

2020 North Carolina Artists Exhibition
by Jan Woodard

This year's North Carolina Artists Exhibition celebrated its opening at CAM Raleigh on Sunday, March 8. The preview of our three-month show was followed by a thought-provoking lecture from Nat Trotman, Curator of Performance and Media at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

This profound and powerful exhibition brings together a diverse, multigenerational group of intentional observers, and offers our community a space for empathy, reflection and conversation, despite our differences.

Nearly 60 North Carolina artists committed to speaking truth to the era in which we live, "unifying the desire to bring moments of grace, beauty and thoughtfulness into the world," said Juror Nat Trotman.

Trotman's selection of works focused on issues of mortality and the daily struggle to simply exist. "We need to find new ways to think through the way that power flows in the art world. This is a way of moving forward with full awareness of the complexity of our contemporary situation," he said.

A number of works in the exhibition address how aspects of the emotional and the physical impact individual lives in real space and time. "Artworks conjure feelings of physical or psychological fragmentation," says Trotman. He noted the physicality of media such as fabric, paper, or ice, which invoke memory and explore processes of disappearance. He contrasted that with other works incorporating rubbish and refuse that will never disappear. Still other works recontextualize social systems, from globalism to the insurance industry to prisons, all of which hover over our lives and highlight histories of violence and oppression.

Two Juror's Choice Awards of \$1,000 each were presented to Durham artist Stacey Kirby for her performance art, "The Death Department" and Nora Hartlaub, of Manteo, for her video performance, "The Insurmountable Thing." The Betsy Sykes Award of \$1,000 was presented to Sherrill Roland, "Weight(s)." The Joyce Wilkins Pope Grand Patron Award of \$3,000 went to Saba Taj for "Laila in Orchids."

Following the lecture, members, guests, sponsors, artists and VIPs gathered at the Opening Reception and Art Sale at CAM Raleigh. Guests were welcomed with a glass of champagne as they entered the main gallery to enjoy viewing the 61 works and socializing with 57 artists.

With 679 artists submitting 1616 works for this year's exhibition, the committee chairs and more than 100 volunteers played a huge part in bringing this amazing process to fruition. Special thanks go to RFAS President Carol Spruill for her unwavering dedication and leadership; Melissa Peden, Marion Church and Carroll Clancy for their guidance, wisdom and advice; to Tricia Arnett, VP of Projects, 2019 AE Chair Vicki Hare, and Chair-Elect Connie Burwell, who stood by every step of the way. My thanks also to Marketing Chair, Susan Garrity and her incredible team; Martha Howard, Cece Scott, Chancy Kapp, Patricia Tector and Cameron Calloway for their eagle-eye proofreading of the Prospectus and catalogue; Jesma Reynolds who made us all look extraordinary through our amazing catalogue; Ella Frantz and Meg Rader for coordinating volunteers during the week of art delivery; Chair of Juror's Lecture Tina Whitley, and her fantastic team; Lochie Overby and Cindy McEnery for their creative

photos; Beth Russell and Jean Neese, Co-Chairs of the Opening Reception; Jane Howard, Dida Parrott, Tal Mangum, Chairs of Sales Team and Check-Out Sales; plus dozens of volunteers on each committee.

Heartfelt appreciation also goes to Junction West for accommodating our 225 guests during the Juror's Lecture. Our show would not be the success it is without the support of CAM Raleigh, its Executive Director Gab Smith; Exhibitions Director Eric Gaard; and staff member Krista Nance.

And as a final word, this exhibition gives us all an opportunity to find relief from the world's troubles. Let's connect – online for now –and look ahead to the joyful occasions that lie before us in this ever-changing life.

Those interested in purchasing one of these spectacular works, please contact me at artistsexhibition@raleighfinearts.org or janwoodard@hotmail.com.

Visit ralfinearts.org, click on Artists Exhibition, then on Juror's Lecture to hear Nat Trotman's entire remarks. After viewing the short 22-minute video, sit back and enjoy the talent and creativity of the artists selected to participate in the 2020 North Carolina Artists Exhibition.