the Baird Community Center undergoes renovations and restructuring of its programs, the Pierro Gallery is left without a display space. This inspired Walsh Gallery Director, Jeanne Brasile to invite Leshé to host his newest installation at the University. This exhibit is focused on using displays of human impulse to convey relevant international issues such as climate change, consumerism, and global politics.

The installation features pieces by Noa Charuvi, an Israeli artist using her work to bring a new perspective to Israel's settlement of Palestine. Her paintings show piles of rubble that were once Palestinian houses in the West Bank and a depiction of a room destroyed by a bomb. Kathryn Vajda presents photographs of sculptures combining natural and artificial substances shaped in the form of mini cities. She forms sculptures made of ice, snow, bubble wrap, and plastic and then takes photographs before nature deteriorates them. The exhibit also features sculptures, photographs, maps, digital imaging, and paintings of piles and massings formed purposefully by artists conveying messages of materialism in society, female oppression, and climate change.

Brasile encourages the M.A. in Museum Professions students as well as students from other programs to attend the exhibit so they can experience culture and current issues in a different environment than from a classroom setting. She explains that students should look at art and exhibitions as ways to see the world in an interpretive and interactive environment, which she argues is the best way to learn. Brasile believes that museums function best when they gather visitors from different fields and points of view. She says this inspires open discussions and an opportunity for visitors to learn from one another and the different experiences they bring. Brasile also encourages members of the South Orange community to attend the exhibit to stand in solidarity with the Pierro Gallery who may not have a space to display collections at the Baird Community Center once renovations are complete.
Graduate students within the M.A. in Museum Professions program were given the opportunity to attend an opening reception for the exhibit on Thursday, September 12, to study the design and function of the exhibit. Students from three of Professor Gregory Stevens' classes then gathered to discuss their thoughts on the theme of the exhibit and how each artist connected their work to Leshé's vision. This discussion occurred just as Brasile hoped, students of different backgrounds and disciplines coming together to consider the exhibit from their own personal perspective. They covered topics such as the flow and spacing of the art, specific interpretations of each piece, and connections to course readings.

The "Mounds, Piles, and Massings" exhibition is free to the public and will be open from September 9 - October 19, 2019. On October 10, at 7:00 p.m., several of the featured artists will host a discussion about their pieces and the theme of the exhibit. The gallery is located in the bottom level of the Walsh Library on campus and is open Monday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

The College of Communication and the Arts currently offers three graduate-level programs, including Museum Professions, Communication, and Public Relations. In addition, four dual-degree options, including three accelerated B.A./M.A. programs and a dual M.A. degree with the School of Diplomacy and International Relations are offered.

For more information about Graduate Studies within the College of Communication and the Arts, please contact Ryan Hudes, Ph.D.

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