

NEWS RELEASE

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Conley Harris and UNH Art Faculty Featured in Exhibitions Opening at UNH Museum of Art

DURHAM, NH –Two new exhibitions showcasing recent drawings, paintings, clay works, and sculptures by four faculty members from the Department of Art and Art History, University of New Hampshire (UNH), as well as the paintings of Boston-based artist Conley Harris, will be on view at the Museum of Art, UNH, from September 6 through October 22, 2008. The exhibitions, “Art Faculty Review: Benjamin Cariens, Brian Chu, Craig Hood, and Maryse Searls McConnell,” and “Conley Harris: Lyrical Tableaux,” will open with a public preview reception on Friday, September 5, from 5 – 7 p.m. Admission is free.

Art Faculty Review: Benjamin Cariens, Brian Chu, Craig Hood, and Maryse Searls McConnell

The exhibition “Art Faculty Review: Benjamin Cariens, Brian Chu, Craig Hood, and Maryse Searls McConnell,” highlights new works created by studio art faculty members, who have recently returned to the Department of Art and Art History at UNH following sabbatical leave or fellowship appointments.

Benjamin Cariens has served as an assistant professor of sculpture and drawing at UNH since 2002. He is a graduate of The College of William and Mary (B.A., 1991), Boston University, School for the Arts (M.F.A., 1993), and Harvard University Divinity School (Master of Theological Studies, 1999). His sculptures reflect his interest in the function of artifice in the expression of religious faith.

An associate professor of drawing and painting at UNH, Brian Chu is a graduate of Queens College (B.F.A., 1971; M.F.A., 1973). His paintings focus on differences found in color, surface, light, and space. As a result of his exploring these differences, his images become understated references, rather than realistic representation of his subjects.

Craig Hood is a graduate of Boston University (B.A., 1975), Pennsylvania State University (B.A., 1979), and Indiana University (M.F.A., 1981). A professor of painting and drawing at UNH since 1981, Hood's work examines the role of the human figure as a narrative image within a fragmented landscape.

Maryse Searls McConnell, a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Art (B.F.A., 1971) and Alfred University (M.F.A., 1973), has served as an associate professor of art at UNH since 1973. Her works showcase the dichotomy of the creative process she employs—in her work in clay, she intuitively builds complex, non-representational studies and reliefs, while in her abstract drawings, she develops dream-like content and symbolism from man-made and natural images.

Conley Harris: Lyrical Tableaux

“Conley Harris: Lyrical Tableaux” presents over 25 vibrant paintings that showcase the Boston-based artist's interest in Persian and Indian miniatures. While paying sincere homage to 17th-century Indian artists who kept unfinished drawings as reference for new works, Harris makes a significant break with this tradition when he layers and repeats drawings into a finished painting.

Theatrical sensibility provides Harris's works with an intensity and power that transcend time and place. Using the lively color and dramatic staging of Hindu court narrative as a springboard, he gives voice to his own passion for a lush, imagined landscape. By incorporating the conventional poses and gestures of Hindu deities and dancers into this exploration of landscape, the formal gardens of the distant past are animated—bringing them into the present for our consideration.

Beginning his career as chief scene painter for the Santa Fe Opera Company during the 1970s, Harris is a former faculty member of the Department of Art and Art History at UNH. He is well-known for his lyrical landscapes of New England and the American West. Upon traveling to the Japan and India, he began collecting antique Rajput, Pahari, and Mughal drawings used as

preparatory studies for miniature paintings which he used as a source of inspiration. His drawings from the 17th- and 18-th century courts and kingdoms of the Indian sub-continent now serve as a source of inspiration for his paintings and drawings. Writing about his work, Harris has stated: “In these fantastical landscapes, I have altered, enlarged, and restaged details from favorite miniatures. A playful energy gathers as figures spring into action—whether it be dancing late into the night, archers pursuing their daring ambitions, or horsemen exploring the rolling landscape. These figures are personal to me, drawn from the past and now part of an imagined world that I find compelling.”

“Conley Harris: Lyrical Tableaux” was organized and circulated by the Danforth Museum of Art, Framingham, Mass. Following its showing at the Museum of Art, UNH, Durham, New Hampshire, it will travel to the University of Tennessee Downtown Gallery in Knoxville, TN (November 21 – December 19, 2008)

Exhibitions and programs are open to the public free of charge. Weekly programs offered in conjunction with the current exhibitions include:

ArtBreak Series: Wednesday, noon – 1 p.m.

