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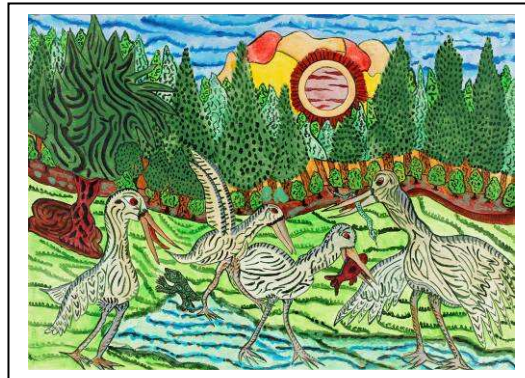
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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Renee' L. Bourgeois, Events Coordinator / PR
(225) 389-7206; renee@lsu.edu

WILLIAM BEECHER: A FANTASTIC VISION

THE LSU MUSEUM OF ART
OPENING MARCH 11, 2006



BATON ROUGE, La.—The LSU Museum of Art in the Shaw Center for the Arts is presenting *William Beecher: A Fantastic Vision*. The exhibition opens at LSU MOA on Saturday, March 11, 2006, and is organized by the LSU Museum of Art. *William Beecher: A Fantastic Vision* features 173 intricately and colorfully rendered paintings – a fraction of more than 600 works Beecher completed within the last five years of his life at the Villa Feliciana Medical Complex in Jackson, Louisiana.

The first major exhibition of works by this remarkable self-taught artist, *William Beecher: A Fantastic Vision*, presents a relatively unknown, yet highly accomplished artist whose work belongs to a subset of outsider art known as psychotic or schizophrenic art. Bold, bright, and packed with images, his engaging compositions are untouched by formal training.

Like Beecher, self-taught artists frequently emerge from quiet corners in our own back yards. Lamentably, their life's work, or large portions of it, often slips easily into oblivion after their death. The exhibition of Beecher's work, owned entirely by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, places the Baton Rouge community at the forefront of presenting an artist whose work is certain to be ranked among the best of its kind.

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Speaker Programs:

Outsider Art and William Beecher's Fantastic Vision, Saturday, March 25, 2:00 p.m. LSU MOA Paula Garvey Manship Floor, Shaw Center for the Arts. Free with museum admission. Darius A Spieth, assistant professor of art history at LSU. What is outsider art? Why is William Beecher considered an outsider artist? Why is William Beecher's art important to the art world? Dr. Spieth will answer these questions and more as he introduces museum visitors to this sometimes confusing, but always interesting, segment of art history.

Art Therapy and Mental Illness, Saturday, April 22, 2:00 p.m. LSU MOA Paula Garvey Manship Floor, Shaw Center for the Arts. Free with museum admission. Anne Bigger, art therapist and assistant professor in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts at Southern University. Dr. Bigger will provide insight into artwork created by those who, like Beecher, suffer from schizophrenia.

The Ins and Outs of Collecting Outsider Art, Saturday, May 20, 2:00 p.m. LSU MOA Paula Garvey Manship Floor, Shaw Center for the Arts. Free with museum admission. Shelby R. Gilley, owner of Gilley's Gallery and author of *Painting by Heart: The Life and Art of Clementine Hunter, Louisiana Folk Artist*. What are the benefits of collecting outsider art? Is outsider art a good investment? Gallery owner and outsider art collector, Shelby Gilley, will answer these questions and more.

Goin' to Jackson, (Date and times to be determined) Manship Theatre, Shaw Center for the Arts. Baton Rouge native Jamie Wax's laugh-packed one-man show, *Goin' to Jackson*. Wax switches from one memorable character to another, all patients at East Louisiana State Mental Hospital in Jackson, as they vie for the title "Louisiana Mental Hospital Spokesperson."

The LSU Museum of Art thanks The Highlands Bank for generously supporting the exhibition.

The new LSU Museum of Art (LSU MOA) in the Shaw Center for the Arts is Baton Rouge's premier art museum. Located in downtown Baton Rouge overlooking the Mississippi River, it presents rotating, historical, and contemporary exhibitions. Selections from the permanent collection are always on display. The collection includes 17th- through 20th-century American and British portraiture, landscape painting, prints, and decorative arts; pre-Civil War New Orleans silver; historical art from India, Japan, and South America; and contemporary Inuit sculpture.

General Admission to the museum: Adults - \$8; Seniors (65+), students, and LSU faculty/staff (with I.D.) - \$6; Children 5 to 17 - \$4. Children under 5 are admitted free.