

# MORGAN LEHMAN

535 West 22nd Street, New York, New York 10011

## **Morgan Lehman artist John Salvest among 102 selected for *State of the Art* exhibition at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art**

**September 13, 2014 - January 19, 2015**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Ark. recently announced that the exhibition *State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now* will feature 102 artists from all over the country. Morgan Lehman Gallery artist John Salvest's work will be included in *State of the Art*, which debuts at Crystal Bridges on September 13.

Crystal Bridges President Don Bacigalupi and Assistant Curator Chad Alligood traveled to Salvest's studio in August 2013 to conduct an interview with the artist as part of the search for the most compelling American art being created today.

This studio visit was one of nearly 1,000 stops made by the curatorial team during a year-long, 100,000 mile journey across the country to discover artists whose work has not yet been fully recognized. The result is a one-of-a-kind exhibition that draws from every region of the U.S., offering an unusually diverse and nuanced look at American art. The 102 artists selected range in age from 24–87, including 54 male and 48 female artists from across the country.

The Crystal Bridges team began their search through their network of art professionals who helped generate a list of thousands of artists across the U.S. After narrowing the group through preliminary research, they began making studio visits and developed their final list, which includes Salvest.

“The complexity of themes in the exhibition's work mirrors the diversity and individuality of the makers. Each artist represents meaningful conversations happening in rural communities, small towns, and more densely populated urban centers all across the country,” said Alligood. “The artists are responding to the same things we're all responding to in our daily lives. We hope that this exhibition will inspire new ways to experience contemporary art and the evolving narratives that make up our cultural fabric.”

From works on canvas and paper to photography, video to installation, sculpture to ceramics and more, the diverse range of styles and voices from across the U.S. reflects what's happening in American art *right now*.

Salvest, who studied at Duke University and the University of Iowa, has exhibited his sculpture and installation work extensively throughout the United States, including a recent one-person exhibition at Morgan Lehman Gallery and an ambitious community-based project entitled *Disappearing Ink* at the Art Museum of the University of Memphis. His work has been reviewed and featured in publications such as *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, *Sculpture*, *Art Papers* and *Number*.

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Salvest, who has had three solo exhibitions at Morgan Lehman Gallery, frequently employs large quantities of discarded ordinary materials in his artwork. At Crystal Bridges he will be exhibiting "Forever," a monumental wall work consisting of more than 4,000 secondhand romance novels the artist collected from thrift stores, yard sales and flea markets over a period of years. That work was included in Salvest's *Object Lessons* at Morgan Lehman earlier this year.

In addition to exhibiting his work widely in solo and group exhibitions, Salvest is also the recipient of numerous awards and grants including two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships and a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant. He has also completed public art projects for the Cannon Center for the Performing Arts in Memphis and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, among others. His 2011 temporary public art project, "IOU/USA," a massive work made of shipping containers erected adjacent to the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, garnered international media attention.

Salvest is looking forward to being part of the exhibition. "I visited the museum shortly after it opened and was impressed by the building, the setting, the permanent collection and the first temporary exhibition, which happened to feature contemporary art. I imagined that it would be a great place to someday show my own work. Little did I know that it would actually happen, let alone so soon."

"The exhibition is a glimpse into the state of art in our nation at this moment," said Bacigalupi. "Presenting the exhibition at Crystal Bridges provides us an opportunity to see contemporary art in the broader historical context. By examining a wide range of works by artists from across the country, we can gain insight into our nation as a whole: our collective passions, challenges, and concerns."

The voices of the artists featured in *State of the Art* will be incorporated into the exhibition materials, ranging from a free downloadable app created specifically for the exhibition to an exhibition catalogue to a series of videos of the artists in their studios. "We want to incorporate as many of these layers as we can in our galleries, interpretive devices, and educational programs," added Bacigalupi.

"State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now" will be on view at Crystal Bridges from September 13, 2014 through January 19, 2015. Salvest is scheduled to present a public lecture about his work and influences in the Great Hall at 7 pm on Friday, November 7.

**For additional information on *State of the Art*, please contact:**

Beth Bobbitt at [Beth.Bobbitt@crystalbridges.org](mailto:Beth.Bobbitt@crystalbridges.org) or (479)418.5700

**[About the Artist](#)**

John Salvest's work has been presented in solo and group shows throughout the United States, including one-person exhibitions at Phoenix Art Museum; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Grand Arts, Kansas City; Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis; Cheekwood Museum of Art, Nashville; Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis; Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock and Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York.

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for the Arts Fellowships and a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, as well as State Arts Council Fellowships from New Jersey and Arkansas. He has completed public art projects for the Cannon Center for the Performing Arts in Memphis and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, among others. The Cannon Center project was cited as one of the country's best public art projects by Americans for the Arts Public Art Network's 2004 Public Art Year in Review. Salvest has also curated several exhibitions, including *Kim Levin: Notes & Itineraries*, which has traveled internationally to critical acclaim.

His work has been reviewed and featured in publications such as *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, *Sculpture*, *Art Papers*, *The New Art Examiner*, and *NUMBER*. Salvest received a B.A. in English from Duke University and an M.A. in English literature and an M.F.A. in sculpture from the University of Iowa. He resides in Jonesboro, AR, where he is Professor of Art at Arkansas State University.

## [About Crystal Bridges](#)

The mission of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art is to welcome all to celebrate the American spirit in a setting that unites the power of art with the beauty of nature. Opened to the public on 11-11-11, Crystal Bridges was founded in 2005 by the Walton Family Foundation as a nonprofit charitable organization for all to enjoy. Philanthropist and arts patron Alice Walton chairs the museum's board of directors. Since its opening, the Museum has welcomed more than 1.4 million visitors, and garnered nearly 8,000 households in its membership. Some 55,000 school children have participated in the Museum's Willard and Pat Walker School Visit program, which provides educational experiences for school groups at no cost to the schools. More than 220,000 visitors a year utilize the Museum's 3.5 miles of walking trails.

Crystal Bridges takes its name from a nearby natural spring and the bridge construction incorporated in the building, designed by world-renowned architect Moshe Safdie. A series of pavilions nestled around two spring-fed ponds house galleries, meeting and classroom spaces, and a large, glass-enclosed gathering hall. Guest amenities include a restaurant on a glass-enclosed bridge overlooking the ponds, a Museum Store designed by architect Marlon Blackwell, and a library featuring more than 50,000 volumes of art reference material. Sculpture and walking trails link the Museum's 120-acre park to downtown Bentonville, Arkansas.

Crystal Bridges' permanent collection spans five centuries of American masterworks ranging from the Colonial era to the current day. Included within the collection are iconic images such as Asher B. Durand's *Kindred Spirits*, Norman Rockwell's *Rosie the Riveter*, and Andy Warhol's *Coca-Cola [3]*— each reflecting a distinct moment in American artistic evolution—as well as major works by modern and contemporary American artists, including Georgia O'Keeffe, John Baldessari, and James Turrell. The permanent collection, which continues to grow through a strategic acquisition plan, is on view year-round and is enhanced by an array of temporary exhibitions, which were viewed by some 216,000 visitors in 2013.

For information about Crystal Bridges, visit [CrystalBridges.org](http://CrystalBridges.org). To learn more about *State of the Art*, visit the [Huffington Post blog](#) and [Crystal Bridges website](#). For news updates, follow Crystal Bridges on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) #StateoftheArt.

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