

weatherspoon art museum

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Exhibition Announcement

Mirror, Mirror: The Prints of Alison Saar
From the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation
November 2, 2019 – February 23, 2020

The **Weatherspoon Art Museum** at the **UNC Greensboro** is pleased to present the exhibition [***Mirror, Mirror: The Prints of Alison***](#). Alison Saar is known not only for her powerful sculptures—she is also a master of the art of printmaking. In both forms, she employs a personal vocabulary informed by history, race, and mythology. Her influences range from ancient Europe, Africa, and American Folk Art, and she is especially drawn to the Kouros, an ancient Greek sculptural form of a man in the diametric pose of stillness and movement.

In addition to 46 prints, including the portfolios “Arcade Suite” and “Copasetic Portfolio,” the exhibition includes six sculptures. Saar often creates related prints and sculptures, such as “White Guise” and “Pallor Tricks.” Her works narrate stories of the African American experience, moving effortlessly from the personal to the political. In many of them, while she charts the tragic history of slavery in America, her figures symbolize defiance and strength. Other recurring images are informed by jazz, romance, and desire.

Saar has explored almost every conceivable form of printmaking, both in process and materials. Her prints include woodcuts, linoleum cuts, etchings, serigraphs, intaglios, lithographs, and monoprints, among other formats. She has printed upon paper, stained cotton shop rags, found sugar shack quilts, and vintage seed sacks. In some cases, she incorporates collage elements, hand-applied pigments, shellac, and chine-collé. Her sculptures also are notable for their combination of materials, from ceramic, cotton bolls, wood, tar and wax to tin, stone, silk, and cast bronze.

Saar was born into an artistic family: her father was an art restorer and ceramicist; her mother, Betye, a renowned artist who also works across media and format; her sister, Lesley, also a visual artist, and her sister, Tracye, who is a writer.

Alison Saar was born in Los Angeles in 1958 and grew up in Laurel Canyon at a time when it was something of an artists' haven, lived in New York for many years, and now lives in Los Angeles. California canyons are prone to fires caught in the valleys between high ridges. The experience of resulting destruction and renewal shaped Alison's destiny in many ways and later became manifest in her work. As she combed the rubble with her sisters, she found pieces of china and glass, old bottles and other orphaned objects. As Weatherspoon director Nancy Doll has written, "Using these common bits and pieces as both inspiration and artistic fodder, Saar became a master of materials and media. In a kind of artistic shamanism, these recovered items became powerful symbols that combined with her profound subject matter to create some of the most compelling art being done today."

Through decades of work, Alison Saar has held the vision to use the power of art to tell stories, and especially ones that matter.

Alison Saar earned her B.A. at Scripps, College, CA, in 1978 and her MFA at Otis Art Institute in 1981. She has had more than 50 solo exhibitions across the country, including several major traveling shows. Her work also has been included in dozens and dozens of group exhibitions since 1985; some of these included *Revival*, National Museum for Women in the Arts; *Rise Up! Social Justice in Art From the Collection of Michael Bewley*, San Jose Museum of Art; *Hopes Springing High*, Crocker Museum of Art; and *From Then to Now: Masterworks of Contemporary African-American Art*, Museum of Contemporary, Cleveland, to name but a few.

Saar has been commissioned to create work for the Hall of Justice in Los Angeles; Metro Silver Line, Gardena, CA; Harriet Tubman Memorial, New York, and the California Endowment, Los Angeles, among others. The artist's work has been recognized with multiple grants and awards, such as Anonymous Was a Woman, Joan Mitchell Foundation, Augustus St. John Memorial Foundation, Guggenheim Foundation, and three fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Alison Saar's work can be found in the collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art; Bowdoin College Museum of Art, ME; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, LA County Museum of Art; Laumeier Sculpture Park, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Studio Museum in Harlem, Virginia Museum of Fine Art; Walker Art Center; Weatherspoon Art Museum; and the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation, among others.

This exhibition has been coordinated for the Weatherspoon Art Museum by Nancy Doll, Director, and is accompanied by a catalog.

Support for the exhibition and related educational and outreach programs has been made possible by a grant from the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation.

Image: Alison Saar, Coup de Grâce, lithograph, edition 6/16, 19 1/4 x 25 in. Collection of Jordan D. Schnitzer.

Related Public Programming

Conversation with Alison Saar and Nancy Doll
Thursday, November 7, 6:30 pm

Noon @ the 'Spoon Public Tour
Tuesday, December 10, 12-12:20 pm

Noon @ the 'Spoon features a 20-minute tour of a new exhibition. Offered every second Tuesday of the month. **Free.**

Noon @ the 'Spoon Public Tour
Tuesday, January 14, 12-12:20 pm

Noon @ the 'Spoon features a 20-minute tour of a new exhibition. Offered every second Tuesday of the month. **Free.**

For a complete, updated list of programs, visit <https://weatherspoonart.org/>.

About the Weatherspoon Art Museum

Mission

The Weatherspoon Art Museum at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro enriches the lives of diverse individuals and connects multiple communities, both on and off campus, by presenting, interpreting, and collecting modern and contemporary art. In recognizing its paramount role of public service, the Weatherspoon fosters an appreciation of the ability of art to positively impact lives.

History

The **Weatherspoon Art Museum** at UNC Greensboro was founded by Gregory Ivy in 1941 and is the earliest of any art facilities within the UNC system. The museum was founded as a resource for the campus, community, and region and its early leadership developed an emphasis—maintained to this day—on presenting and acquiring modern and contemporary works of art. A 1950 bequest from the renowned collection of Claribel and Etta Cone, which included prints and bronzes by Henri Matisse and other works on paper by American and European modernists, helped to establish the Weatherspoon's permanent collection. Other prescient acquisitions during Ivy's tenure included a 1951 suspended mobile by Alexander Calder, Willem de Kooning's pivotal 1949-50 *Woman*, and the first drawings by Eva Hesse and Robert Smithson to enter a museum collection.

In 1989, the museum moved into its present location in The Anne and Benjamin Cone Building designed by the architectural firm Mitchell Giurgula. The museum has six galleries and a sculpture courtyard with over 17,000 square feet of exhibition space. The American Alliance of Museums accredited the Weatherspoon in 1995 and renewed its accreditation in 2005 and 2015.

Collections + Exhibitions

The permanent collection of the Weatherspoon Art Museum is considered to be one of the foremost of its kind in the Southeast. It represents all major art movements from the beginning of the 20th century to the present. Among the nearly 7,000 works in the collection are pieces by such prominent figures as Henry Ossawa Tanner, Edward Weston, Joseph Stella, David Smith, Jackson Pollock, Elizabeth Catlett, Louise Nevelson, Gordon Parks, Sol LeWitt, Robert Mangold, Cindy Sherman, Adrian Piper, Betye Saar, Amy Silman, Nick Cave, Jennifer Steinkamp, and Sanford Biggers. The museum regularly lends to major exhibitions nationally and internationally.

The Weatherspoon also is known for its dynamic exhibition program. Through a lively annual calendar of exhibitions and a multi-disciplinary educational program for audiences of all ages, the museum provides an opportunity for visitors to consider artistic, cultural, and social issues of our time—enriching the life of our university, community, and region.

Weatherspoon Art Museum

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