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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita hosts “Between the Shadow and the Light: An Exhibit Out of South Africa” international traveling art exhibit through Feb. 23

By Katie Smith

January 30, 2018

For more information, contact OBU’s news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5802.



ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University’s Sutton School of Social Sciences is hosting the final U.S. stop of the international traveling exhibit, “Between the Shadow and the Light: An Exhibit Out of South Africa,” on Ouachita’s campus. It is the largest exhibit to show on Ouachita’s campus to date, spanning Mabee Fine Arts Center’s Hammons Gallery as well as Moses-Provine Hall’s Rosemary Gossett Adams Galleries. The exhibit will be on display through Feb. 23 and is free and open to the public.

“Between the Shadow and the Light” focuses on the history, social movements and current reconciliation efforts of Southern Africa. Dr. Randall Wight, dean of Ouachita’s Sutton School, noted the intertwining purpose of hosting the exhibit as both a social science and fine art experience for students and guests, especially in light of the Sutton School’s newest major, social justice studies, which was established in the fall of 2016.

“Social science studies across place and time the behavior and experience of individuals and peoples – and the narratives they create, the life-ways they embody,” Wight explained. “Art is a mirror of that behavior and experience, a mirror permitting looks into our deepest selves – often looks into interior moments where the light of language shines only ephemerally, if at all. Upon confronting art, many people turn away, unwilling to face the insight art illuminates. Art grants light to see. Social science scholarship works to untangle what we see: looking to the past for understanding, scanning the present for mechanisms and creating lenses to better see the future. Art lights the way.”

In 2013, 20 art educators from American Christian universities and artists from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya met and collaborated together for two weeks in South Africa to plan this exhibit. The art pieces in this show are inspired from these members’ exploration of the culture, history and, for some, their personal experiences of South Africa. As the exhibit’s name suggests, this effort gave the group a contrast of joyous and sorrowful experiences.

The artists grappled with five themes in their art: remembrance, resistance, reconciliation, representation and re-visioning. “Between the Shadow and the Light” keeps these themes in the center of each of its

artworks. Visitors can expect to see pieces commemorating the reconciliations and growth in the country as well as reminders of the pain and struggles still felt today.

The exhibit features art from many mediums. Guests can view installations, sculptures, paintings, prints and more. Pieces exposing the darkest parts of South Africa's history are juxtaposed with the growing light of the country's rebuilding. Although every piece is different and focuses on vastly different subjects, they are all tied together with themes reflective of South Africa's culture.

"Between the Shadow and the Light' is full of thoughtfulness and variety," said Donnie Copeland, chair of Ouachita's Adams Department of Visual Arts. "I enjoy the relationships between disparate pieces such as Keatlaetse Kwati's photographic, documentary piece, *Ties that Bind: The Fabric of Our Being*, and a floor piece such as Jonathan Anderson's *Property Lines*. The two pieces are very different works and deal with different subjects in their own ways, but both rely on line as a key element throughout each of the works."

"The pieces in this exhibit hold up a mirror that reflects the universal injustice buried deep within us," Wight noted. "Tolstoy once observed that everyone thinks of changing the world but no one thinks of changing his or her self. If you can walk away from this collection and not wonder who you are or how you might be a brighter light, then you are not paying attention."

"Between the Shadow and the Light" is the largest exhibit Ouachita has showcased, and pieces were curated for three gallery spaces in order to evoke a different nuance within the overall exhibit.

"I invite our guests to see if they can pinpoint an experience specific to each gallery," Wight said.

"I hope people will take the time to see each of the three galleries – and not be rushed," Copeland added. "There is no need to try to see it all in one trip."

"Between the Shadow and the Light" is located in Ouachita's Mabee Fine Arts Building and Moses-Provine Hall. The exhibit runs through Feb. 23 and is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, contact Dr. Randall Wight at wight@obu.edu or (870) 245-5168.