

BIRD SHOW TO OPEN AT MICHELSON MUSEUM OF ART

“Birds: A Collection of Verse and Vision” featuring the works of Houston attorney and writer Jim Blackburn and Houston artist, Isabelle Scurry Chapman will open at the Michelson Museum of Art beginning July 6th and will be on display until September 26th, according to museum director Susan Spears. The opening reception, sponsored in part by the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Friends of the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge and the Caddo Lake Institute/Ramsar Wetland Center will be held July 8th from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

Jim Blackburn, is a partner in the Blackburn Carter Law Firm in Houston specializing in environmental law and planning. He is the co-founder of Houston Wilderness, the Matagorda Bay Foundation and the Galveston Bay Foundation. A serious writer, who eloquently addresses coastal preservation and sustainable development, considered his poetry to be a form of entertainment until he visited Isabelle Chapman’s art studio, saw her bird creations on the wall and said, “I can write poems to go with those birds”. Thus began an “artistic partnership” of creativity. The poems Blackburn created, allows him to express his spiritual devotion to nature, or what he refers to as “Earth Church” in ways he had only touched upon in prose. His manuscript, The Book of Texas Bays, was published in 2004. The Michelson exhibit is inspired by the book that he co-authored with Chapman, Birds: A Collection of Verse and Vision, published in 2009.

The works of Isabelle Scurry Chapman began as a group of portraits of her favorite coastal birds, but she is including many Caddo Lake birds in the Michelson exhibit. The birds are painted on cigar boxes, chosen because they represent a place to store treasures, and because “they have lovely borders reminiscent of Indian miniature paintings”. Ms. Chapman said, “I use the bird as a symbol of spirit. Birds as spirit are different for each of us...I am honored to work in collaboration of art, poetry, birds and spirit with Jim Blackburn.” Also on display will be bird sculptures by Chapman created primarily from clothes dryer lint, embellished with buttons, lace, wire and anything else that appeals to her. “The sculptures fit into my ethic of recycling, and mix reality and whimsy.

In addition to the exhibit, photographs by birder Tom Walker will be shown and a new poster creation from the Caddo Lake Ramsar Wetland Education Center will be on display. On August 12 at 5 p.m. noted statewide Non-game Ornithologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife, Clifford Shackelford, will present a talk entitled “How to Attract and Identify Backyard Birds”. Ms. Spears said the birding presentation will be a first for the Michelson and hopes that the lecture will encourage more people to become involved with birding activities at Caddo Lake or in their own backyard.

Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge (CLNWR) Manager, Mark Williams, speaking on behalf of the refuge and the Friends of CLNWR, said “we are pleased

to again be partnering with the Michelson Museum of Art to help sponsor another conservation related exhibit. We encourage everyone to visit the show at the Michelson, and then come visit the CLNWR, Caddo Lake Wildlife Management Area and Caddo State Park where over 250 species of birds are known to occur. Many of the bird species being featured in the show can be seen at Caddo Lake. See the show, then see them in their native habitat.”

There is no admission charge to visit the Michelson Museum of Art or the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The Michelson, located at 216 North Bolivar in Marshall, is open Tuesday through Friday from 12 to 5 p.m., and from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The CLNWR and Ramsar Wetland Education Center, located at 15600 Highway 134 in Karnack, Texas, is open from sun up to sun set seven days a week. For additional information visit www.caddofriends.org or www.caddolakeinstitute.us.