



City of Slidell

Dept. of Cultural & Public Affairs Press Release for Immediate Release
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August 7, 2007

Where Are They Now?

The City of Slidell's Department of Cultural & Public Affairs is answering the question *Where Are They Now?* with the opening of its new curated art exhibit of the same name.

Where Are They Now? premieres on Friday, August 17, with an opening reception from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Slidell Cultural Center. Admission is free.

This unique exhibit features the works of former St. Tammany Parish students who have gone on to pursue a career in the arts. "It's one of the most unique exhibits we've ever offered," said Kim Bergeron, Director of the Department of Cultural and Public Affairs. "We want to illustrate the many career options that are available through the arts, and hopefully inspire the next generation of art enthusiasts."

So, *Where Are They Now?* One is an animator at Dreamworks. Another conducts symphonies and operas and performs around the world. There is also a rising country music star, a computer video game animator and a local chef who has cooked for celebrities and politicians. There are teachers and students, photographers and designers, gallery owners, a jewelry maker, movie prop artist, reporter, author and even a luthier (maker of stringed instruments).



Shrek & Marty Sixkiller

These artists live around the country and perform around the world, and their work will all be featured in this exhibit.

The *Where Are They Now?* opening reception will feature live performances from country singer Jenny Brooks and saxophonist Brina Bourliea, starting at 7:30 p.m.

The exhibit will remain open until Saturday, September 8. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Slidell Cultural Center is located at 1827 Front Street, temporarily operating in the Slidell Art League Gallery, on the second floor of the historic train depot.

The idea for *Where Are They Now?* sprung from Bergeron's mind. "We have seen so many talented student artists over the





Paul Mauffray

years who have displayed their work in our annual Salad Days exhibit, and I've wondered where they are and what kind of work they are doing. That curiosity sparked the idea for the exhibit."

The city sent out a call for artists and asked for the assistance of parents and art teachers, many of whom have kept in contact with their former students, to help spread the word. "The response was amazing," said Bergeron. "We had parents asking how their children could submit their work, and the response from the art teachers was astounding."

Part of the exhibit will focus on the bond between student and teachers, as each artist has named the people who have inspired them throughout their artistic careers.

The response was so outstanding, the exhibit will now feature the works of 30 former St. Tammany Parish Students.

So, *Where Are They Now?*

Marty Sixkiller, a graduate of Salmen High School, is now an animator for PDI/DreamWorks Animation. He served as a Post Technology Engineer for Shrek the Third and has also worked on the hit films *Antz*, *Shrek*, *Shrek 2*, *Madagascar*, *Flushed Away* and *Over the Hedge*.

Jenny Brooks graduated from Slidell High and is a rising country music star. She has performed at numerous venues, including the Superbowl XXIV Halftime Show and the CMA Music Festival. Her original song, *Baby Footprints in the Sand*, can be heard on over 150 independent country music stations worldwide.

Paul Mauffray, a graduate of Slidell High School, is now a freelance conductor of opera. He lives in Brno in the Czech Republic and conducts operas and symphonies throughout Europe.

Darren Bagert is a two-time Tony Award winner who attended Pearl River High and the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts. He is a Broadway Producer in New York City who has worked on numerous plays, including the Tony Award winning plays *Company* and *Sweeney Todd*.

John Besh, a graduate from Pope John Paul II High School, is an award winning executive chef and owner of August, Luke, Besh Steak and La Provence restaurants.

Mark Brennan graduated from Slidell High and is now a saucier at La Provence restaurant in Lacombe. He has cooked for country singer Willie Nelson, former president George Bush, Sr. and numerous other politicians.



Kiran Chawla

Kiran Chawla, a graduate of Northshore High School, is now a reporter for WVLA-TV in Baton Rouge and has interviewed presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama.

Kenneth Decker, Jr., graduated from Slidell High and is now the owner of Composite Effects, a company that specializes in movie props, makeup effects, animatronics, mold making, sculpting and

more. You can see his work in the recent film *The Reaping* and in the upcoming movie, *Harold and Kumar 2*.

