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**Local artist A. Mary Kay among 102 selected for *State of the Art* exhibition at  
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art  
September 13, 2014 - January 19, 2015**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**From Lindsborg, Kansas —** [Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art](#) in Bentonville, Ark. recently announced that the exhibition [State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now](#) will feature 102 artists from all over the country. Lindsborg, Kansas based artist, A. Mary Kay's work will be included in *State of the Art*, which debuts at Crystal Bridges on September 13.

Crystal Bridges President Don Bacigalupi and Assistant Curator Chad Allgood traveled to Lindsborg in December 2014 to conduct an interview with A. Mary Kay as part of the search for the most compelling American art being created today.

This studio visit was one of nearly 1,000 stops made by the curatorial team during a year-long, 100,000 mile journey across the country to discover artists whose work has not yet been fully recognized. The result is a one-of-a-kind exhibition that draws from every region of the U.S., offering an unusually diverse and nuanced look at American art. The 102 artists selected range in age from 24 – 87, including 54 male and 48 female artists from across the country.

A. Mary Kay will be exhibiting "Zenith" a large three-paneled oil painting 7' X 18' in the *State of the Art* Exhibition. She is immersed in the natural world and has built a collection of objects and detritus from the place where she lives. She uses insects, seeds, wings, flower parts and bones in conjunction with the physicality of paint to speak metaphorically, through translation into a wide vocabulary of painting language. These physical sensations of paint marry the objects and environment to build images that unfold and extend seeing.

It is the enormity of minutiae, infinite variation, taxonomies and mimicry found within the boundaries of her garden that have become catalysts for painting. The beauty found within the lush zenith of summer's fecundity contains precariousness, the imminent decline of fall. It is this rush of life, and with it the mystery of the infinite connectedness of everything that inspires her. Through painting she summons this frenzy of the intertwining of soil, plants, insects and weather. Wanting to grasp and celebrate the extraordinary buzz within the layers of life found here, she moves herself visually and emotionally further and further in. In "Zenith" she celebrates the fleeting climax of life.

A. Mary Kay received her MFA from Yale University in 1989. She is a Professor of Art at Bethany College Lindsborg, Kansas. Her website is [www.marykaypainting.com](http://www.marykaypainting.com)

“The complexity of themes in the work mirrors the diversity and individuality of the makers. Each artist represents meaningful conversations happening in rural communities, small towns, and more densely populated urban centers all across the country,” said Crystal Bridges assistant curator Chad Alligood. “The artists are responding to the same things we’re all responding to in our daily lives. We hope that this exhibition will inspire new ways to experience contemporary art and the evolving narratives that make up our cultural fabric.”

From works on canvas and paper to photography, video to installation, sculpture to ceramics and more, the diverse range of styles and voices from across the U.S. reflects what’s happening in American art *right now*.

“The exhibition is a glimpse into the state of art in our nation at this moment,” said Crystal Bridges president Don Bacigalupi. “Presenting the exhibition at Crystal Bridges provides us an opportunity to see contemporary art in the broader historical context. By examining a wide range of works by artists from across the country, we can gain insight into our nation as a whole: our collective passions, challenges, and concerns.”

The *State of the Art* exhibition, featuring more than 200 works by the 102 artists, will reach beyond the museum’s temporary exhibition spaces, extending into the permanent collection galleries and activating community areas indoors and out. Visitors to the exhibition will traverse through the museum’s permanent collection galleries, featuring masterworks such as Asher Brown Durand’s *Kindred Spirits* and Georgia O’Keeffe’s *Radiator Building—Night, New York*, before arriving at the museum’s 20th century gallery and the beginning of the *State of the Art* exhibition. The exhibition continues in the temporary exhibition galleries, occupying a total of approximately 19,000 square feet of gallery space.

**For additional information on *State of the Art*, please contact:**

Beth Bobbitt at [Beth.Bobbitt@crystalbridges.org](mailto:Beth.Bobbitt@crystalbridges.org) or (479) 418.5700

### **About the Artist**

A. Mary Kay lives and paints in rural Lindsborg, Kansas. She is Professor of Art at Bethany College sharing a single teaching position with artist Frank Shaw.

She was born in London England, and has lived in the USA for 27 years, 25 of these in Kansas. She received a BA from Bath Academy of Art UK, an MA from Goldsmiths College London University England, and a MFA in Painting from Yale University.

