Among the Fleming Museum’s exhibition offerings this spring are two exciting exhibitions that demonstrate the immense diversity of contemporary visual artistic expression. Against the Grain features the unique and engaging work of wood sculptor Hugh Townley. Active from the 1950s until his death in 2008, Townley spent the last decade of his life in Bethel, Vermont. The Fleming is honored to present an exceptional body of Townley’s work in his first major museum retrospective. His quirky, evocative, and sensual sculptures will delight visitors of all ages.

More than Bilingual: William Cordova / Major Jackson is a collaboration between visual artist and poet, both young and highly acclaimed, who have admired one another’s work for years. We are delighted to bring together artist William Cordova and poet and University of Vermont faculty member Major Jackson in a collaborative project that includes mixed-media drawings, installation, video, and poetry. The exhibition title, drawn from one of Cordova’s works, beautifully expresses the project’s interwoven complex of visual, written, and oral language.

The exhibition in the Fleming’s Wilbur Room cases this spring, curated by students in the University of Vermont’s Museum Anthropology course, examines power and identity as reflected in objects from various cultures and periods in the Museum’s collections. As in previous exhibitions organized by students in this course, this promises to cut a thought-provoking swath through the Fleming’s rich and varied collections.

We want to extend our gratitude to all of our members, donors, and visitors who generously support the Fleming’s programs. As we enter a new year of economic uncertainties and global challenges, we are continually reminded, by all of you, of the enduring importance of the arts, culture, and community. We thank you, and we look forward to seeing you at the Fleming this spring.

DIRECTOR’S NOTES


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REGULAR ADMISSION

Cash Bar and Hors D’Oeuvres

Exhibitions and Events | Spring 2009

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OPENING RECEPTIONS

For Fleming Museum Members, the Academic Community & the Public

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28
5:30 – 7:30 PM
Hugh Townley: Against the Grain
More than Bilingual: William Cordova / Major Jackson
Objects of Power and Identity

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4
5:30 – 7:30 PM
A Beckoning Country:
Art and Objects from the Lake Champlain Valley
NOONTIME
Greg Delanty
Jeffrey Thomson
Matthew Miller

Directions and Parking:
Fletcher Allen Health Care. Additional parking information and directions. Parking is available in the visitor lot located between the Museum and the Museum Hours:

Museum Hours:
May 5 – August 31: Tuesday – Friday, Noon – 4 PM  Saturday & Sunday, 1 – 5 PM

Organized around a geological and natural history framework—water, earth, flora, and fauna—the Country Lake Champlain has drawn people to its shores and to the land it nourishes.

Beckoning Country: Art and Objects from the Lake Champlain Valley. For thousands of years, Lake Champlain attracted people to its shores. They gathered plants and animals, built winter homes, or traded with Native American groups. They also left behind remnants of their daily lives, from basic materials like pottery and bones to fine objects that reflect belief and identity. It seems that identity can be assumed, expressed, imposed, granted, and contested, for better or for worse, in a variety of ways, through objects that reflect belief and identity are revealed here in both common and not-so-common objects of power and identity that are considered through a selection of anthropological and ethnographic material from the University of Vermont’s Museum of Art and Anthropology class, notions of cultural anthropology, and the Belk Library and Museum’s collections, which include a special exhibit of Gifts from the Streets and Gifts from the Museum.

Hugh Townley (American, 1923-2008), Einstein, Eddington, Edison, and Ford

Hugh Townley developed a painterly quality in his relief sculptures by juxtaposing variations in color, texture, and form. The bold shapes of his sculptures and reliefs are derived from his hybridity of origins. Townley’s Hybrid identity is revealed through his artwork, which draws on his Eastern and Western cultural heritage. Townley’s art is often described as a hybrid identity, a fusion of Eastern and Western traditions. His work embodies the impact of this study and combines it with the biomorphic abstractions associated with Surrealism, as well as the primordial and mythic imagery of Abstract Expressionism. Townley’s art is a testament to the power of cultural exchange and hybridity, and the importance of embracing diversity in art and culture.

Hugh Townley: Against the Grain

Through his creative practice, Townley explored the tension and balance of his singular vision. The tradition of poet-painter collaborations flourished in New York City in the late 1950s and 1960s, and Townley was a key participant in this movement. Together with his wife, Josephine, Townley created works that celebrated and critiqued the dispersal of cultural territories. Their collaborative process was a powerful expression of belief and identity.

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