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# 2011 Texas Artist of the Year **Mary McCleary: A Survey** **1996-2011**



*Swimming in my tiny, tiny myness, 2007*

**Exhibition on view Friday, September 9 - November 12, 2011**  
**Opening Reception - Friday, September 9, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.**  
**Artist talk at 6:30 p.m.**

**Houston, TX - Art League Houston** is proud to announce the 2011 *Texas Artist of the Year* exhibition, ***Mary McCleary: A Survey 1996 - 2011***, which brings together, for the first time, an incredible selection of some twenty-seven collage works that span over a fifteen year period of the artist's prolific and exceptional career. The exhibition will be displayed throughout both gallery spaces at Art League Houston. The opening reception is **Friday, September 9** from **6:00 - 8:00 p.m.** with an artist talk at **6:30 p.m.**

"Art League Houston's tradition of honoring outstanding Texas artists is a commitment of which I am most proud," says ALH Executive Director Vanessa Wodehouse. "The 2011 *Texas Artist of the Year*, Mary McCleary, is long-

Art League Houston, 1953 Montrose Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77006

deserving of this title. Her work is brilliantly complex and executed in an extraordinary manner."

A printmaker throughout school, Mary McCleary began making collages in 1978. Over time her work evolved from abstract collages onto which she began gluing three dimensional items, to the multi-layered, extremely complex and detailed figurative work that we now recognize as a style that is Mary's and Mary's alone. Using all matters of things (leather, lint, small plastic toys, glass, pencils, nails, sticks and mirrors), chosen not only for their texture and color, but also for their symbolic import, Mary attaches these items on heavy paper, as she says, "much in the way a painter builds layer upon layer of paint on canvas... My aim is that the obsessive images that result... convey an intensity which the viewer finds compelling... Drawing my subject matter from history and literature, I like the irony of using materials that are often trivial, foolish, and temporal to express ideas of what is significant, timeless, and transcendent."

Wayne Roosa, a professor of art at Bethel University in St. Paul, says this about Mary's work:

There is a fullness of vision in Mary McCleary's art. It is a particular and peculiar kind of fullness, one that is engorged with the fecundity of earth and the senses, and yet simultaneously inhabited by a silent and spiritual presence hovering, - both immanent and transcendent - amidst all that is sensuous and of the earth. Indeed, the viewer's experience of her work is one of being struck and mesmerized by so many ingredients that the sumptuous fabric of these collages dazzles and then seduces. (Image: A Journal of Art and Religion, Issue 23)

## **ABOUT MARY McCLEARY**

Mary McCleary was born in Houston in 1951, and now lives in Nacogdoches, Texas. She is Regent's Professor of Art Emeritus at Stephen F. Austin State University, where she taught from 1975 to 2005.

She received her B.F.A., cum laude in printmaking/drawing at Texas Christian University and her M.F.A. in graphics from the University of Oklahoma. Since 1970 she has participated in over 250 solo and group exhibits in museums and galleries in 24 states, as well as Mexico and Russia. These venues include the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C., MOBIA (Museum of Biblical Art) in New York City, the Grey Gallery at NYU, the Parrish Museum in New York, the Boston Museum of Art, the Dallas Museum of Art, the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, the Blaffer Gallery at U. of Houston, the Galveston Arts Center, the San Antonio Museum of Art, and the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City. She is also a recipient of a Mid-American Arts Alliance/National Endowment of the Arts Fellowship.

Her work has been regularly reviewed or featured in the *Houston Post*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Austin American Statesman*, *Dallas Morning News*, and other Texas newspapers, as well as national publications that include *Art in America*, *Art News*, *Image: A Journal of the Arts and Religion*, *Art Papers*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Art Week*, *Artspace*, *Texas Homes*, *New American Paintings*, and *Contemporanea International Arts Magazine*.

McCleary's work is in many public collections, including those of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas; the El Paso Museum of Art; the San Antonio Museum of Art; and the Art Museum of Southeast Texas in Beaumont. She is represented by Moody Gallery in Houston. McCleary's work will be featured in "An Act of Faith: The Art of Mary McCleary" at the Grace Museum in Abilene, Texas, January 20 - April 16, 2011.

## **ABOUT TEXAS ARTIST OF THE YEAR**

In 1983, Art League Houston created the *Texas Artist of the Year* award as a dynamic annual project documenting Texas art history. ALH was the first organization in the state to develop the award. To date, twenty-eight artists have been honored. Past recipients include **Joseph Havel, Dick Wray, Richard Stout, Dixie Friend Gay, Al Souza, Luis Jimenez, Lucas Johnson, Sharon Kopriva, Bert L. Long, Jr., Jesús Moroles, Dr. John Biggers,** and **Dorothy Hood**, among others.

## **ABOUT ART LEAGUE HOUSTON**

Art League Houston (ALH) was founded in 1948 and incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1953. **The mission of ALH is to cultivate awareness, appreciation, and accessibility of contemporary visual art within the community for its cultural enrichment.** Art League Houston fulfills its mission through exhibitions, the Art League School, its annual *Texas Artist of the Year* program, and outreach programming.

## **SUPPORT**

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