



R O C K P O R T
C E N T E R for the A R T S



Affiliated with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 15, 2017

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**HURRICANE HARVEY FORCES MIGRATION OF NATIONAL *BIRDS IN ART* EXHIBIT
FROM HARD-HIT ROCKPORT TO NEIGHBORING CORPUS CHRISTI
THROUGH NEW CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ART INSTITUTIONS**

**A NEW VENUE IS FOUND AT THE ART MUSEUM OF SOUTH TEXAS FOR PRESTIGIOUS
JURIED EXHIBIT KNOWN GLOBALLY AS “GOLD STANDARD” IN AVIAN ART**

THE BEST INDOOR BIRDWATCHING ON THE PLANET

THREE TEXAS ARTISTS FEATURED IN EXHIBIT

Birds in Art

Featuring World Renowned Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum's Annual Exhibit

Presented by Rockport Center for the Arts

On Display at the Art Museum of South Texas

September 28 – November 19, 2017

Art Museum of South Texas □ 1902 North Shoreline Blvd. □ Corpus Christi, Texas

www.rockportbirds.com □ (361) 825-3500 and (361) 729-5519

#ArtHeals

(CORPUS CHRISTI, TX) Although Category 4 Hurricane Harvey and its direct hit to the City of Rockport created massive amounts of havoc and chaos, simple examples of support and love continue to emerge each and every day. One such beautiful relationship is yet another great example of this- artists helping other artists. Rockport Center for the Arts is proudly partnering with the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi to bring *Birds in Art* to the Coastal Bend.

‘Texas Strong’ really is the best way to describe it. We were dealt a devastating blow. Our building may be damaged, but our spirit is not broken. It is actually stronger than ever. Everyone in Rockport has had to adjust sails and change course, but with the support of fellow arts organizations and the thousands of artists that support

us from across the United States, we can move forward and keep art alive in our community,” says Rockport Center for the Arts Executive Director, Luis Purón.

Rockport Center for the Arts was originally scheduled to host a traveling exhibit of the world-renowned Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum’s annual *Birds in Art* exhibition starting in mid-September 2017. Exhibit plans were waylaid when the Center sustained substantial damages that included the catastrophic loss of a large portion of the roof structure. A creative partnership with the Art Museum of South Texas has found a new home for birds from land, sea, and sky in multitudes of artistic mediums and styles so they can continue to fly thousands of miles and find hospitable refuge from their long migrations along the Texas Gulf Coast.

“Art has the power to heal a community— especially one like Rockport where amazing creative forces are the very backbone of our artist colony and a huge portion of business enterprise and the economy. The Art Center will continue to be a major force in Rockport, just like it has for almost 50 years. In the aftermath of the storm my initial thought was to not let go of *Birds in Art*. I knew that if we found a place to host the exhibit it would provide very powerful reinforcement to our membership, our patrons and the community as a whole. Once I knew the condition of our building I immediately reached out to Joe Schenk and he said “yes” right away and for that, we are eternally grateful,” Purón adds.

“Having worked with Kathy Foley at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in presenting the show elsewhere and even judging a previous rendition of *Birds in Art*, I knew that we needed to step up and assist Luis and all our colleagues at the Rockport Center for the Arts to make sure this was not a missed opportunity for our area. By not installing a permanent collection show, our staff could provide the necessary space for this important exhibition and help our Rockport neighbors,” said Joe Schenk, Director of the Art Museum of South Texas.

About *Birds in Art*

Now into its fifth decade, the exhibit has grown, and is widely recognized around the world as the “gold standard” for avian art. *Birds in Art* celebrates the timeless appeal of birds through fresh and contemporary artistic interpretations. It will be on display from September 28 through November 19, 2017 at the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi. This is the southernmost showing for the juried and curated exhibition.

“Mankind’s fascination with birds, bird symbols and avian art is universal. To be captivated by the harmony and serenity of the natural world is part of the human condition. Art lovers, nature enthusiasts and bird watchers will find something exciting in *Birds in Art* - these three simple words have become synonymous with the absolute best in avian art from around the globe.” says Purón.

Since 1976, the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum's annual *Birds in Art* exhibit has showcased the remarkable talents of more than 1,000 artists from around the world, who have presented the very best work interpreting birds. Whether the subject is a backyard feeder favorite or an exotic species from a distant part of the world, an international cast of artists interprets avian themes and habitats employing diverse styles and mediums. From its origination point at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin, the show has 5 additional stops at prestigious institutions including the Museum of York County in South Carolina, Wichita Falls Museum of Art at Midwestern State University, Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History in New York, the Fullerton Arboretum in California and now Corpus Christi, Texas.

AMST Curator of Exhibitions, Deborah Fullerton says, "Over the years The Rockport Center for the Arts and the Art Museum of South Texas have collaborated in a number of ways to the benefit of artists and patrons alike. When Hurricane Harvey tipped toward the north, heading directly into Rockport, Texas, those 30 short miles spanned a connection; in friendship and professional community cooperation. The Art Museum of South Texas is here for our coastal communities, visitors and now especially, for our colleagues in Rockport whose lives and livelihoods have been interrupted. We feel that bruise and we are committed to be a part of the recovery. As Luis and others have said, art has the power to heal, and we all have the capacity to bring that recovery about."

Purón adds, "Rockport's status as an important art colony in the United States is well documented. For five decades, Rockport Center for the Arts has encouraged artists to use the natural elements of our coastal landscape, the delicate movement in the water, the splendor of the sun, and the shore birds because the Coastal Bend is an important migratory area for many species. It goes without saying that this is the perfect exhibit for South Texas-art lovers, nature enthusiasts and bird watchers who will find something exciting in *Birds in Art*."