Matthew Szydlik, a former Salad Days winning artist and graduate of Slidell High, graduated from the Ringling School of Art and Design. His senior thesis, *Bushido*, won the 2005 Independent Film Festival Award in animation. He is currently employed as an associate character modeler at Electronic Arts and has worked on the *Madden '06*, *'07* and *'08* and the *NCAA '06* and *'07* football videogames.

Slidell native Blake Boyd will also be exhibiting *Hard Luck Woman No.2*, a piece from his unique exhibit, *Romantica: A New Hope*.

And these are only a few of the artists who are participating. Also featured in this exhibit:

Nancy Boyer, a graduate of Slidell High, is now an art teacher and instructor in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Lauren Carter, a Northshore High School alum, recently graduated from Louisiana State University with a bachelor of interior design.

Darby Clarke, a former Salad Days blue ribbon winner and a graduate of Salmen High, now works as an intern architect.

Charlotte Lowry Collins graduated from Slidell High and now lives in Acworth Georgia. She is an associate professor of art at Kennesaw University and is a published author who is currently writing a novel about Bayou Liberty, named *Rooted in Liberté*.

Marti DuBuisson, a graduate of Salmen High, is now a designer in Dallas who works on interior design for corporate and broadcast facilities.



**“Untitled”
Marti DuBuisson**

Sarah Dunn, a graduate of St. Scholastica, is now the artist, owner and manager of the Sarah Dunn Art Gallery in Covington.

Russell Garehan, a Northshore High graduate, attends LSU and is majoring in mechanical engineering. He also works as a luthier, making and designing guitars for his own company, Garehan Guitars.

Amy Guidry of Lafayette graduated from Northshore High and works as a jewelry designer and painter.

April Hammock, a Northshore High graduate, is now a talented visual arts instructor at Baton Rouge Magnet High School.

Mia Kaplan is now an artist who works at the Jonathan Ferrara Gallery in New Orleans. She recently curated the cutting edge exhibit, *Ad Lib: Americana*.



**“Mike”
Amy Guidry**



**“Self Portrait”
Nicholas Leblanc**

Jonathan Larson, a graduate of Pope John Paul II High School, now works as an architect in Birmingham, AL. Stephan Larson from Marquette, MI, graduated from Pope John Paul II and is now an associate professor of art and design. His work has been shown in over 150 exhibitions throughout the world including the ACM SIGGRAPH Electronic Theater, Anima Mundi, and Prix Ars Electronica.

Nicholas Leblanc, a Pope John Paul II graduate and an award winning *Salad Days* artist whose works have appeared in the *Times-Picayune* and other local publications, is now majoring in studio art at LSU, and plans to concentrate in graphic design.

Shannon Lista attended Northshore High and graduated from Brigham Young University. She now works as a freelance photographer in Mesa, AZ.

Lacie Lovelace, a graduate of Northshore High School, is a former *Salad Days* winner and will soon graduate from LSU with a bachelor of fine arts.

Edward Schexnayder, a Slidell High graduate, now works as an artist in Brooklyn, NY. He is attending the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and has been accepted into the Whitney Museum of American Art’s Independent Study Program.

Tracy Wascom from Marquette, MI, graduated from Pope John Paul II and juggles four different jobs; marketing coordinator for Upfront & Company, adjunct instructor for the School of Art & Design at Northern Michigan University, freelance graphic designer and working artist.

In conjunction with the *Where Are They Now?* exhibit, Marty Sixkiller will present *The Art, Science and Math of Shrek*, a sneak peek into the creation of the *Shrek* movies. The audience will be given a rare glimpse of pre-production artwork, production designs, animation tests, and a description of the animation process on a full-scale animated film. The *Shrek* presentation will be held on Thursday, August 16, at 7 p.m. in the Slidell Municipal Auditorium. Admission is free and the doors will open at 6:30 p.m.

These events are made possible through the generosity of our 2007–2008 cultural sponsors and are also supported in part by funds from the Louisiana State Arts Council and the Louisiana Division of the Arts as administered by the St. Tammany Arts Commission/ Department of Cultural and Governmental Affairs, St. Tammany Parish.

For more information, please visit the city’s website at www.slidell.la.us or call the Department of Cultural & Public Affairs at (985) 646-4375.



**“Cherry Jubilee”
Sarah Dunn**