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Ouachita hosts “Crowded Spaces” art exhibit by Treslyn Shipley Aug. 24-Oct. 3



By Julia Shands

September 2, 2021

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or 870-245-5206

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University’s Rosemary Gossett Adams Department of Art & Design is hosting “Crowded Spaces,” an exhibit by Arlington, Texas, artist Treslyn Shipley through Oct. 3 in the Adams Gallery in Moses-Provine Hall. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

The exhibit features a collection of painted canvases focused on people engaging in social interaction in crowded public spaces. While Shipley said she’s always sought to represent basic human similarities through her work, the COVID-19 pandemic amplified the importance of human interaction. As it led to social distancing and isolation, Shipley was inspired to create a series of what she, and many others, missed the most, crowded spaces.

“I began to paint crowds in earnest just a month before the pandemic began,” she said, “so while my game plan on how I was going to gather photo reference materials needed to change, the subject matter itself became intensified.”

Shipley’s artwork shows candid individuals, capturing scenes and moments of people interacting with one another in everyday life.

“I’ve always loved looking at paintings that include people as the subject matter, as well as creating paintings that focus on people,” said Shipley, who is a 2016 Ouachita graduate. “A few years ago I was in the middle of painting a heavy amount of commissioned pieces, and needed an outlet to paint for myself. The piece ‘A Crowd On Some Steps’ was just that, taking a full year to complete and providing the necessary breath of fresh air in my daily routine.”

“Crowded Spaces” narrates elements of day-to-day life that became rare due to the pandemic, but through her work, Shipley said she hopes that she can help others find their place among the crowd and be reminded of the simple luxuries we once took for granted.

“The paintings served as a reminder to myself and the audience later on of the missing elements in our society – what we were and are sacrificing out of necessity as well as what we are working toward returning to safely together,” Shipley said. “While I hope that the series continues to live on past the pandemic, it will forever hold a special place within myself as a part of my personal pandemic experience.”

Shipley kicked off the exhibit by meeting with current Ouachita students.

“Treslyn shared about her creative ideas and why she made these works, and she also shared about her professional experiences as a working artist and studio art graduate,” said Donnie Copeland, chair of the Adams Department. “I look forward to seeing how these interactions play out in the work of our current students.”



Picture 1 “Some People Sitting” by Treslyn Shipley is part of her “Crowded Spaces” exhibit, on display at Ouachita through Oct. 3.



Picture 2 Katie Simpson (left) and Treslyn Shipley

Shipley recently also provided a permanent piece of art on Ouachita's campus. This summer, she and Katie Simpson, a 2014 graduate, painted a 60-foot mural in Evans Student Center that showcases iconic Ouachita buildings and campus life moments.

Regular gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and 9 a.m. to 12 noon on Fridays. Admission is free. Masks are currently required in Ouachita buildings. See current COVID-19 protocols at obu.edu/coronavirus. The exhibit is part of Ouachita's Arts Engagement program, in which students are exposed to visual, theatre and musical arts throughout the year for academic credit.

Learn more about Ouachita's Adams Department of Art & Design at obu.edu/art-design or contact Donnie Copeland at copelandd@obu.edu or 870-245-5559. Learn more about Treslyn Shipley at www.treslynshipley.com.

PHOTO AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT <https://obu.edu/stories/news/2021/09/treslyn-shipley-exhibit-crowded-spaces.php>.