Three artists who live and work in Texas will be featured in the prestigious exhibit including Kent Ullberg (Corpus Christi), Jim Offeman (Missouri City) and Debbie Stevens (Cypress) as well as many other artists with international recognition. Ullberg needs no introduction. Texas' Coastal Bend is already a sanctuary for his work with a total of eighteen major monuments, two of which reside in the Sculpture Garden at Rockport Center for the Arts- *Rites of Spring* (2000) and *Preening Heron* (2017) and one – *Evolution* (triptych) (1992) in the Paulson Gallery at the Art Museum of South Texas. Offeman has the distinction of being Rockport Art Festival Poster Artist in 2001. His pastel works are widely collected. Stevens was recently selected as Rockport Art Festival Poster Artist for 2018.

Rockport Center for the Arts presented *Birds in Art* in 2013. The show had a very successful two-month run. After the show ended two Art Center benefactors, M.A. and Pete Fischer, expressed interest in making a major financial commitment to have *Birds in Art* return. Generous support was also received from The Margaret Sue

Rust Foundation. Government support was received from Texas Commission on the Arts and the City of Rockport along with a corporate sponsorship from South Texas Money Management LTD. “Corporate support from South Texas Money Management is critical. For one, this corporation has always been a champion of the arts and a long time supporter of the Art Center. Jeanie Wyatt (CEO) personally reached out to me the day after the hurricane to offer her support” says Purón. Additional underwriting was also received after the storm from long-time patron of the arts and Corpus Christi resident and business owner, Bill Richmond.

Purón notes, “Birds are beautiful creatures. Whether you are an artist who draws or sculpts them, a poet who writes about them, a naturalist who observes them, or an advocate for conservancy; the mere fact that birds can unpredictably take flight, make songs with fluttering wings and coordinate other birds into a rhythmic elevation is fascinating.”

There are many possibilities for *Birds in Art* as an educational resource. This traveling show is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for people in Texas, its four bordering states and Northern Mexico to experience the finest avian art being produced at an international level.

A total of 918 entries by 518 artists were submitted for *Birds in Art* from around the world. One hundred pieces were chosen by three jurors: Mindy Moak, principal of MME Fine Arts in New York; Michael Panhorst, curator at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts in Alabama; and Graeme Reid, director of collections at the Museum of Wisconsin Art in West Bend- for display at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin. The traveling exhibit includes fifty paintings and works on paper and ten sculptures. A fully illustrated, color catalogue accompanies each *Birds in Art* exhibition. Catalogues are available for sale at the Art Museum of South Texas.

Birds in Art opens Thursday, September 28, 2017 from 5:30 to 7 PM and runs through Sunday November 19, 2017. “Members of Rockport Center for the Arts will enjoy free admission to the Art Museum of South Texas during the exhibit’s opening night” states Joe Schenk.

Birds in Art is organized by the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin.

About Rockport Center for the Arts

Currently in its 48th year of operation, the Art Center is located in the blue Victorian house at Rockport Harbor near Rockport Beach Park. On August 25 and 26, 2017 the facility suffered catastrophic damage due to Hurricane Harvey’s direct impact on Rockport. A world-class sculpture garden featuring works by Kent Ullberg, James Surls and the late Jesus Moroles have accentuated the Art Center since 2000, making it one of the most

prestigious showcases for fine art in South Texas. Some of the sculptures sustained damages but art salvage and restoration is underway to protect Rockport's art legacy. Inspiring exhibitions, an annual Artist-in-Residence program and traveling exhibits are part of the repertoire the community and its visitors have come to expect. The many activities of the Art Center draw forty eight-thousand visitors per year. In the spring, the Tour of Homes allows visitors and patrons to see some of the most unique residences on the Texas coast. In the summer, the Rockport Art Festival is the place to be July 4th weekend. More than 10,000 people attend each year to enjoy music, food and artwork from 120 of the best artists from around the country. Early in November, the Rockport Film Festival entertains audiences with the best of independent cinema. Workshops, classes and mentoring from established local artists are part of a well crafted art education program. For decades children have enjoyed free, high caliber art instruction year-round through ArtSpace and Free Family Saturdays. The Art Center is temporarily closed due to storm damage caused by Hurricane Harvey. The staff and board of directors are actively involved in re-establishing operations at another location. Visit www.RockportArtCenter.com for more information or call 361-729-5519.

About The Art Museum of South Texas

The Art Museum of South Texas (AMST), located at 1902 N. Shoreline Blvd., Corpus Christi, Texas is open to the public Tuesday – Saturday 10 am – 5 pm, Sunday 1 – 5 pm and closed on Monday. For admission information, contact the Museum at 361-825-3500 or visit www.artmuseumofsouthtexas.org, or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

The Mission of the South Texas Institute for the Arts, doing business as the **Art Museum of South Texas**, is to operate educational facilities and an art museum, which advance the awareness, knowledge, appreciation, and enjoyment of the visual arts for residents and visitors of South Texas.

In addition to the *Birds in Art* exhibition, visitors to the Art Museum of South Texas can view *Digital Darkroom*, an exhibition from the Annenberg Space for Photography in Los Angeles, which features works by 17 photographers from the United States, France and the United Kingdom exploring the intersection of art and technology. An artist is forever exploring the frontiers of expression. Extraordinary images such as these have always existed in photographers' heads, but inadequate technology made it impossible to bring them into the world. This unforgettable exhibition captures surreal creations using an ever-changing technology. *Digital Darkroom* is on view at the Art Museum of South Texas September 29-December 29, 2017. Be sure to pick up a pair of complimentary Whataburger #D glasses to get the most of your *Digital Darkroom* experience.

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