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Del Mar College celebrating CAIN National Art Show's 60th anniversary, holding opening reception on Friday, Feb. 13

Guest juror and Brooklyn artist Tabitha Whitley giving "Art Talk" previous day in Richardson Performance Hall

Del Mar College's (DMC) Cain Gallery not only pays tribute to the late Joseph A. Cain, the facility also keeps his vision alive. Cain, who served as Chair of the Art Department from the mid-1960s until his passing in 1980, dreamed of a juried art show that would annually attract some of the best contemporary artwork created by local artists as well as those from across the state and country.

Now celebrating 60 years of his vision, the Art Program with the DMC Art and Drama Department will **commemorate his vision with an opening reception for the 2026 CAIN National Art Show on Friday, Feb. 13.** This year's guest juror is Brooklyn artist Tabitha Whitley, who will also provide a free **Art Talk on Thursday, Feb. 12, at 11 a.m. in Richardson Performance Hall** while she's visiting Corpus Christi.

"We are so honored to have Tabitha Whitley as our juror as the college and Art Program celebrate this milestone year," said Elena Rodriguez, Assistant Professor of Art and Gallery Coordinator. "Her selections show a wide range of materials, subjects and viewpoints that definitely make this year's show one you need to see."

The free reception is scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. in Cain Gallery and features the 55 pieces selected by Whitley. The event also includes complimentary catered hors d'oeuvres from Citrus Bistro and a cash bar. Additionally, the Art Program purchases artwork for its Permanent Collection each year, and those winners will be announced during the event. The reception is supported by an anonymous donor, Del Mar College's Art faculty and the City of Corpus Christi Arts & Cultural Commission.

The CAIN National Art Show runs weekdays Feb. 16 through April 17 with free public viewing Mondays through Thursdays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 9 a.m. to noon Fridays, except during DMC's Spring Break closing March 9-14.

The Fine Arts Center (Joseph A. Cain Memorial Art Gallery) and Richardson Performance Hall are on the DMC Heritage Campus located at 101 Baldwin Blvd. (78404). [Get online directions and campus map.](#) Questions can be directed to the DMC Art Program at 361-698-1216 or art@delmar.edu.

This year's CAIN National Art Show attracted 985 entries with 55 selected for exhibition, including 25 sculptures and 30 two-dimensional artworks from artists representing 18 states.

"As an artist, I have spent much of my career on the applicant side of art competitions, so I understand how meaningful an opportunity like this can be," said Whitley, noting she was honored to serve as this year's guest juror. "With that in mind, I gave careful consideration to each of the nearly 1,000 works submitted."

Whitley noted that while reviewing entries, she "sought works that were not only visually compelling but also grounded in a well-developed concept, and I was particularly drawn to pieces that told human stories."

"The selected works move between figuration and abstraction and are rooted in narratives of family, place, home, love and grief," she said, adding: "I was also drawn to works that embraced playfulness and humor, believing that seriousness of intent can coexist with joy."

Whitley's own work delves into themes of identity, heritage and our interconnectedness with nature. Her pieces have been widely exhibited with notable shows, including a prestigious group show at the Brooklyn Museum — *Brooklyn Artist Exhibition* — and a solo show at Gracie Mansion — *From Roots to Radiance: Embracing Her Soft Era*. Whitley's art has also garnered attention in esteemed publications such as *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Guardian*.

Currently residing in her native Brooklyn, New York, Whitley continues to pursue her studio practice, creating art that reflects her deep engagement with personal and universal themes.

She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Painting from the Fashion Institute of Technology in 2009 followed by her Master in Fine Arts degree in the same medium from the New York Academy of Art in 2011, where she also served as the President of the Alumni Association and on the academy's Board of Trustees. Learn more about the artist and her work by visiting her website at www.tabithawhitley.com/.

Regarding her final thoughts about the CAIN National Art Show, Whitley said, "As the accepted works came together, a cohesive exhibition began to emerge; and while the show was not required to have a unifying theme, I found reflections of my own story within it."

"As a native New Yorker born and raised in Brooklyn, I grew up immersed in a rich mix of cultures, languages and identities, so the diverse group of artists, [who represent] a wide range of cultural backgrounds and gender identities, reflects the communities that shaped me as both an artist and a person," she said, noting: "This exhibition mirrors the inclusivity I hope to see more widely embraced within the art world."

Visit the Cain Gallery web page at delmar.edu/offices/art/gallery.html.

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