

Winifred Godfrey Exhibit Coming to Hatheway Sept.15-Oct.12

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Lewis and Clark Community College's Hatheway Cultural Center Art Gallery will soon feature the rich, resonating paintings of American artist Winifred Godfrey.

The retrospective exhibit, "Winifred Godfrey: 40 Years of Painting," will feature oil and watercolor paintings, drawings and lithographs, including figurative work, paintings which depict the distinctive textiles of the Mayan people of the Guatemalan Highlands, and floral pieces.



“What interests me primarily in painting floral forms is the delicate and temporary quality of the blossom,” Godfrey said. “Although the canvases are painted realistically, the flower is the starting point for an abstract study of the luminosity and transparency

of the individual petal. I try to accomplish this through the magnification of the plant form itself in a tight design, and make a dynamic spatial relationship of this form with the rectangle of the canvas.”

A public opening for the exhibit will take place from 3-6 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 15. The exhibit will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily through Saturday, Oct. 12. On Oct. 12, a closing reception will be held from 3-6 p.m.

“The college is grateful to Winifred Godfrey for providing us the opportunity to organize an exhibition that covers four decades of her work,” said Jim Price, professor of art, history and culture at Lewis and Clark. “It is a unique opportunity for people to see the amazing breadth and depth of her art. This is a show that will enhance the offerings of the college and increase our perception of what excellence is.”

The exhibit of Godfrey’s art, which graces the Lewis and Clark’s Godfrey campus in both the Templin Nursing Building and the Trimpe ATC, will provide local residents and art patrons from the Chicago area with the opportunity to see more than 100 pieces of her extensive work spanning four decades. This is the first time a display of Godfrey’s work of this scope and size has ever been exhibited in the United States.

Godfrey brings a decidedly 20th century look to the long tradition of floral and figurative painting. Her work is often described as photorealistic, although her interest is more with color and composition. Working with common subjects but presented large, Godfrey’s art provides a fresh view of the intricate shapes, texture and translucency of flowers. Her figurative work is presented in a unique, life-sized format.

Born in Philadelphia and raised on Chicago’s south side, Godfrey received a Bachelor of Science in Art and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Wisconsin. Her artwork is included in many private, corporate and museum collections and has been exhibited throughout North America.

Among Godfrey’s more notable exhibitions are one-woman shows at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, Penn., the University of Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia, Penn., the Organization of American States in Washington, D. C., the Rahr-West Art Museum in Manitowoc, Wis., and the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard in Cambridge, Mass.

Godfrey’s work was presented with that of Georgia O’Keefe and Marc Chagall at an exhibit of 20th century flower paintings at the Museum of Art of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. She has also exhibited at the Chicago Botanic Garden, where she won the Flora Exhibition Award of Excellence. Other awards to her credit are the State of Illinois Library Competition and First Prize out of 4,500 floral entries in The Artist’s Magazine

Floral Competition. More recently she was awarded the Municipal Art League's Award of Excellence for her entire career and body of work.

This spring Godfrey exhibited her "MAYAN PROCESSION" at the Chicago Cultural Center in the Renaissance Court Gallery. In the last several years she has been working on a series of figurative paintings of highland indigenous of Guatemala. Each canvas depicts a different village and costume. There are currently 14 life-size oils that are exhibited in sequence and called "MAYAN PROCESSION."

"In the early eighties, Guatemala began to have enormous political problems that had a direct and devastating effect on the very groups that I found so beautiful and compelling," Godfrey said. "Following the information about the political situation in Guatemala made me want, all the more, to say something about these indigenous people. My intentions changed from seeking to record an impression of something ancient and beautiful to a desire to educate others about the potential devastation of a living culture that preserves one of the only true links to our pre-Columbian past."

Along with painting flowers, Godfrey plans to finish four more Mayan pieces to complete the series. The exhibit has actual textiles, photos and other educational material to accompany the paintings. A unique addition to the exhibit is a sawdust carpet called an "Alfombra" which is a special tradition in Guatemala before processions. The "MAYAN PROCESSION" has been exceptionally well received in various museums and educational institutions throughout the country.

For more information about the exhibit, "Winifred Godfrey: 40 Years of Painting," call Louise Jett at (618) 468-3220 or visit www.lc.edu/WinifredGodfrey