



NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Florida CraftArt Unveils Dual Exhibitions: *RESILIENT: Jewelry that Empowers* and *Eleg-ants: Designs from Dalí's Animal Kingdom*

St. Petersburg, FL - February 15, 2024 - Florida CraftArt is delighted to announce the opening of two captivating exhibitions, *RESILIENT: Jewelry that Empowers*, and *Eleg-ants: Designs from Dalí's Animal Kingdom*, running from **February 28 to March 17, 2024**.

RESILIENT: Jewelry that Empowers

Exploring the intersection of contemporary cultural movements and the art of jewelry-making, *RESILIENT* is a testament to the renewed interest in environmental consciousness, Afrofuturism, and the concept of resilience in the aftermath of the disruptions caused by the pandemic and other historic milestones. The exhibition aims to explore the idea of jewelry as talisman, serving as more than just adornment; a talisman is believed to possess magical properties offering good luck and protection.

A national call to artists drew a diverse array of talent, including Seattle-based artist Camisha Jackson, currently featured at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. Her bold designs are a tribute to the diverse beauty of cultures across the globe. In a recent interview, Jackson shared, "There's a lot that inspires my pieces: other cultures, colors, architecture... I love science fiction, fantasy, Afrofuturism. I love when things are flexible and I can take them apart, make them bigger, play with the design, change it."

Texan artist Dawna Gillespie, who limits her materials to copper, brass, and velvet, contributes to the exhibition with 3 pieces including *Resurrection*. This artwork showcases individually hand-cut forms that undulate with the energy of clouds and water. But despite its delicate elements, *Resurrection* comes together like a piece of armor. Gillespie stated, "Throughout my life and experiences, I've learned we need to guard our hearts. I view my art as kind of a shield covering the heart and soul. My work is based on both joys and trials and tribulations in my life. I want to translate experiences into something beautiful to give back to the world."

Eleg-ants: Designs from Dalí's Animal Kingdom

Florida CraftArt proudly collaborates with The Dali Museum in presenting *Eleg-ants: Designs from Dalí's Animal Kingdom*. The exhibition showcases the creativity of students from the Fashion Design at The Dalí program, where high school students from the Tampa Bay area take inspiration from animal imagery that appears in Dalí's artworks and translate them into wearable art. Patricia Donnelly, the Department Chair of the Design Technology Department at Pinellas County Center for the Arts (PCCA), leads the program, offering students the chance to learn design fundamentals, construction techniques, and runway presentation skills.

Jorge Vidal, CEO of Florida CraftArt, expressed enthusiasm for supporting up-and-coming creatives, stating, "At Florida CraftArt, we're all about fueling the fire of young talent. Whether it's through The Dalí's design program or our own FCA Emerging Artist Program, we're on a mission to turn creativity into opportunity. Because, after all, the future of art is in the hands of those just starting to make their mark."

Event: Join us to meet and celebrate the artists of both these exciting exhibitions, on Second Saturday, March 9, 5pm—8pm. Awards ceremony for *RESILIENT: Jewelry that Empowers* at 6:30pm. *RESILIENT* will be judged by Samantha Freeman, nationally recognized fine craft jeweler.

CUTLINES

- 1. Gillespie_Ressurrection_full.jpg, Photo by Dawna Gillespie**
Dawna Gillespie's *Resurrection*; its delicate individually hand-cut elements of brass and copper camouflage the armor like quality of the finished piece.
- 2. The Oracle_detail.jpg, Photo by Camisha Jackson**
Camisha Jackson, an artist based in Seattle, draws inspiration from a blend of cultures, architecture, science fiction, and Afrofuturism in her creations. The artwork titled "The Oracle" is not only bold but also presents itself with an intriguing air of mystery.
- 3. Griffin_To Vanquish Other Blooms_detai.jpg, Photo by Erin Griffin**
To Vanquish Other Blooms, by artist Erin Griffin, who works locally, can be likened to a reliquary. The exterior of the sterling silver vessel is adorned with blooms, intended to be worn around the neck, while internally, seeds remain hidden and safeguarded.