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UM Senior Honored with Museum of Women in the Arts' Scholarship

Student's sculptures seek to raise awareness of mental illness

OCTOBER 14, 2018 BY [KENDALL PATTERSON](#)

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Charlotte Burge

OXFORD, Miss. – An ability to use her artistic skills to raise awareness of those struggling with mental illness helped a **University of Mississippi** senior earn a prestigious visual arts scholarship from the Mississippi State Committee of the **National Museum of Women in the Arts**.

Charlotte Burge, of Saltillo, a senior pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture, was nominated for the scholarship by the UM **Department of Art and Art History**, and she received the honor earlier this semester at a luncheon in Jackson.

"Last spring, the art department was asked to nominate female nominees for this award and a group of faculty got together and went through this list of nominees, and Charlotte really just rose to the top, not only because of her work, but also her presence in the department," said Brooke White, department chair and professor of art. "We thought she was really deserving of this."

Burge's artwork revolves around the theme of mental illnesses. She creates sculptures that portray the life, mindset and struggles of those who suffer from mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety.

Burge said that she has struggled with depression and anxiety in her life, so she uses the art she creates in an effort to illuminate what life can be like for those with a mental illness.

"Hopefully my art can be that picture for people who never dealt with mental illness, depression or anxiety, that they get a little insight of people who do deal with these things in their life," Burge said. "I want people to get the stress and the reality of the world, that it's not a perfect Instagram post. It's not what we're trying to portray to the world. It's who we are."

Burge incorporates colors throughout sculptures to attract her audience, which ends up being surprised once they realize the darker tone contained within her artwork.

"The work is inviting and whimsical at first encounter, while upon further investigation, the viewer realizes that there is deeper content dealing with often-overlooked life struggles," said Durant Thompson, UM sculpture art professor.

Burge explained that the mindset of a person suffering from mental illnesses is normally darker than the person appears to the outside world. That's why her art uses colors to represent how individuals may appear beautiful on the outside but actually could be a total mess on the inside, she said.

"A lot of my pieces represent the mind frame of these people," she said. "We are all colorful blocks on

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Campus Briefs

Donations Sought for 25th Annual Books and Bears Program

OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children's play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

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Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship Aims to Build Leaders

OXFORD, Miss. – Twenty-five inaugural recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship – a program hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches and the Mississippi High School Activities Association – are expected to increase their impact on student-athletes and their communities. The coaching fellowship

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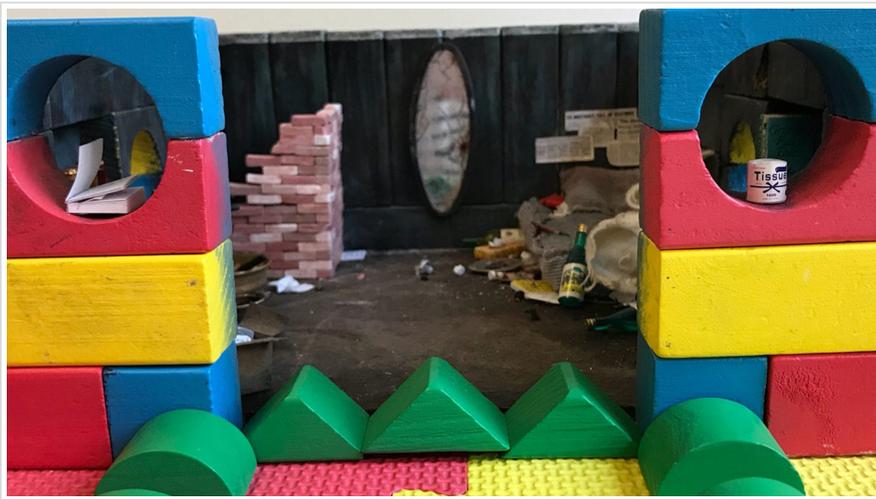
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Ole Miss In the News

Clarion-Ledger: New Essay Collection Tells the Story of Meredith's Enrollment

Essays celebrate 60th anniversary of James Meredith's enrollment at University of Mississippi By Lauren Rhoades Oct. 1 marks the 60th anniversary of James Meredith's 1962 enrollment at the University of Mississippi as the school's first African-American student.

the outside, but on the inside, it's just like this really messy, gross house that's too completely disorganized."



Charlotte Burge creates sculptures that portray the life, mindset and struggles of those who suffer from mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety. Submitted photo

The National Museum of Women in the Arts, based in Washington, D.C., brings recognition to the achievements of female artists of all periods and nationalities by exhibiting, preserving, acquiring and researching art by women and by teaching the public about their accomplishments.

The scholarship from the National Museum of Women in the Arts could assist Burge in achieving one of her primary goals, which is for her art to influence society and inform people about the realities of life for those suffering from mental illnesses.

Ideally, those who view Burge's artwork will gain a greater understanding of how those who suffer from mental illness experience the world, she said. Perhaps they will see that a mental illness is not something that can be turned on or off at will, she said.

"I'm so tired of people saying, 'Get out of that' and 'Get happy,'" she said. "It's about letting yourself wallow and letting yourself feel this way rather than being like 'I'm going to force myself to be happy.'"

If it wasn't for the supportive atmosphere of the art department, Burge said she might never have sought help to manage her own mental problems. That's why she is so thankful that she can openly be herself, express herself and have a support system there she can rely on.

"If I didn't have the support that I have here, I definitely wouldn't have reached to get help for my own issues I deal with," Burge said.

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"James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier," a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

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