



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART TO REOPEN TUESDAY, OCT 23

AMA Takes Cautious Approach with Artwork After Power Interruption from Hurricane

[For Release Oct 15, 2018 – Albany, GA] — The Albany Museum of Art will reopen Tuesday, Oct 23, 2018. The museum lost power and sustained minor damage when Hurricane Michael roared through Southwest Georgia late on Wednesday, Oct 10.

The museum's *Autumn Reception* will take place as planned 5-7 pm on Thursday, Oct 25. The second AMA Contemporaries event, *What the Funk!*, which also had been planned for Oct 25 has been postponed. A new date will be announced soon.

Albany Museum of Art Executive Director Paula Williams said the good news is there was no severe damage to the museum from Hurricane Michael. The first Category 4 hurricane to strike the Florida Panhandle killed at least 18 people, devastated businesses and residences, blocked roadways, and shut off power to hundreds of thousands along its wide path. Most Albany residents and businesses lost power around 6 pm Wednesday.

"We've been through this before," Williams said. "We knew how to prepare, and we knew how to respond."

"I am so proud of the staff for making sure we were covered and for being here after the storm to make sure everything was being handled responsibly."

When the high winds of Jan 2, 2017—the first of the "twin storms" that rocked Albany and Southwest Georgia that month—struck the AMA, the 90 mph straight-line winds breached the roof and forced the museum to close for nearly nine months while repairs were made. The three downstairs galleries were reopened Aug 24, 2018 and have been exhibiting on a full schedule since then.

The AMA's permanent collection, however, has been stored at secure off-site locations since the 2017 storm, so none of those pieces was at risk when Hurricane Michael struck. This time, the museum sustained some minor water damage, but the biggest concern was the loss of power. Without electricity, the museum was unable to control climate factors like humidity.

Two shows were open when Michael hit—*Educators as Artists: Juried College Faculty Exhibition* in the East Gallery and *Georgia Artists Guild of Albany 25th annual Juried Competition* in the West Gallery. An exhibition that was set to open Thursday, Oct 18, 2018, *Home Tour: Artists Investigating Interiors, Domesticity and Identity*, was in the process of preparation for that opening in the Haley Gallery. The works for *Home Tour* had been installed.

"We erred on the side of caution with all of the works that were in the galleries," Williams said. "Because there was no major damage to the building, we feel confident that we will be able to bring back to the museum the works that were evacuated because of humidity issues and we will be able to reopen Tuesday, October 23."

While the lack of phone and internet service on Thursday in Albany and Southwest Georgia caused some delay, Williams contacted The Conservation Center in Chicago, IL, which sent a disaster response team led by Paul Kirk, its director of transportation & installation. They arrived Friday and completed their work Saturday.

The Conservation Center is the nation's largest and most comprehensive private art conservation lab. Its disaster response team provides expert rescue services across the nation and has extensive experience assisting with fires, floods and natural disasters of all scales.

Kirk brought a team to the AMA immediately after the January 2017 storm. He said Michael was nowhere near as destructive to the art museum as those unnamed 2017 winds and rain were.

"This, thankfully, is a whole different operation for everybody here," Kirk said Saturday afternoon. "Things are in much better condition, as well as the building itself, which is in much better condition."

Fortunately, power was restored to the AMA on Saturday. The damage that Michael did to the state's power grid was overwhelming, knocking off electricity to more than 750,000 households and customers in the Georgia alone. Thousands were still without power on Sunday.

"We're doing two things," Kirk said. "There are some pieces that have had some damage, and then we're doing some preventative deinstallation just to make sure there's no further damage. The good news is the power's back on."

With the return of air conditioning, Kirk said humidity issues were quickly improving,

"Right now the humidity is pretty stable here in the gallery," he said, adding that he and Williams were checking with the city to make sure the power "is going to hold."

"There are some pieces here that we're not concerned about humidity damage," he said. "The things we are concerned with are paper, obviously because of the humidity, and some of the wood pieces. But things seem pretty stable."

Kirk said there was some minor damage to art pieces on paper, particularly three pieces in the *Home Tour* show. Some pieces from the show and some pieces in the AMA vault have been moved to a climate-controlled secure site as a precaution. Kirk said they will be brought back to the AMA when its climate control stabilizes.

Williams said she expects the museum's climate control to be back to normal well before the reopening.

The Albany Museum of Art, located in Albany, Georgia, adjacent to Albany State University West Campus just off Gillionville Road is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Albany Museum of Art is open 10 am through 5 pm Tuesday through Friday and noon until 5 pm on Saturday. Admission is free.

For more information about the AMA please visit our website, www.albanymuseum.com or call 229.439.8400.

CAPTION INFORMATION:

PHOTO 1: From left, Director of Transportation & Installation Paul Kirk, Sean Roach and Jesus Mejia, all with The Conservation Center, prepare one of the pieces from the Albany Museum of Art's upcoming *Home Tour* exhibition for temporary relocation pending the museum's reopening. The AMA sustained minor damage from Hurricane Michael, but loss of power caused humidity concerns for some of the artwork. The AMA will reopen Tuesday, Oct 23. (Photo: Jim Hendricks/Albany Museum of Art)

PHOTO 2: Amanda Maddern with The Conservation Center works with one of the pieces from the Albany Museum of Art's upcoming exhibition *Home Tour* for relocation. The AMA sustained minor damage from Hurricane Michael, but loss of power caused humidity concerns for some of the artwork. The AMA will reopen Tuesday, Oct 23. (Photo: Jim Hendricks/Albany Museum of Art)

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