

# University of Mississippi Museum Hosts Acclaimed Watercolor Exhibit

## 'Visual Abundance: Realism in Watercolor' showcases paintings of Laurin McCracken

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Renowned watercolorist Laurin McCracken is the subject of an exhibition over the coming weeks at the University of Mississippi Museum. The exhibit, 'Visual Abundance: Realism in Watercolor,' runs through Aug. 3. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – Renowned watercolorist and Mississippi native Laurin McCracken will have his award-winning work on display at the **University of Mississippi Museum** beginning Jan. 22.

The exhibit, "Visual Abundance: Realism in Watercolor," will showcase many of McCracken's realistic watercolor paintings that are largely influenced by the Dutch and Flemish still life painters of the 16th and 17th centuries.

"Laurin McCracken is one of the most distinguished and acclaimed American watercolorists of our time, exhibiting both nationally and internationally," said Robert Saarnio, the museum's director. "It's an uncommon opportunity of considerable magnitude for our audiences to have access to work of this technical brilliance, in this medium."

The exhibit will be available through Aug. 3, and McCracken will make appearances on campus Jan. 31 for an opening reception and gallery walkthrough. He also has a planned return trip to Oxford March 20-23 to speak with Ole Miss art students about the business of art and marketing their work, a step-by-step watercolor presentation and an adult studio workshop.

More information will be available at <http://museum.olemiss.edu/> as it becomes available.

"I hope to share with them (the students) some of the ways I've been able to be published, get in galleries and show my work," McCracken said. "I'm very interested in talking with and relating with the art students at the university."

“Hopefully I can bring some things to the table, from a very pragmatic viewpoint, that I can tell them about the art world.”

McCracken said he is excited to visit the university and have his work appreciated.

“I’m delighted and it humbles me at the same time (to have this exhibit),” he said. “To have a solo museum show is every painter’s dream, and I was quite honored to be asked to show in a fine institution like the museum at the university.”

McCracken was born in Meridian and resides in Fort Worth, Texas. In his day job as an architect and head of marketing for large architectural and engineering firms, McCracken was able to travel and draw inspiration from paintings in various art museums around the globe. That inspiration led him to pick up a paintbrush at age 60.

“What I thought was going to be a hobby has turned out to be a pretty fabulous second career,” he said.

McCracken said the art that most captivated him were paintings that brought everyday items into a new light through still-life watercolor.

“Watercolor is a dance that involves the artist, the paint, the brush and the paper,” he said. “The artist must lead in this dance and hope that the very active elements of this medium will participate and enhance the effort. I enjoy the dance.”

In just 16 years of professional painting, McCracken has been published in many magazines and books focused on watercolors. His work has been featured in galleries across the United States and internationally.

“It goes without saying, it’s never too late to indulge your artistic side,” McCracken said. “I never expected at this point in my life, at age 76, I would be flying all over the world to be in exhibitions.

“I think if I were going to give advice to anybody, it’s that at any point in your life, follow your dream.”

McCracken will share that message, along with some tricks of the trade required to make it as a professional artist when he visits campus.

McCracken hopes his work will show artists the range of watercolor and its ability to be used in fine art, but most importantly, he just hopes guests enjoy his paintings.

“I want people to walk out of the gallery with a smile on their face,” he said. “I hope that in my work, they see things that they can relate to, and it has a positive impact on them.”

The opening reception and gallery walkthrough for McCracken’s exhibit will be 5:30-7:30 p.m. Jan. 31 at the UM Museum. Admission to the museum, as well as to the opening reception, is free. Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

The museum is at the intersection of University Avenue and Fifth Street in Oxford. For more information, call 662-915-7073 or visit the museum’s [website](#).



Laurin McCracken’s ‘Silver, Cherries, Pears and Magnolia’ is among the pieces included in ‘Visual Abundance: Realism in Watercolor.’ Submitted photo