

# Delta Sources and Resources

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**Bradbury Art Museum:  
Bringing Bold Contemporary Art to  
Northeast Arkansas**  
201 Olympic Drive  
Arkansas State University, Main Campus  
Jonesboro, Arkansas  
by Garry Holstein and Haley Voges

There's no need to leave Northeast Arkansas to see amazing art for free! The Bradbury Art Museum (BAM) is a contemporary art museum housed on the campus of Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Arkansas. BAM is dedicated to working with the public to build a vibrant art scene in this part of the state.

Bradbury Art Museum, formerly known as Bradbury Gallery, was established in January of 2001 by Curt Bradbury who provided an endowment in honor of his wife, Charlotte, an alumna of A-State and a former member of the university's Board of Trustees. In August of 2015 the gallery was reestablished as a museum to better reflect its scope and purpose of teaching, presenting, and collecting.

Bradbury Art Museum features changing exhibitions of contemporary art in all media with programming that promotes the understanding of art and its significance to society. Prominent regional, national and international artists are presented to inform viewers of cultural developments in our community, across the country and around the world. Through these endeavors we invite museum visitors and program participants to meaningfully engage in artistic experiences that are enlightening and educational.

At the core of the Bradbury Art Museum's mission is the effort to engage community members in the creative exploration of a shared cultural dialogue. The Bradbury strategy is to en-



hance quality of life across the Mid-South by leveraging our collection, providing opportunities for artists, and facilitating events and educational programs. Through this practice, BAM acts as a steward of the arts and champions their role in the formulation of a shared sense of place through creative learning and connectivity enhancement strategies.

BAM is dedicated to making art more accessible for Northeast Arkansas residents. In addition to their five rotating galleries, a new educational exhibition space is developing and has been well received by the community. They also often create educational/interactive spaces within exhibitions, providing hands-on activities, reading material, and videos related to the concurrent exhibitions.

Since the initiation of BAM's education program in 2017, outreach has tripled, affecting the lives of thousands of Northeast Arkansas residents and visitors. They serve the region by providing workshops, lectures, tours, and informational resources to their audience. Their



## BRADBURY ART MUSEUM

priority is to provide positive artistic experiences to a wide range of participants who may not otherwise have access. Workshops demonstrate the many artistic principles, materials, and processes available for open-ended creative expression, making art accessible to those with varying skill sets. Inside the museum, BAM's goal is to provide the educational materials and interactive activities necessary to foster art appreciation and interpretation within the culturally expanding community. They aim to ensure inhabitants of this region have the opportunity for meaningful cultural experiences without having to travel.

BAM's educational outreach is unique in providing an extensive program outside museum walls and within the community served. These services include visiting lectures and workshops. Workshops are focused on the cultivation of creative freedom through open-ended projects, breaking free from the often rigid structure of art instruction. Lessons focus on the teaching of art fundamentals as well as the exploration of numerous artistic mediums, giving participants access to as many avenues of artistic expression as possible. Art interpretation is taught alongside art creation to ensure the community has the tools needed to both create works of their own as well as appreciate the work of others.

In addition to the programming they provide outside the museum, many events and workshops are hosted within BAM and BAM Studio. Each exhibition held at BAM has a reception which is open to the public, providing refreshments and prompting engaging social interactions. The exhibiting artists are often able to visit, allowing them to host artist talks for their au-

dience. For the duration of each show, BAM also provides tours during open hours and by appointment. Tours are discussion-guided and encourage a heightened level of engagement with the artwork. Workshops for each exhibition are hosted in BAM Studio, a creative space in which participants use artwork within the museum as inspiration for creations of their own.

One program with high impact is their annual regional high school exhibition, *Inspired*. Invited high school students visit the museum, participate in a tour, and select an inspirational artwork. Students then respond by creating a work of their own using the medium of their choice. Along with the artwork, each submission requires a written statement clarifying the concept of the work they created. The work is then selected by a juror for exhibition. In 2019, over 200 students from the eleven invited counties participated. *Inspired* maintained success in 2020 by adjusting to a partially virtual process. Each year, more families become involved, expanding reach and facilitating BAM's ability to spread our mission. As the program grows, additional students will be given this unique opportunity to gain exposure to the practices of a professional artist.

