

Julie Heffernan

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2018 Fall arts guide: First look at visual art shows in Hampton Roads

By Mark St. John Erickson
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With three major Peninsula museums curtailing new exhibits this year because of expansion projects, Hampton Roads' visual arts schedule is running a little leaner than usual this fall.

But there are still plenty of shows worthy of adding to your calendars.

“Black Gods of the Metropolis: The Drawings of J. Alan Cumbey,” Sept. 15-Jan. 13, Baron and Ellin Gordon Art Galleries, Old Dominion University, Norfolk. The noted Richmond writer's strange, often surreal colored-pencil drawings blend pop-culture references to television, music and theater as well as race and sexual orientation into fantastically imagined confessional images that explore his life as a gay man in the South and the battles with diabetes and AIDS that led to his death in 1992.

“From Ansel Adams to Infinity,” Sept. 21-Jan. 27, Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk. Twenty-five pictures from a recently donated Museum Set Edition printed by the pioneering photographer in the early 1980s and

renowned for their unprecedented luminosity and tonal range offer stunning black-and-white views of the Yosemite Valley and American West.

“Todd Schorr: Atomic Cocktail,” Sept. 22-Dec. 30, Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach. The West Coast artist’s unabashed mash-up of Northern Renaissance and Romantic painting influences with such contemporary cultural references as cartoon characters and B-movie monsters has given birth to a remarkable pictorial world teeming with unexpected, often comical scenes and rich narratives.

“When the Water Rises: Recent Paintings by Julie Heffernan,” Sept. 22-Dec. 30, Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art. Spurred by the allegorical paintings of Hieronymus Bosch and the sublime landscapes of Thomas Cole and Albert Bierstadt, Heffernan’s fanciful scenes of human fecklessness and environmental disaster name names and point fingers at forces menacing the health of the planet.

“Henri Farré and the Birth of Combat Aviation,” Sept. 28-Jan. 27, Chrysler Museum of Art. Drawn from collection of the Military Aviation Museum in Virginia Beach, these pioneering images created by a French portrait painter turned military aviator depict the new sky-high arena of fighter planes, bombers and aerial combat that captured the popular imagination and radically transformed the nature of warfare during World War I.

“Adorn,” a series of exhibits featuring **“Judith Peto Leiber: Earthly Delights,”** **“The Perfect Dress”** and **“Walk this Way,”** Oct. 13-Jan. 24, Peninsula Fine Arts Center, Newport News. Hand-crafted fashion-forward handbags mix with high-couture evening dresses and to-die-for artisan-made shoes in this trio of shows tracing how the age-old impulse to enhance and distinguish the female form can blur the boundaries between function and art.

“Virginia Glass Guild Juried Exhibition 2018,” Oct. 13-Dec. 2, Charles Taylor Visual Art Center, Hampton. Powered by \$4,000 in prizes, the 31st annual juried exhibition of this pioneering state-wide studio-glass group will showcase recent works exploring a wide range of processes, including blown, carved, cast, painted, flame-worked, fused, leaded, neon, sandblasted and stained glass.

“Congo Masks: Masterpieces from Central Africa,” Nov. 10-Feb. 24, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Drawn from the world’s finest and most comprehensive private collections, this stellar assemblage of 140-plus masks dating from the 17th through 20th centuries also features complete ceremonial ensembles as well as period photographs, film footage and audio showing how they were used.

“Chaos and Awe: Painting for the 21st Century,” Nov. 16-April 28, Chrysler Museum of Art. This sweeping survey of contemporary art from around the world features works by 36 artists exploring such themes as globalism, mass migration, radical ideologies and the rapid expansion of technology.

“Miniatures and Small Works by Tidewater Artists,” Dec. 8-Jan. 20, Charles Taylor Visual Art Center. Good things come in small packages at this annual audience favorite, which will showcase more than 350 miniature and small works created by about 250 Hampton Roads artists — all striving to meet the challenge of making big statements on an unusually diminutive scale.