## **Brief Resume**

### **A. Mary Kay**

**Date of birth 1954**

#### **Education**

1989 MFA Painting Yale University USA

1986 MA Painting Goldsmiths College London University UK

1977 BA hons Bath Academy of Art UK

#### **Selected Solo and Two Person Shows**

2014 ***Forthcoming***: Taxonomies: The Land Institute Salina KS

2014 ***Forthcoming***: Wonder: Chapman Gallery Kansas State University KS

2013 Two Painters: Butler Community College Eldorado KS

2008 Mary Kay/Rebecca Morales Recent Work: Grand Arts Kansas City MO

2008 Collected and Uncollected Thoughts Mary Kay and Frank Shaw: Moss-Thorns Gallery of Art, Fort Hays State University, Hays, KS

2005 Nature Remains: Mallin Gallery, Kansas City Artists Coalition, Kansas City MO

2003 ReCollection: Nature Remains Salina Art Center, Salina, KS

1999 Triptychs from the Landscape: Sandzen Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, KS

#### **Selected group Exhibitions**

2014 ***Forthcoming***: State of the Art: Crystal Bridges Art Museum Bentonville AR

2014 ***Present***: Turn and Return: Kansas City Collection III Kansas City MO

2014 Invitational: M55 Art Noho Gallery New York NY

2001 Drawing the Body: An Invitational Drawing Exhibition Cecile R. Hunt Gallery Webster, University, St. Louis, MO

1999-2002 Body: Touring Show with KRATES Salina Art Center, Salina, KS

Erman B. White Gallery, Butler Community College, El Dorado, KS

Moss- Thorns Gallery of Art, Fort Hays State University, Hays, KS

Mulvane Art Museum, Washburn University, Topeka, KS

1999 Body: Salina Art Center, Salina, KS

#### **Selected Publications, Articles**

2014 Crystal Bridges to include Kansas and Missouri Artists, Huffington Post  
By Blair Schulman

2014 A. Mary Kay: Catalogue Essay for Kansas City Collection III by Dana Self

2008 Naturalism Two Ways: Bones, Hair, and Jaws” Paint Review exhibit review by Steve Walker

2008 At Grand Arts, Mary Kay and Rebecca Morales show dirty, rotten – and beautiful – work: The Pitch exhibit review by Dana Self

2008 Mary Kay/Rebecca Morales: Kansas City Star exhibit review by Elisabeth Kirsch

2008 Remembering Today, Longing for Long Ago, Protecting Tomorrow: brochure essay by Sue Spaid

2003 Nature Remains brochure essay by Saralyn Reece Hardy

2001 River Styx, No. 61, 2001 Five Drawings from the Grieving Series

1994 The Land Report, No. 50, Summer 1994 To Fly an Earthen Carpet

#### **Selected Honors**

1989 Liquitex Materials and Purchase Award

1989 Helen W. Winternitz Award, Yale University

## Selected Collections

Emprise Bank Wichita

## Website

[www.marykaypainting.com](http://www.marykaypainting.com)

## About Crystal Bridges

The mission of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art is to welcome all to celebrate the American spirit in a setting that unites the power of art with the beauty of nature. Opened to the public on 11-11-11, Crystal Bridges was founded in 2005 by the Walton Family Foundation as a nonprofit charitable organization for all to enjoy. Philanthropist and arts patron Alice Walton chairs the museum's board of directors. Since its opening, the Museum has welcomed more than 1.4 million visitors, and garnered nearly 8,000 households in its membership. Some 55,000 school children have participated in the Museum's Willard and Pat Walker School Visit program, which provides educational experiences for school groups at no cost to the schools. More than 220,000 visitors a year utilize the Museum's 3.5 miles of walking trails.

Crystal Bridges takes its name from a nearby natural spring and the bridge construction incorporated in the building, designed by world-renowned architect Moshe Safdie. A series of pavilions nestled around two spring-fed ponds house galleries, meeting and classroom spaces, and a large, glass-enclosed gathering hall. Guest amenities include a restaurant on a glass-enclosed bridge overlooking the ponds, a Museum Store designed by architect Marlon Blackwell, and a library featuring more than 50,000 volumes of art reference material. Sculpture and walking trails link the Museum's 120-acre park to downtown Bentonville, Arkansas.

Crystal Bridges' permanent collection spans five centuries of American masterworks ranging from the Colonial era to the current day. Included within the collection are iconic images such as Asher B. Durand's *Kindred Spirits*, Norman Rockwell's *Rosie the Riveter*, and Andy Warhol's *Coca-Cola [3]*— each reflecting a distinct moment in American artistic evolution—as well as major works by modern and contemporary American

artists, including Georgia O'Keeffe, John Baldessari, and James Turrell. The permanent collection, which continues to grow through a strategic acquisition plan, is on view year-round and is enhanced by an array of temporary exhibitions, which were viewed by some 216,000 visitors in 2013.

For information about Crystal Bridges, visit [CrystalBridges.org](http://CrystalBridges.org). To learn more about *State of the Art*, visit the [Huffington Post blog](#) and [Crystal Bridges website](#). For news updates, follow Crystal Bridges on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) #StateoftheArt.