

Art Museum of South Texas

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Exhibit Opens January 20 at Art Museum

“The Art of the Dive: Portraits of the Deep”

A new art exhibition that opens to the public on January 20 allows visitors to experience in stunning clarity the underwater life that makes up a large portion of our world. *The Art of the Dive: Portraits of the Deep* presents 75 original paintings, sculptures and photographs by artists who depict underwater life forms and habitat. Subjects range from sailfish, marlin, and other billed game fish to striped bass, bluefish and tuna. Included too are an array of other life forms that inhabit the underwater world, ranging from corals to crustaceans, mollusks and plants.

The Art of the Dive: Portraits of the Deep allows the viewer direct access to this mysterious underwater world and illustrates the concerns that some artists share about world ecology, and the health of the world’s oceans and its inhabitants. Their perspective reveals a poignant point of view that resonates resoundingly in our own time, beginning with New York painter Stanley Meltzoff (1917-2006). Meltzoff was given his start with a commission from National Geographic Society in the 1960’s and has been the model, if not the inspiration, for a circle of artists who subsequently specialized in dive art. He is generally recognized as the progenitor of the genre. Some of the artists included in the exhibition are painter Al Barnes (Fulton, TX), well-known outdoor enthusiast Guy Harvey (Cayman Islands, BWI), and sculptor Kent Ullberg (Corpus Christi, TX), among many other of the world’s leading marine painters and sculptors.

Selections from the estate collection of Stanley Meltzoff now in possession of Mike Rivkin, who authored and published the recently released book *Stanley Meltzoff — Picture Maker*, are at the core of the exhibition. Rivkin’s book, which is available in the Museum Gift Shop, focuses on the contributions of Meltzoff to the genre of underwater-focused imagery and his influence to some degree on every underwater artist who has followed.

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Education programs accompanying the exhibition allow participants to further explore the underwater world through art.

The Art of the Dive: Portraits of the Deep is produced by David J. Wagner, L.L.C., David J. Wagner, Ph.D., Curator/Tour Director. The exhibition will be on view at the Art Museum of South Texas through Sunday, March 11, 2012. Following that, it will travel to museums in Denver and in San Diego. A number of educational programs, gallery walks and guided learning experiences accompany the exhibition.

Educational Programs

Friday, January 20. “Lunch Amongst the Masters” honors the artists in the exhibition. Artists Kent Ullberg and Guy Harvey will describe the dives that influenced their paintings and sculptures; additional artists in the exhibit also will be available in the Museum galleries to discuss their works. 12 noon; lunch is included. Cost: \$15-members and \$20-nonmembers.

Sunday, February 19. Dr. Larry McKinney, Executive Director for the Harte Research Institute for the Gulf of Mexico, will discuss the local waters and species of the Gulf of Mexico. 3 p.m. in the Auditorium. Free with membership or paid Museum admission.

Youth Activities

Moms & Tots (ages 2-5). \$5-members; \$10-nonmembers. 10 – 11:30 a.m.

- January 26: “Underwater Seascapes”

- February 23: “Sun-Catcher Aquarium”

Kids Club Super Saturday (ages 5 – 12). \$5-members; \$10-nonmembers. 1 – 3 p.m.

- February 4: “Shimmering Sea Collage”

- March 3: “Fabulous Fish Prints”

Free Family Day (all ages). No admission charge. 1 – 3 p.m.

- February 19: “Under the Sea”

Special Programming

- January 21: “It’s A Moray!” (ages 4 – 6). Held in partnership with the Texas State Aquarium. Location: the Texas State Aquarium. For more information, contact 361/653-2620.

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The Art Museum of South Texas has been located on the Corpus Christi Bayfront since 1972. The Art Museum is affiliated with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, and hosts educational programs, youth art classes and traveling exhibits throughout the year. The Museum is operated by the South Texas Institute for the Arts. Program and exhibit information is available on www.artmuseumofsouthtexas.org.