

The Detroit News

ARTS

Scott Hocking leads trio of Detroit artists in new Cranbrook exhibit

Erica Hobbs

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Detroit's arts scene will be in the spotlight beginning Saturday with a series of exhibitions of powerful displays that include larger-than-life-sculptures, vibrant mixed-media paintings and hyper-realistic still lifes.

The Cranbrook Art Museum is showcasing some of Detroit's best artists, led by a retrospective of work by sculptor and photographer Scott Hocking. Joined by painters James Benjamin Franklin and Bakpak Durden, the exhibit shares the works of local artists at varying stages of their careers.

Andrew Satake Blauvelt, director of Cranbrook Art Museum, said the artists reflect the richness of Detroit's artistic scene with perspectives that range from witnessing first-hand changes of the city over decades, to a southern California transplant bringing an outside perspective, to a self-taught artist who was born and raised in Detroit.



“Each artist’s approach to art and their individual backgrounds is utterly unique and that reflects the diversity of the city’s art scene: there’s no single ‘Detroit’ look, there are only multitudes,” he said.

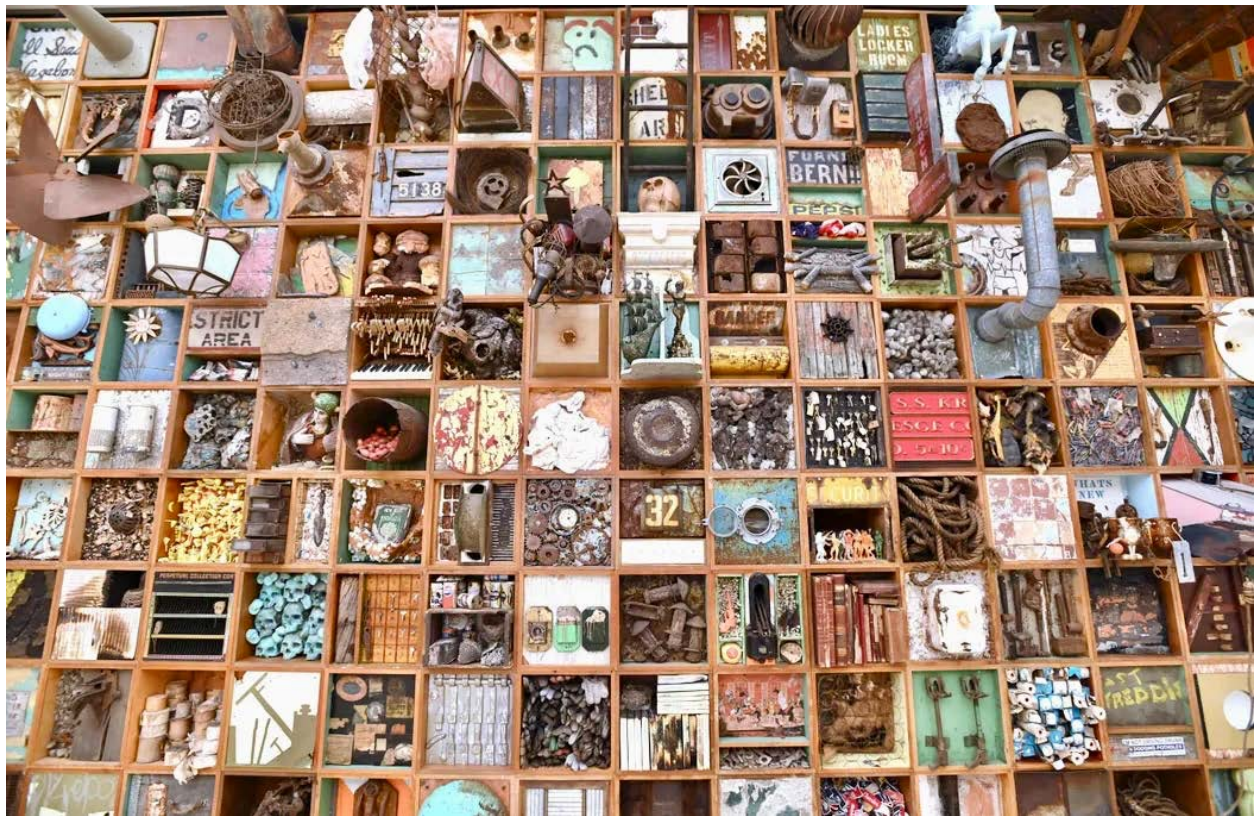
The centerpiece of the exhibition is “Scott Hocking: Detroit Stories,” representing 25 years of the artist’s work that document the city’s history and change. Hocking is known for his sculptures made from repurposed existing materials and found objects, many from Detroit’s abandoned buildings and built on site, which are now presented in photos.

His most famous sculptures include a giant egg inside Michigan Central Station made from hundreds of pieces of slab marble debris from inside the building and a massive ziggurat structure built inside the Fisher Body Plant created from thousands of wooden floor blocks. Another project involved collecting a

series of abandoned boats found throughout Detroit and hanging them for an arrangement inside an abandoned building.

“Scott’s work is really about post-industrial Detroit, that’s why a lot of that has been changing...,” Blauvelt said. “The Detroit of 1999 is not the Detroit of 2022, a lot of this ends up being an archive of the history of the city, which we find really interesting.”

One of Hocking’s most dramatic works is RELICS, a series of 18-inch square wooden boxes featuring found objects throughout Detroit. Started in 2001 in collaboration with Clint Snyder, the project has evolved over the years, documenting Detroit’s history. The latest version of the installation at Cranbrook features 200 boxes that cover an entire wall, filling the space with abandoned signs, toys, keys, tools, tiles, bottles, pipes and more in neat rows.



“It’s a future artifact installation,” Hocking said. “It’s kind of playing with the idea of, ‘What are our artifacts?’ ‘What are the artifacts we produce now?’ ‘How will we be perceived in the future?’ ‘How do we perceive people in the past?’ It’s kind of juxtaposing all those thoughts.”

For the exhibition overall, Hocking said he’s happy to be recognized and to show his work with Franklin and Durden.

“The work looks wonderful in the exhibition,” he said. “I just think it’s a really well-curated show.”



'Scott Hocking: Detroit Stories'

39221 Woodward, Bloomfield Hills

Cranbrook Art Museum

Saturday-March 19, 2023

More information: Visit www.cranbrookartmuseum.org

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