

## Ask the Artsperts by Kristine Meek and Juliana Meek Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL

### Loaning Exhibitions to Museums

#### Dear Artsperts:

Traveling one summer I visited my daughter and son-in-law in Pennsylvania and saw the Eliot O'Hara watercolor exhibition "The Ring of Fire" at the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art in Loretto, Pennsylvania. We were surprised to see that the exhibition was on loan from Naples, Florida. How do museums arrange for exhibitions from your gallery?

Signed,  
Night at the Museum

#### Dear Night at the Museum,

Museum personnel have a few options when planning their museum exhibitions. They can mount shows from their own permanent collections, invite single artists to provide exhibitions from his/her studio and/or collectors who own that artist's works, book in traveling exhibitions such as the Smithsonian's variety of offerings, create their own exhibitions of a certain theme by borrowing extensively from collectors and other museums; or loan exhibitions from sales galleries/art dealers.

From the standpoint of our own gallery, Harmon-Meek, we have viewed the loaning of exhibitions as a win-win-win. It serves the greater public, promotes our artists and the gallery, as well as a service to our clients and artists. In 1980 Federal grants to museums were slashed by 50% and while this affected all museums, it hurt the regional and smaller museums the most significantly as the federal grants amounted to a larger percentage of their annual budgets. At the same time our father decided that the summer off-season in Naples was also a great time to visit with museum personnel outside the state with thoughts of loaning exhibitions of the gallery's numerous American masters to those museums.

So far, we have loaned more than 225 exhibitions at more than 90 museums in 27 states from coast to coast. Aside from the exhibition of Eliot O'Hara in Pennsylvania, in the past 5 years we have loaned exhibitions of Bob Kane, Byron Browne, John Baeder, Richard Haas, Tobi Kahn, Adolf Dehn, Richard Segalman, Gary Bukovnik, and Hunt Slonem to museums in Georgia, Ohio, Florida, and South Carolina.

To provide one example of a loaned show - in 2015, William Meek arranged and curated an extensive Robert Vickrey Memorial Retrospective for the Melvin & Burks Galleries at Florida Southern College in Lakeland. The loaned exhibition included 55 paintings dating from 1958 to 2011 from the estate of the artist, various collectors, and the Golisano Children's Museum of Naples. The works needed to be assembled, photographed, inventoried, wrapped in plastic, micro foam, and cardboard, and then shipped using Murray Art Move of Naples to Lakeland where the museum staff installed the exhibition. Our gallery also provided wall descriptions about the artist's various subjects, mediums, and techniques. Juliana Meek led a "walking docent tour" of the exhibition as well. This is one example of the many loaned exhibitions our Gallery arranges each year.

In 2012, William Meek earned a MS in Museum Studies from Johns Hopkins University. Not only to impress his daughters with this academic achievement, but also to better understand how

museums operate today. William also promoted our loan program among museums participating in the national American Alliance of Museums convention in Atlanta and at the Southeastern Museums Conference in Jacksonville and in Naples.

Sincerely,  
The Artsperts



Above: Robert Vickrey paintings wrapped and ready for shipment for museum loan exhibition to Florida Southern College in 2015.

Below: Reyneir Llanes works being uncrated after an exhibition at an art museum at Northwestern State University in Louisiana in 2017.

