



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jim Hendricks  
Director of Marketing & Public Relations  
229.439.8400  
[jim.hendricks@albanymuseum.com](mailto:jim.hendricks@albanymuseum.com)

### **UNIVERSITY MOCK TRIAL EXAMINED IN ART INSTALLATION *MIDLANDS***

Courtney McClellan Installation Is on View at the Albany Museum of Art

**[For Release Dec 10, 2020 – Albany, GA]** — *Midlands*, a multimedia installation by artist and writer Courtney McClellan, is the culmination of a three-year project that intersects art and performance with academic pursuits in the field of law. It is on view now in the East Gallery of the Albany Museum of Art.

*Midlands* opened Nov 3 and continues through Feb 20, 2021. The AMA is open to the public 10 am-5 pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and 10 am-7 pm on Thursdays. Admission is always free.

In creating the installation, McClellan first investigated and examined the structure of the UGA Mock Trial in which students acted as attorneys, jury and judges to work out complex legal problems in a fictional location called Midlands.

"This is an exploration in the theatricality and performative space of a courtroom setting," AMA Guest Curator Didi Dunphy said. "She worked with the University of Georgia in the sculpture area at the Lamar Dodd School of Art to examine how mock trials are held in this type of environment, looking at how our justice system is identified and propelled into this type of physical setting.

"This is a fictional land in which students—budding attorneys, defense and prosecution—trial out different issues of the law. The show has several photographs of interior courtroom areas, as well as a three-monitor video exploration into the idea of Midlands."

McClellan, of Atlanta, says she is interested in "professionals who write and perform unstable truths."

"By this, I mean that I study people who act as gatekeepers in an age when truth is pluralistic, difficult to define, and/or nonexistent," the artist said. "Particularly today, these professionals are tasked with the impossible, but the necessary.

"I collaborate with attorneys, journalists, court reporters, law students and teachers in order to explore how they're important but fallible actions offer grave, complex, transformative outcomes."

Her research on the performance of rhetoric in institutional space led McClellan to study the university's mock trial team, which is nationally ranked.

The artwork from her study exists "at the intersection of media," she said, adding they are "translations between people and media. Through collaboration, research, and intermedia practice, I produce hybrids: performing objects, objectified text, and performative writing that I exhibit through scripted actions, sculptures, installations, and occasionally essays."

*Midlands* was delayed from its planned Spring 2020 at the AMA because of the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown.

McClellan, originally from Greensboro, N.C., has a B.A. in studio art and journalism and mass communications from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an M.F.A. from Tufts University and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. A Fountainhead Fellow in the Sculpture and Extended Media Department at Virginia Commonwealth University, she was the Sculpture Fellow at UGA in 2015-17 and a Museum of Fine Arts Boston Traveling Fellow in 2017-18.

Awarded the 2019-20 Roman J. Witt Residency at the University of Michigan, she will create Witness Lab, an interdisciplinary, collaborative project with Stamps School of Art students and faculty. She also is a 2019-20 Working Artist Project Fellow at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia. Her work will be included in Atlanta Biennial 2021, curated by Jordan Amerikani, at the Atlanta Contemporary in Atlanta. Recently, she was named the 2021 Innovator-in-Residence at the Library of Congress.

One of the reasons that visitors are able to view *Midlands* and the AMA's other exhibitions—*On the Wall*, *Escape Plan* and the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Georgia Artists Guild of Albany juried show—with free admission is the generous support of AMA members. The museum is in the final days of its **#FallinLoveWithArt** membership drive. Members get great benefits, including discounts on classes and camps, and they can schedule private tours of AMA exhibitions on Mondays. You can get information on how to become a member and help create a stronger community through art at [www.albanymuseum.com/join](http://www.albanymuseum.com/join).

## CURRENT AMA EXHIBITIONS

- *On the Wall*: murals by David Hale, Shanequa Gay, Amanda Jane Burk and Chris Johnson, and paintings by Sarah Emerson, is in the Haley Gallery through Feb 20, 2021.
- *Midlands*, works by Courtney McClellan, is in the East Gallery through Feb 20, 2021.
- *Escape Plan*, works by Elinor Saragoussi, is in the West Gallery through Feb 20, 2021.
- *Georgia Artists Guild of Albany 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition* is in the McCormack Gallery.

## ABOUT THE ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

The Albany Museum of Art is located at 311 Meadowlark Drive in Albany, Ga., adjacent to Albany State University West Campus just off Gillionville Road. The museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Albany Museum of Art is open to the public 10 am-5 pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and 10 am-7 pm Thursdays. Admission is free.

For more information about the AMA please visit our website, [www.albanymuseum.com](http://www.albanymuseum.com) or call 229.439.8400. Be sure to follow the @AlbanyArtMuseum on Twitter, AlbanyMuseum on Instagram and AlbanyMuseumOfArt on Facebook.

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