



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

**44th Benefit Art Auction Exhibition
January 8 - February 3, 2016
Exhibition Opening and Artist Reception: January 8, 5-8 PM
Mam's 44th Benefit Art Auction, Saturday, February 6, 5 PM**

Missoula, MT / December 10, 2015 / Missoula Art Museum (MAM) / MAM's 44th Benefit Art Auction and Exhibition features exemplary contemporary art by Montana-based and nationally known artists. MAM is thrilled to return to the University Center Ballroom at UM for a festive night of fun and support for the arts. Think outside the box and dress to the nines for this year's theme, *Out of the Box*. Featured artists include seasoned veterans as well as some new names to the auction roster. Please purchase tickets today to reserve your seat at this sell-out event. Thank you Missoula for your continued support of MAM through this important fundraiser! And thank you to our Presenting Sponsor US Bank and Media Sponsors the *Missoulian* and Missoula Broadcasting Company. To purchase tickets or check your membership status, contact Alison Dillon at Alison@missoulaartmuseum.org or 406.728-0447.

Auction volunteer Libby Addington spoke with Leslie Van Stavern Millar II about her encaustic painting *Sweetbriar Plantation Artifacts*, which is featured in this year's auction:

Addington: *Tell us about this piece, what inspired it?*

LSVM: *It's from a series created for a Cabinet of Curiosities solo show I had at Sweet Briar College in 2014. One year I discovered this unassuming little building on campus — a museum left over from the early part of the school's history... in the process of dismantling all these displays. I spoke with the curator and learned of the school's plans to archive the items and replace them with more modern pieces. I convinced them to pause the archiving work long enough to allow me to take photographs of the objects I had so admired over the years.*

Addington: *Tell us about the specific artifacts we see in the image.*

LSVM: *Sweet Briar was founded in the early 1900s by Indiana Fletcher Williams, whose family owned an 8,000-acre estate and working plantation in Virginia during the Civil War era. Indiana married a northerner and had one child, a daughter named Daisy who died from a rare genetic disorder at the age of 16. Indiana's husband passed a few years later and she went on to bequest her family's land and estate — despite objections from family members — to found a school in Daisy's memory. The Fletcher family artifacts formed the contents of the displays and my painting, things like Daisy's doll, a teacup, a fan, a china set from when the family attended the World's Fair. I feel so lucky to have had an opportunity to focus on the Sweet Briar history in an innovative, intimate way. I love the idea that, over 100 years later, I can connect with the story and retell it visually.*

Contact: For more information, please contact the Missoula Art Museum at 406.728.0447; visit the MAM website at www.missoulaartmuseum.org or contact John Calsbeek, Assistant Curator, johnc@missoulaartmuseum.org, 406.728.0447 x223.

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About MAM: FREE EXPRESSION / FREE ADMISSION. The Missoula Art Museum strives to engage artists and audience in the creative exploration of contemporary art relevant to our community, state and region. Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM showcases diverse and thought-provoking contemporary artwork from local and international artists. Gallery Hours: Tuesday- Saturday, 10 AM - 5 PM. Office hours: Mon-Fri, 9AM-5PM.