All programs are in the Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH, Durham

September 10:

ArtBreak: Slide Lecture: “An Unfolding Process” Kinetic sculptor and UNH alumnus (BFA, 1978) Arthur Ganson discusses his work. Noon, free, Room A219, Paul Creative Arts Center, 30 Academic Way, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, 03824-2617, (603) 862-3712, www.unh.edu/moa, museum.of.art@unh.edu

September 17:

ArtBreak: Gallery Talk: Conley Harris, Boston artist and former University of New Hampshire art faculty member, discusses his work on view in the current exhibition “Conley Harris: Lyrical Tableaux.” Noon, free, Museum of Art, Paul Creative Arts Center, 30 Academic Way, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, 03824-2617, (603) 862-3712, www.unh.edu/moa, museum.of.art@unh.edu

September 24:

ArtBreak: Slide Lecture: Mary McWilliams, Norma Jean Calderwood Curator of Islamic & Later Indian Art, Harvard Art Museum, discusses the iconological references found in the work of painter Conley Harris. Noon, free, Room A219, Paul Creative Arts Center, 30 Academic Way, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, 03824-2617, (603) 862-3712, www.unh.edu/moa, museum.of.art@unh.edu

October 1:

ArtBreak: Gallery Talk: Three exhibiting faculty artists from the University of New Hampshire's Department of Art & Art History—Brian Chu, Craig Hood, and Maryse Searls McConnell—

discuss their work in the current exhibition, “Art Faculty Review.” Noon, free, Museum of Art, Paul Creative Arts Center, 30 Academic Way, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, 03824-2617, (603) 862-3712, www.unh.edu/moa, museum.of.art@unh.edu

October 8:

ArtBreak: Slide Lecture: “The Legacy: The Parthenon Sculptures and Modern Day Debate of Repatriation” is discussed by UNH International Research Opportunities Program grant recipient Elizabeth G. Lapan. Noon, free, Room A219, Paul Creative Arts Center, 30 Academic Way, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, 03824-2617, (603) 862-3712, www.unh.edu/moa, museum.of.art@unh.edu

October 15:

ArtBreak: Slide Lecture & Gallery Talk: “From Faith to Form” The function of artifice in the expression of religious faith and in recent sculptures is discussed by Benjamin Cariens, University of New Hampshire. Noon, free, Room A219 & Museum of Art, Paul Creative Arts Center, 30 Academic Way, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, 03824-2617, (603) 862-3712, www.unh.edu/moa, museum.of.art@unh.edu

October 22:

ArtBreak: Slide Lecture: “New England Currents: Animating the Museum with Contemporary Art” by Katherine French (B.F.A., 1975), curator and director of the Danforth Museum of Art. Noon, free, Room A219, Paul Creative Arts Center, 30 Academic Way, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, 03824-2617, (603) 862-3712, www.unh.edu/moa, museum.of.art@unh.edu

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The exhibitions and programs are supported in part by the Friends of the Museum of Art. Guided group tours for schools and other organizations are available with advance reservation by contacting Catherine A. Mazur, education and publicity coordinator, at catherine.mazur@unh.edu or (603) 862-3713. For more information on the exhibitions and programs, contact the Museum of Art at (603) 862-3712, museum.of.art@unh.edu, or visit www.unh.edu/moa.

The Museum of Art is open during the academic year: Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday, 1-5 p.m.; closed Fridays, University holidays, and during exhibition changes.

Editors: The following high-resolution images of works in the exhibitions are available for downloading:

Selected images for “Art Faculty Review: Benjamin Cariens, Brian Chu, Craig Hood, and Maryse Searls McConnell,” include:



Benjamin Cariens, “Katib II,” 2007, mixed media, 89” x 62” x 22”
http://www.unh.edu/art-gallery/images/Faculty_2008/Ben_Cariens_Katib_II.press.jpg



Brian Chu, “Commotion,” 2007, oil on board, 8” x 16”
http://www.unh.edu/art-gallery/images/Faculty_2008/Brian_Chu_Commotion.press.jpg



Craig Hood, “Chiminea,” 2008, oil on canvas, 40” x 54”
http://www.unh.edu/art-gallery/images/Faculty_2008/Craig_Hood_Chiminea.press_image_edited-2.jpg

Selected images for “Conley Harris: Lyrical Tableaux” include:



Conley Harris, "Bright Crimson Skies," 2007, oil on canvas, 56" x 56", Courtesy of the artist and Victoria Munroe Fine Art, Boston

http://www.unh.edu/art-gallery/images/Conley_Harris/Conley_Harris_Bright_Crimson_Skies.jpg



Conley Harris, "The Dancing Maiden," 2007, oil on canvas, 54" x 44",
Courtesy of the artist and Victoria Munroe Fine Art, Boston

http://www.unh.edu/art-gallery/images/Conley_Harris/Conley_Harris_The_Dancing_Maiden.jpg



Conley Harris, "Triumphant Parade," 2007, oil on canvas, 30" x 30", Collection of
Howard Truelove

http://www.unh.edu/art-gallery/images/Conley_Harris/Conley_Harris_Triumphant_Parade.jpg



Conley Harris, "Flying Paisleys," 2006-07, oil on canvas, 36" x 36", Courtesy of the
artist and Victoria Munroe Fine Art, Boston

http://www.unh.edu/art-gallery/images/Conley_Harris/Conley_Harris_Flying_Paisleys.jpg