

# kemperMUSEUM

of contemporary art

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## **Artist David Bates—Longtime Painter of Gulf Coast—Chronicles the Devastation of Hurricane Katrina**

### **Exhibition at KC's Kemper Museum Marks Disasters Fifth Anniversary**

For decades, Texas-based artist David Bates has painted images of America's bucolic Gulf Coast—its people and places. In 2005, Bates, like many Americans, was overwhelmed by the destruction of Hurricane Katrina. In the exhibition *David Bates: The Katrina Paintings*, the artist addresses Katrina, one of the most severe and inexplicable tragedies of our time and its devastating aftermath. In this series of paintings and works on paper, Bates's paintings remind us again why art defines our civilizations. *David Bates: The Katrina Paintings* is on view May 21–August 22, 2010, at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri. Admission is free.

The exhibition will open with a free, public reception Friday, May 21, 5:30–7:30 p.m. at the Kemper Museum. People will have the opportunity to meet the artist. See pages 3 and 4 for information about educational programs, organized in conjunction with the exhibition.

### **Hurricane Katrina**

Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast on August 28, 2005, and caused massive

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*The Flood*, 2006–07; oil on canvas, 86 x 64 inches;  
Collection of Lillian W. and Katharine E. Albritton,  
Dallas, Texas; photo: David Wharton

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damage and flooding throughout Louisiana and Mississippi, including New Orleans, a city that rests below sea level. More than 1800 people lost their lives as a result of the storm, one of the deadliest in the history of the United States. With more than \$81 billion dollars in damages occurred, it was also the most costly storm. (Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). Thousands of people were stuck in New Orleans without adequate food, water, and shelter from the storm and rising flood waters, and the response for help seemed delayed due to the overwhelming nature of the disaster. Since 2005, New Orleans and other Gulf Coast communities have been working to rebuild what was lost, and years later, a significant number of the displaced residents has yet to return home.

### **An Artist's Response**

Like many, David Bates knew that the people and landscapes he depicted in the past would be forever changed after Hurricane Katrina. Bates was glued to the television and other sources for news about the storm and its victims. Because New Orleans and much of the region were closed at first, he painted from those first mediated images, showing the Hurricane's destruction and victims. Later, the artist traveled several times to reconnect with and document the places that had so often been his subject. As well, he formed relationships with the Gulf Coast's citizens that sought refuge in his hometown of Dallas.

The artist's response resulted in a series of works or painting and works on paper, created from 2005 to 2007. Known for his bright palette, Bates in these works painted dark and agonizing images, including those of destroyed property as well as the displaced people of the South. The exhibition includes a number of preliminary drawings and photographs with the paintings. The large-size scale of many of the exhibition's works, including a two triptychs, brings a monumental and religious icon quality to the works of art.

A native of Dallas, David Bates earned a BFA in 1975 and an MFA in 1978 from

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Southern Methodist University. His paintings are in collections throughout the United States, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Museum of Modern Art in New York, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art.

### **Exhibition Catalogue and Tour**

The exhibition, organized by the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, will be accompanied by a fully illustrated, 114-page catalogue with essays by exhibition and Kemper Museum Curator Barbara O'Brien, arts writer Carl Little, and New Orleans-based gallerist Arthur Roger. The catalogue, distributed by D.A.P., will be available for \$30.00 in the Museum Shop and on line at [www.kemperart.org](http://www.kemperart.org).

After the exhibition is on view at the Kemper Museum, it travels to the Knoxville Museum of Art in Tennessee, where it will be on view October 29, 2010–February 13, 2011.

### **Educational Programs**

#### **Meet Me at the Museum**

**Sunday, June 6, 2:00–3:00 p.m.**

Kemper Museum | Free

Join a Kemper Museum docent for a lively discussion and tour of *David Bates: The Katrina Paintings*. No reservations are required.

#### **Start with Art Fridays**

**Public Talk: Empathetic Realism**

**Friday, June 11, 6:00–7:00 p.m.**

Kemper Museum | Free

How does empathy manifest itself in art? In his slide talk, art critic and exhibition catalogue essayist Carl Little shows how American artists from Thomas Eakins to David Bates have shaped a vision that addresses the human condition.

#### **Family Day: New Orleans Style**

**Saturday, June 12, 1:00–3:00 p.m.**

Kemper Museum | Free

Let the good times roll at this fun-filled event of activities and music, inspired by the spirit and vibrant culture of New Orleans. Families receive a lunch coupon for a 20 percent discount at Café Sebastienne (Offer available only that day for

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lunch).

Family Days at the Kemper Museum are made possible by the generous support of the R. A. Long Foundation.

### **Contemporary Connections in the Classroom: Summer Session**

**Wednesday, June 23, 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.**

Kemper Museum | Free

Educators learn about David Bates and the paintings he created after Hurricane Katrina. Participants in this workshop explore classroom connections using Bates's work, tour the exhibition, and take part in hands-on activities that meet Missouri state education standings for visual arts, literacy, and social sciences. A box lunch will be served. Space is limited, and registration is required. Call 816-457-6134 or email [bharris@kemperart.org](mailto:bharris@kemperart.org) to register.

### **Start with Art Fridays: Hearts of Darkness**

**Friday, July 9, 6:00–7:30 p.m.**

Kemper Museum | Free

Join Kansas City's Hearts of Darkness for a big band and big brass performance on the steps of the Kemper Museum to celebrate the spirit of New Orleans. Cash bar available.

### **About the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art**

Kansas City's renowned free modern and contemporary art museum, the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art opened in 1994 and draws more than 120,000 visitors each year. The Museum boasts a rapidly growing permanent collection of modern and contemporary works of artists from around the world and in three locations—the signature Gunnar Birkerts-designed building, Kemper at the Crossroads, and Kemper East. The Museum hosts temporary exhibitions, installations, lectures, concerts, children's workshops, and other creative programs.

The Museum (4420 Warwick Blvd.) is open 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Tuesday–Thursday; 10:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m., Friday–Saturday; and 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Sunday. Café Sebastienne, a four-star restaurant, serves lunch 11:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m., Tuesday–Sunday; and dinner 5:30–9:30 p.m., Friday–Saturday. The Museum and Café are closed on Mondays and major holidays. Admission is free.

Kemper at the Crossroads (33 West 19th Street) is open noon–8:00 p.m., Fridays; and noon–6:00 p.m., Saturdays. Admission is free.

The galleries of Kemper East (200 E. 44th Street) are open 10:00 a.m.–4 p.m., Tuesday–Friday. Admission is free.

### **Thank you**

The exhibition catalogue was supported by DC Moore Gallery, New York, New York. Additional support was provided by Dunn and Brown Contemporary, Dallas, Texas, and Arthur Roger Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana.

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The Museum thanks its annual sponsors

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**For more general information about the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, visit [www.kemperart.org](http://www.kemperart.org).**

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