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Elmhurst Art Museum takes on John Coltrane's 'Love Supreme'



Artist Norman Teague was inspired by John Coltrane's album "A Love Supreme" to create an installation of the same name at the Elmhurst Art Museum. (Siegfried Mueller Photography/HANDOUT)

Legendary jazz musician John Coltrane's album, "A Love Supreme," inspired artist Norman Teague's installation of the same name, presented Jan. 20-April 28 at the Elmhurst Art Museum.

The exhibit is paired with "A Love Supreme: McCormick House Reimagined," an installation featuring works by 35 BIPOC artists in the adjoining Mies van der Rohe house.

The McCormick House exhibit is co-curated by Teague and Rose Camara, a Charles Hummel Curatorial Fellow at The Chipstone Foundation. Hours are noon-5 p.m. Wednesdays-Thursdays and 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Fridays-Sundays.



Thirty-five BIPOC artists have pieces in the installation “A Love Supreme: McCormick House Reimagined” in the Mies van der Rohe house, as a companion to Norman Teague’s installation “A Love Supreme” at the Elmhurst Art Museum. (Siegfried Mueller Photography/HANDOUT)

Teague said that Coltrane’s music inspires him because of “the calming, it’s the melody, it’s the whimsicalness. As much as I love John Coltrane, I have a love for the rest of the band. There’s a community vibe that comes with listening to jazz music.”

The artist said that he began seriously planning the installation in November but he noted, “I’ve been dreaming of a show like this for years.” That includes the related “McCormick House Reimagined” installation, which he envisions as part of a traveling exhibit.

“It’s like putting a band on the road and showing off a number of amazing works by artists and increasing that number of artists as it travels,” Teague said.

Teague’s installation features around 20 pieces in four galleries, some new pieces created for the installation as well as existing works. It includes sculptures in porcelain, ash wood from Chicago, African mahogany, and poplar. It features a wide range of techniques, including mixed media pieces cast from used instruments as well as designed objects and sculptures.

In terms of the McCormick House exhibit, Teague started with a list of 100 artists from which he chose 35 to participate.

“I thought about age, I thought about the type of work that they do with the idea of furnishing a house,” Teague said. “There was some thoughts around domesticity but also with jazz being a part of that there was also a lot of musical influences. These are the people I know really well or people I want to get to know well. I appreciate their work.”

There were no requirements for the work submitted by chosen artists. “I did not want them to make anything new,” Teague explained. “I was very happy with what they were already doing.”

The artists chose the piece they wanted to submit. The only requirement was that they include a song with their artwork.

He asked each of them, “What is your background music when you’re in your studio and you’re alone in contemplation or you’re alone and working that clay, working that piece of wood, or you’re on that painting?,” Teague related.

Pieces by the BIPOC artists include furniture, ceramics, paintings, photographs, and more.

“This is my first time curating an exhibition and it has been a really fun process,” Camara said. “The Chipstone Foundation really values opportunities for collaboration.”

Since Teague had already come up with the concept of the installation at McCormick House, Camara’s function was to create the written parts of the exhibit.

“When you walk into the exhibition instead of having museum text and labels on the wall, we wanted the exhibition to have a more domestic feel,” Camara said. “Guests will be given the opportunity to look at a handout and the handout has all the curatorial content in it.”

That includes a statement of what the show is about and each artist’s statement about their work.

Camara also worked with Teague to figure out the layout of the installation based on images of the work.

“I think that the McCormick House is a complement to Norman’s exhibition because not only does the house go into musical influences of some of these artists but it also goes into larger themes of how movement influenced artists’ work, speaking specifically of migration, immigration, the physical movement of an artist’s hands.”

‘A Love Supreme’ and ‘A Love Supreme: McCormick House Reimagined’

When: Jan. 20-April 28

Where: Elmhurst Art Museum, 150 S. Cottage Hill Ave., Elmhurst

Tickets: \$18 adults, \$15 seniors, \$10 students 18 and over, \$5 ages 5-17

Information: 630-834-0202; elmhurstartmuseum.org

Myrna Petlicki is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.