

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Louisiana Artist Brings Profound Portraits to the Martin Museum of Art

Contact: Allison Chew, Director, Martin Museum of Art at Baylor University
254-710-4734 | Allison_chew@baylor.edu | Instagram: @MartinMuseumBU

WACO, Texas (November 25, 2024)—Renowned artist Vitus Shell, known for his thought-provoking and visually stunning works, will bring his latest collection to the Martin this winter for a special exhibition of his *Gold Everything Series*.

Shell, who lives and works in Monroe, Louisiana, will showcase eight works in an exhibition titled *400 Degreez*, which will open on December 10, 2024, and run through April 17, 2025. In addition to the exhibition, there will be a public reception and artist talk, providing a unique opportunity to engage with Shell about his work and the themes it explores. His work is geared toward the black experience, giving agency to people from this community through powerful images deconstructing, sampling, and remixing identity, civil rights, and contemporary black culture.



All of the Above, Acrylic, Paper & Foamcut Print on Canvas, 42.5 Diameter, 2022

The portraits that make up this exhibition are visually striking and multifaceted. Layers of collage, paint, stencils, and foam-cut printing techniques are cut up and reconstructed; then, the subject is placed and surrounded by layers of gold leaf. These visual layers demand investigation and create a deep and complex conversation about their subjects and a comparison to historical portraiture and how these subjects fit in, or don't, into that history. Shell turns the viewer's attention to themes of art history, high and low art, black culture, and generational gaps.

“In my work, I strive to bridge the gap between the older and younger generations by exploring and uncovering factors that contributed to the unfortunate relationship breakdown between the two. Moreover, my layered, mixed media paintings examine parallels between present day behaviors and attitudes that date back to African roots. With this work, I continue experimenting with portraiture, acrylic paint, oversized photocopies of early 20th century vintage advertisements and the incorporation of a foam-cut printing technique. My artistic goal is to exude the hip hop lifestyle with a southern vernacular.”

- Vitus Shell



Artist Vitus Shell in the studio.

ABOUT VITUS SHELL

Vitus Shell received a BFA from Memphis College of Art, in 2000 and an MFA from the University of Mississippi, in 2008. Vitus Shell has been in residencies at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Anderson Ranch Art Center, Hermitage Artist Retreat, Mass MoCA, Joan Mitchell Center, Skowhegan School of Art, and Masur Museum of Art. To date, he has accumulated an impressive list of achievements, some of which include: participating in exhibits at universities, museums, and private galleries across the country including The McKenna Museum of African American Art, Stephen F. Austin University, Miami University, Oxford, OH; painted murals for the National Civil Rights Museum's NBA Pioneers exhibit, Indianola City Pool in Indianola, MS, Union Parish Elementary School in Farmerville, LA; created illustrations for South Main Art Festival, Memphis, TN, Southwest Review Journal, Dallas, TX, Dillard Today, New Orleans, LA, Flying Tiger Brewery, Monroe, LA; and commissioned to do public art by the Memphis UrbanArt Commission. Shell has received numerous grants including the Joan Mitchell MFA Award.

Vitus Shell has taught at Grambling State University as an Adjunct Instructor and at Louisiana Tech University as a Visiting Assistant Professor. As of 2024, Vitus Shell is an Assistant Professor at the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

ABOUT MARTIN MUSEUM OF ART AT BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

The Martin Museum of Art (MMoA) is a dynamic resource that enriches appreciation for the visual arts while serving Baylor University, Waco and Central Texas communities and beyond. As a dedicated teaching museum within the Department of Art and Art History, the MMoA provides unique perspectives on art history and contemporary art and practice through innovative exhibitions, direct access to collections, vibrant public programming and captivating public tours, including related hands-on studio-art activities for school groups. As a primary resource for the visual arts, the MMoA is inclusive, reflective and transformative in its mission. It integrates the awareness, understanding and practice of artmaking into the fabric and culture of the students, faculty and staff of Baylor University and our communities abroad. For more information, visit the [Martin Museum of Art website](#).

60 Baylor Avenue
Waco, Texas 76706

Hours of Operation:

Tuesday – Saturday	10am – 5pm
Sunday	1pm – 5 pm

Last guest admitted at 4:30 pm

The Museum is closed on Mondays, during Baylor University holidays, Baylor Football Home Game days, and between exhibitions.

ABOUT BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

Baylor University is a private Christian University and a nationally ranked Research 1 institution. The University provides a vibrant campus community for more than 20,000 students by blending interdisciplinary research with an international reputation for educational excellence and a faculty commitment to teaching and scholarship. Chartered in 1845 by the Republic of Texas through the efforts of Baptist pioneers, Baylor is the oldest continually operating University in Texas. Located in Waco, Baylor welcomes students from all 50 states and more than 100 countries to study a broad range of degrees among its 12 nationally recognized academic divisions.