*LEGENDS: An Exploration of Contemporary Storytelling from Frame to Experience* will be the source material for BAM's 2021 *Inspired* program. This exhibition utilizes comics as a jumping off point for a dialogue about storytelling through contemporary artmaking processes. Featuring both legends in the field as well as popular legends from contemporary culture, *Legends* seeks to explore storytelling and image making as an art form.

Garry Holstein BAM Director says, "The installation aims to attract new first-time museum visitors because it will showcase something we all have experience with, provide insight into how these works are made, and drive a dialogue about their influence. The program provides an amaz-

ing outreach opportunity making art accessible and approachable. Everyone connects with comic book heroes, and this installation will feed outreach to regional schools.” For the installation, BAM is collaborating with Dr. Randy Duncan of Henderson State University who is the Director of The Center for Comics Studies and author of *The Power of Comics*.

Some of the artists that will be in the exhibition include the following:

Trina Robbins is the first female to draw Wonder Woman. Robbins was influential in the underground comix movement and is an iconic figure in the comic book world. She is a member of the Will Eisner Hall of Fame and founded the first all-female comic titled *It Ain't Me Babe Comix*.

*MAD Magazine* fans will recognize the work of Peter Kuper, the current illustrator of “Spy vs. Spy.” Peter Kuper’s work appears regularly in *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, and *MAD*, where he has written and illustrated every issue of “Spy vs. Spy” since 1997. His most recent graphic novels include *Kafkaesque* (winner of the 2018 Rueben award) and an adaptation of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Translations of his work have appeared in Greece, Italy, France, Spain, Slovenia, China, Brazil, Germany and Mexico.

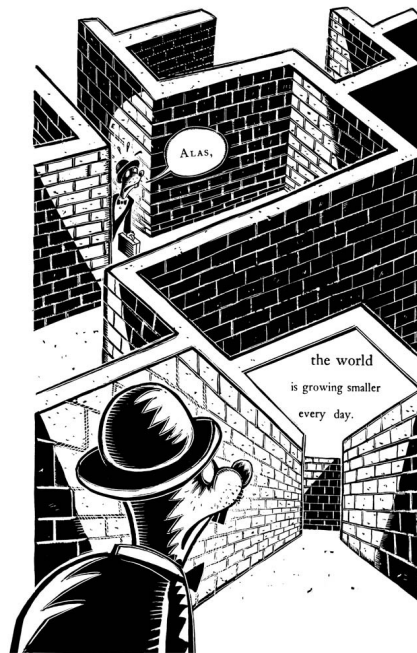
The exhibition will also feature work from multimedia artist JooYoung Choi. Through painting, video, sculpture, animation, music, and installation art, multidisciplinary world builder JooYoung Choi documents the interconnecting narratives of a highly-structured, expansive fictional land called the Cosmic Womb.

Contemporary ceramicist Kevin Snipes is also a part of this exhibition. Snipes has participated in several artist residency programs including the Clay Studio in Philadelphia and Watershed Center for Ceramic Arts in New Castle, Maine and received a Taunt Fellowship from the Archie Bray Foundation in Montana, 2008. He has exhibited works nationally and interna-

tionally, including a recent solo exhibition at the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston; AKAR, Iowa City; and Duane Reed Gallery in St. Louis. Snipes has exhibited as far away as Jingdezhen, China. He combines his love of constructing unconventional pottery with an obsessive need to draw on everything that he produces, creating a uniquely dynamic body of work.

*LEGENDS* runs from September 15th through December 8th 2021.

Bradbury Art Museum is in Fowler Center at 201 Olympic Drive and admission is free. BAM is not open between exhibitions; view their exhibition schedule and open hours at: [BradburyArtMuseum.org](http://BradburyArtMuseum.org).



Peter Kuper  
*Fable 001*, 2005  
silkscreen on paper  
30 x 22 Inches