



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART



*Horse Power*, an exhibition of paintings as Macon artist Cedric Smith, opens Saturday, July 10 in the East Gallery of the Albany Museum of Art. (Photo: Albany Museum of Art/Jim Hendricks)



*Essay Topic: Write Down the Word WOMAN One Hundred Times!*, an exhibition of new works by Athens artist Sanaz Haghani, opens Saturday, July 10 in the McCormack Gallery of the Albany Museum of Art. (Photo: Albany Museum of Art/Jim Hendricks)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## TWO NEW EXHIBITIONS OPEN JULY 10 AT THE ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

Works by Cedric Smith and Sanaz Haghani Will Be on View Starting Saturday

**[For Release July 7, 2021 – Albany, GA]** — Two new exhibitions debut Saturday at the Albany Museum of Art. *Horse Power*, an exhibition of oil paintings by Macon artist Cedric Smith, opens in the East Gallery. *Essay Topic: Write Down the Word WOMAN One Hundred Times!*, new works by Athens artist Sanaz Haghani, opens in the McCormack Gallery. Both exhibitions will continue through Christmas.

The AMA, located at 311 Meadowlark Drive, is open 10 am-5 pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and 10 am-7 pm on Thursdays. Admission is free to everyone.

"The AMA is honored to have this opportunity to show the original work of two marvelous storytellers, who also happen to be outstanding visual artists," AMA Executive Director Andrew J. Wulf, Ph.D., said. "Cedric Smith and Sanaz Haghani bring their important voices to these two shows to honor the all but forgotten history of African-American males in American horse culture, and the darker realities of women living in a patriarchal, theocratic society such as present-day Iran. These artists deepen the conversation about the historical and current suppression racial and gender identities."

Smith, a native of Philadelphia, is a self-taught painter and photographer who draws upon a wide range of influences and sources, both traditional and contemporary, to express poignant observations about African-American life. Growing up in the 1970s and '80s, the lack of Black representation in print and television advertisements raised questions for him.

In *Horse Power*, Smith's large, vibrant paintings show African Americans with horses, as cowboys, jockeys, soldiers and businessmen.

"My theme about all my paintings has always been about the history of Blacks in America," Smith said. "This particular show here stems from me hearing a question from a kid. He said he didn't know Black people—or Black men—rode horses. And that just blew me away.

"But I got to thinking myself. How many images do you see of Black men with horses?"

After digging through history books, Smith said he combined what he learned with his love for pop art to create paintings, such as *Jockey Cigars*, which depicts a Black jockey advertising the product. "If back then they gave endorsements to Black people or athletes, maybe this is how this endorsement would have looked on a billboard for that particular jockey," he said.

Just as Smith, whose work is now in numerous private and public collections, was inspired to become a professional artist when he met an African-American artist, Smith says he hopes his depictions of Black men in *Horse Power* will broaden viewers' minds about their own possibilities in life.

"It's almost like if you see it, you can be it," he said. "This is something that maybe can spark a conversation with a kid or anyone to dig deeper and learn more of the American history that's not really placed in books."

Smith has had solo exhibitions in Georgia, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, California, Tennessee and Paris, France. He has been in group exhibitions in those states, as well as Ohio, Illinois, Arizona, Arkansas, Virginia and Florida. His work is included in numerous public collections, including those of the Coca-Cola Co., Atlanta; Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, Atlanta; Morris Brown College, Atlanta; the University of Delaware, Newark, Del.; the New York Historical Society, New York, N.Y., and the Tubman Museum, Macon.

Haghani uses screen prints on paper to depict women she has met and to relate their experiences. A native of Iran, the visual artist usually introduces herself as a narrator or storyteller.

Those stories include cultures of oppression and acts of violence against women and girls. She wrote a book about so-called "honor killings," and has stories of child brides. While Haghani says the view of womanhood in Middle Eastern society has improved, women still face big challenges in their social and personal lives because of their secondary status.

Growing up in a big family that frequently had guests in the home, she always asked women she met to talk about their life stories. "I want to share those stories, that hiddenness, that darkness, those

moments they had in their life but they cannot share it with anyone,” Haghani said. “I want to show that in my work.”

The centerpiece of Haghani’s installation at the AMA shares the title of the exhibition. *Essay Topic: Write Down the Word Woman One Hundred Times!* is a 100-foot-long screen print on paper artwork that shows the image of a woman 100 times as it repeatedly flows from the ceiling to the floor of the McCormack Gallery.

“The installation is an attempt to depict a dictatorship,” Haghani says in her artist’s statement. “The title of this work resembles homework—it is a request to write down an essay. For this installation, I wanted to induce a contrast to the viewers. There is a contradiction between the title and the installation: on the one hand, the dictated homework generates intellectual arbitrary, and on the other hand, it is an image of unbounded imagination. The flowing and furled 100-foot-long paper form, the 100 repeated female images, the repeated women’s words are an image of creativity, found to show the censorship behind its form with all the limitations and dictatorship.”

Haghani has an MFA with distinction in Art from the University of Georgia and a BFA in Graphic Design from Sooreh University in Shiraz, Iran. An adjunct professor at the Rowan Cabarrus Community College, she was an adjunct professor at the Department of Printmaking and Book Arts at the University of Georgia, and instructor of record in foundation drawing at Montana State University in Bozeman, Mont. Haghani also worked as a graphic designer for eight years in Iran, where she taught graphic design and drawing courses.

She has exhibited her work at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, the Georgia Museum of Art, the Missoula Art Museum, and internationally in multiple solo, group and competitive exhibitions. She was one of the artists in *Paper Routes – Women to Watch 2020*.

## CURRENT AMA EXHIBITIONS

- *Butch Anthony: Art, Nature, and Intertwangleism* is in the Haley Gallery March 4-July 31, 2021.
- *Horse Power: Works by Cedric Smith* is in the East Gallery July 10-Dec 25, 2021.
- *Essay Topic: Write Down the Word WOMAN One Hundred Times, New works by Sanaz Haghani* is in the McCormack Gallery July 10-Dec 25, 2021
- *Escape Plan*, installation by Elinor Saragoussi, is in the West 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, Fridays and Saturdays, 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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