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VISUAL ARTS, CULTURE, REVIEWS



BAYOU TRAILS COLLABORATION WITH CITY PARKS

Houston Arts Alliance

Houston Arts Alliance (HAA) has announced the selected awardees for Bayou Trails, a special creative placemaking project funded by the National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town initiative, as well as The Brown Foundation, Wells Fargo, and the City of Houston.

Through Bayou Trails, HAA brings community-responsive arts program to three signature parks that reside along lower Brays Bayou: **Mason Park, MacGregor Park, and Hermann Park.**

"The Bayou Trails project is an example of parks, neighborhoods, and artists collaborating on interesting and innovative projects," says Houston Arts Alliance CEO, John Abodeely. "The Alliance is honored to help empower these impressive individuals and organizations to create and serve the community."

The selected awardees working in **Mason Park** are Celestina Cardona Billington, Matt Fries, Julian Luna, and Chris Stevens. Their community-responsive and multidisciplinary project, Sacred Voice of The Bayou, will be anchored by a temporary installation in the park's gazebo. Using LEDs, steel, lights, and sound, the structure will invigorate the imaginations of park visitors as they approach the glowing space, viewing themselves in the mirror-reflection of the stainless steel.

Selected awardees working in **MacGregor Park** are Lisa E. Harris and Young Audiences Houston. Their project, Free Time Flow at MacGregor Park, celebrates the intersections of improvisation, performance, free expression, and athleticism. Free Time Flow brings together lead artist, composer and vocalist, Lisa E. Harris and Young Audiences of Houston, a nonprofit arts organization, and will feature weekend workshops by several nationally-recognized performance artists.

Selected awardees working in **Hermann Park** are Tami Merrick and Nicola Parente. Their project, Color Bursting Hermann Park, is an infusion of color in celebration of the Spring Equinox to engage the community. The project occurs in five movements of dance, music, and temporary public art. Temporary pieces include wrapping vividly colored, synthetic ribbon on some 35 trees throughout the park. A second piece will involve about 60 tree vests, which will be scattered along walking trails to enhance public attention. Families will help to create these vests.

Projects are scheduled to happen throughout spring and conclude by May, 2018.

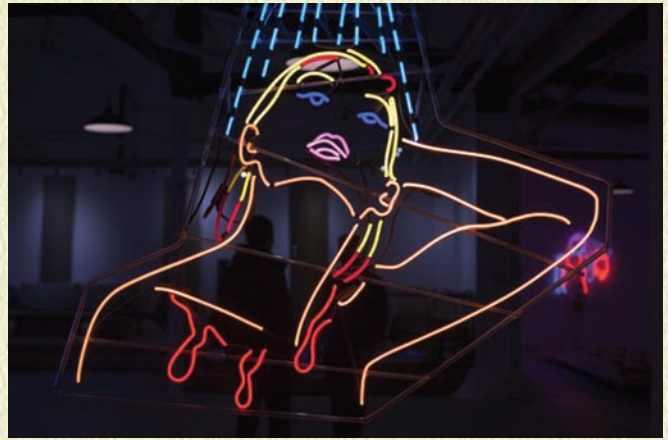
ALABAMA/TEXAS ART EXCHANGE

Mobile Museum of Art/Houston Baptist University Art Gallery

Mobile Museum of Art collaborates with Houston Baptist University Art Gallery in Houston, Texas, to create an "exchange" program of contemporary art exhibitions featuring the work of artists from their respective states, presented concurrently at each venue.

The exhibition is organized and selected by Jim Edwards, Director and Curator of HBU's Contemporary Art Gallery, and will be on view at MMofA, January 26 to July 8, 2018.

The work presented at MMofA includes 9 Houston Artists: **HJ Bott, Pat Colville, Ibsen Espada, Virgil Grotfeldt, Michael Kennaugh, Arielle Masson, Steve Murphy, Susan Plum, and Arthur Turner.**



Kate Hush, *I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair*, 2015. 8mm Italian glass tubing filled with argon and neon gas, animated 120v power supplies. 50 x 40 x 2.5 inches. Photo by Shahryar Kashani.

LIGHT CHARMER: NEON AND PLASMA IN ACTION

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

This Spring, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) presents *Light Charmer: Neon and Plasma in Action*, a group show featuring artists who create a spectacle of light, color, and movement through neon and plasma sculpture and performance. Viewers will be enchanted by the variety of glowing artworks on display.

While the advertising world has largely abandoned neon signage in favor of LEDs and fluorescent lighting, many contemporary artists have embraced the dynamic mediums of neon and plasma, challenging common misconceptions that these materials are only suitable for two-dimensional art. "In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in the aesthetic of neon art and signage. However, few people realize the level of hand skill and scientific knowledge that it requires," says HCCC Curator Kathryn Hall. "Through experimentation with blown-glass forms, unique gas compositions, and the interplay of light and sound, these artists demonstrate new and exciting potential for a material that has been in a state of commercial decline."

As a throwback to the neon of a bygone era, Brooklyn artist Kate Hush puts a new spin on animated signs by addressing feminist issues through the flashy aesthetic of the material. Her femme fatales reference the dangerous and tragic women that once dazzled the silver screens of film noir. Her recent body of work responds to the absurd female stereotype of the crazy, unstable woman and plays into the fantasy of the dangerous vixen. For instance, in *I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outta My Hair* (2015), the artist straddles the line between the mundane and psychotic, leaving it ambiguous as to whether the large red drops originating from the young woman's head are hair dye or blood. The blinking lights generated by the animation of the piece only increase its dramatic effect.

Other artists in the show are enthralled by the science of these luminous materials. In their purest form, noble gases produce different colors and, when combined, create a wide spectrum of possible light effects, as exemplified by the works on view. Plasma is a perfect medium for artists who want to incorporate performance into their works, as the electrons in the material collide into one another, creating a series of explosive effects. *On view until May 13, 2018.*