

MEDIA INFORMATION

News Bureau

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Robert Ketchens: Transition Spaces 11.2 Highlight African American Culture, History

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo., Aug. 10, 2011 - "Robert Ketchens: Transition Spaces 11.2," opens Aug. 26, in the Rosemary Berkel and Harry L. Crisp II Museum, at Southeast Missouri State University's River Campus.

The public is invited to attend an opening reception from 4-8 p.m. Sept. 2, with a gallery talk by the artist at 5 p.m. The exhibit will remain on display through Oct. 16, 2011.

The paintings by Robert Ketchens capture a reflection of African American culture, history and societal issues. For his Transition Spaces exhibition, Ketchens will present a series of paintings focusing on the Sharecroppers' Strike of 1939.

Ketchens states, "I am drawn to this subject matter for its David vs. Goliath situations. During the Jim Crow era in our nation's history, the Sharecroppers' Strike of 1939 was a major labor and human rights movement and very much a David vs. Goliath situation."

This series of art works is a tribute to the strikers. Their awakening of society to man's dark side, and the corrections to his misdeeds and injustices that normally follows an awakening is a gift to the nation.

The works are prepared and presented in two- and three-dimensional visual forms that best express certain aspects of the movement. In some works, texture is used to reinforce a particular shape that makes vivid the hardship strikers endured. Critical to the whole, aesthetically and metaphorically is color.

"It is a tool that I regularly use, changing it with contrasting hues, at times exaggerating it and at others, subduing it. From the blackness of the crow to the whiteness of the snow, all tints and shades of color are infused with energy, ...trying to match that of the strikers," Ketchens has said.

Ketchens, a New Orleans native, served in U.S. Air Force as a medical illustrator. During his tour of duty in Wiesbaden, Germany, he enrolled in a local Atelier, where he learned to master the practical aspects of easel painting. With his substantial knowledge of human anatomy,

portraiture and the figurative, painting has become his forte. Ketchens has exhibited internationally as well as nationally, in group and solo exhibitions. His art is in significant corporate and private collections.

Ketchens maintains an active exhibition record of solo* and group, exhibitions. Recent solo exhibitions include “Displaced, Disbursed, and then Dissed,” Dusable Museum, Chicago, Ill; “Robert Ketchens Paintings,” Art Council of Southeast Missouri; “Women: The Artist Muse,” Wiley College, Marshall, Texas; “The Magnolia Project,” Margaret Harwell Art Museum, Poplar Bluff, Mo.; “New Paintings,” City ArtFest, St. Louis Community College, St. Louis, Mo.; “Black Creativity Show, Museum of Science and Industry,” Chicago, Ill.; “National Black Fine Arts Festival,” Atlanta, Ga.; and “Essence Art Exposition,” New Orleans, La.

He has received numerous awards and commissions for his work including an Award of Excellence in the Voices of Experience: Diverse Artists, the College School and Art Saint Louis, Webster Groves, Mo.

The Crisp Museum is located in the Cultural Arts Center at Southeast Missouri State University’s River Campus, 518 S. Fountain St., Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Museum hours: Tues.-Fri.: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekends: 1-4 p.m. The museum is closed Sept. 5. For additional information, email museum@semo.edu or call (573) 651-2260.