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Norman Gorbaty: Works in Dialogue Press Release

Bellarmine Museum of Art

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Fairfield University Presents Two Exhibitions of Works by Artist
Norman Gorbaty Opening January 27

FAIRFIELD, Conn. (Dec. 20, 2010) Two separate yet complementary exhibitions of a retrospective view of the work of artist Norman Gorbaty open at Fairfield University Thursday, Jan. 27: Gorbaty’s “To Honor My People” features the artist’s Judaic works at the Thomas J. Walsh Art Gallery in the Quick Center for the Arts and “Norman Gorbaty: Works in Dialogue,” highlights the artist’s drawings, carvings and sculptures at the Bellarmine Museum of Art, on the lower level of Bellarmine Hall. The public is invited to attend simultaneous opening receptions at which Gorbaty will appear from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 27. Both exhibitions continue through March 27. Admission is free.

In addition to the exhibitions, several free lectures by Gorbaty are planned. The Carl and Dorothy Bennett Center for Judaic Studies presents the artist as the Samuel and Bettie Roberts Memorial Lecturer in Jewish Art on Wednesday, Feb. 9 in Gonzaga Hall’s auditorium at 8 p.m. Gorbaty joins the gallery and museum directors, Dr. Diana Mille (Walsh Art Gallery) and Dr. Jill Deupi (Bellarmine Museum of Art) for two noontime gallery talks about his works on consecutive Wednesdays: Feb. 23 at the Walsh Art Gallery and March 2 at the Bellarmine Museum of Art.

Gorbaty’s approach to his insightful and vibrant work — whether it be drawing, painting, carving or sculpture — is best described by the artist, himself: “I have always been a doer of images. The mystery is in the doing… I am fascinated by the motion around us … Everything moves. Images are constantly in motion.” The result of his astute observation combines with his profound sensitivity to the human condition and manifests itself in his artistry generating his passion to combine movement “with our differing perspectives of an image to create unique experiences that I artistically explore.”
In her essay on “To Honor My People,” Mille notes, “A major methodology that presents itself in Gorbaty’s work is that of a creator who recapitulates in his mind the stories and perceptions from his family of origin, his tribe of Judaic culture and … from those outside this culture … to bring the narrative to life … the artist also suggests that the works he creates are equipped with secondary stories which invite a further reading and interpretation.” It is Mille’s contention that Gorbaty “reminds us of the aesthetic and technical similarities between his process of carving and drawing — a delicacy of heavenly lines and light that truly honors the viewer — using a chisel instead of a pencil, pen or brush…Whether the lines are expressed in two or three dimensions…they elicit the poetry of an experienced and emotional tracing that relies on light and shadow to define the image.” She states that the Walsh exhibition is “a memorial to acquaint fellow Jews and non-Jews alike with significant meaning which is intended to last.”

Of “Works in Dialogue” Deupi writes, “Gorbaty’s works … unfold before the viewer to reveal a world that is both perceived and imagined; a reality that is imitative and metaphysical in equal measures.” His ability “to capture the quintessence of nature with deftness and complexity,” she states, is exemplified by his view of “Venice’s Tronchetto,” in which he depicts “with magisterial control, a dramatic tempest releasing its pent-up fury over the majestic lagoon. By bending his characteristic hatchings into agitated arcs, the artist elicits the sublime sensation of whipping wind and pelting rain.”

Throughout his long career, Gorbaty has experimented with different genres to dynamic and memorable effect at times, as Deupi says, “crowding multiple images onto a single page … while conveying prescient messages about … individual subjects [and] the larger panorama that is humanity;” at others, creating “caricatures [that] display a related capacity for capturing the essence of life and human existence in all of its iterations, from the sublime to the ridiculous.”

Gorbaty’s oeuvre crosses the boundaries that traditionally define distinct genres and discrete media. In exploring this modern master’s work, the two exhibitions display an everlasting sense of mystery and a palpable commitment to taking risks.

The Walsh Art Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sundays, noon to 4 p.m.; closed Mondays. The Bellarmine Museum of Art hours: Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with Second Saturday family days from noon to 5 p.m.

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