



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Maryann Bonjorni: Legends Are History

November 6, 2015 - January 2, 2016 // Morris and Helen Silver Gallery

First Friday Artist Reception: November 6, 5-8 PM

Artist Gallery Talk: November 6, 7 PM

Saturday + MaryAnn Bonjorni: November 7, 10 AM - 12 PM

Saturday Family Art Workshop: November 14, 11AM - 12:30 PM

Teen Artist Workshop: November 18, 4-6 PM

Missoula, MT / August 31, 2015 / Missoula Art Museum (MAM) / MaryAnn Bonjorni is, in no particular order, a painter, drawer, sculptor, educator, and cowgirl. In fact Bonjorni's 25 years of working as a range rider, ranch hand, and professor equally informs her art-making and locally known public persona. She has taught in the University of Montana's School of Art for the past 22 years and inspired hundreds of students and young artists with her passion for creative expression. MAM is proud to present this local artist who has worked with consistency and zeal in the Missoula art community for more than two decades.

Bonjorni's visual language is distinct—she combines and re-appropriates found objects and painting to create work that explores the romance, customs, and everyday lore of the West. The found objects are secondhand kitsch and run the gamut of taxidermy animal parts to Virgin Mary statues, trophies, or puzzles. Bonjorni challenges the institution of painting with the combination of these objects onto a two-dimensional surface framed like a traditional painting. The works hang on the wall and are viewed as a traditional painting, but the two-dimensional picture plane is shattered in the vein of Robert Rauschenberg's combine paintings.

Bonjorni is known best for her attention commanding large-scale works, but the 16 works that make up the *Legends Are History* series are on a much smaller scale and fit perfectly into MAM's Morris and Helen Silver Gallery. Her deliberate and disciplined work ethic results in a tight series of work that requires contemplation. Taut formal compositions hold the sparse elements of each artwork together. The innate symbolism of the found objects used produces tension between each other within the confines of the frame and creates an open narrative. In her artist statement, Bonjorni concludes, "These works do not present ideas about utopia or a particular agenda about who we are and what we do as Westerners because, in my view, we have and continue to botch the deal and that is why, ultimately, these works are admittedly tragic and a little bit sad."

Legends Are History is a traveling exhibition that is touring the state through the Montana Art Gallery Director's Association (MAGDA) and was organized by the Gallery of Visual Arts at the University of Montana.

Contact: For more information, please contact the Missoula Art Museum at 406.728.0447; visit the MAM website at www.missoulaartmuseum.org or contact John Calsbeek, John Calsbeek Associate Curator, johnc@missoulaartmuseum.org, 406.728.0447 x229.

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About MAM: FREE EXPRESSION / FREE ADMISSION. The Missoula Art Museum strives to engage artists and audience in the creative exploration of contemporary art relevant to our community, state and region. Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM showcases diverse and thought-provoking contemporary artwork from local and international artists. Gallery Hours: Tuesday- Saturday, 10 AM - 5 PM. Office hours: Mon-Fri, 9AM-5PM.