

HHS graduate returns for art show opening

By Jonathan Menard - Oct 04, 2007

St. Charles Parish native Riece Walton will make his return to the area on Oct. 5, when his art exhibit "Do You Know What It Means?" is featured at the Perrin Benham Gallery on Magazine St.

Walton's large colorful canvases pay homage to the city of New Orleans and will be on display throughout October. Though Walton now lives in Pensacola, Fla., his favorite subject has remained vivid New Orleans scenes.

"I paint scenes of New Orleans to remind me of happy times and the very unique city in which I was so fortunate to grow up," he said. "I paint to bring New Orleans to me. I do know what it means to miss her."

While Walton only recently began to sell his work, he has been an artist for as long as he can remember. All throughout elementary and junior high, he was a part of the Talented Art Program with Hahnville teacher Lloyd Sensat. In his first two years at Hahnville High School, Walton was able to gain even more experience before being reunited with Sensat again his senior year.



Photo courtesy of Riece Walton

Hahnville High School graduate Riece Walton's work will be featured at the Perrin Benham Gallery beginning with an artist's reception at 6 p.m. on Oct. 5. and running through the month. Walton, who now lives in Pensacola, Fla., paints vivid New Orleans scenes

"It was great my senior year that Mr. Sensat ended up being my teacher again," Walton said. "This time, I could mesh all the stuff I learned but have Lloyd there to inspire me. That was a great year for my art."

Not only did Walton use influence from each teacher to develop his style, but he also took a little something away from each artist he studied.

"I love the Baroque period's handling of dramatic lighting, Van Gogh's color and brush strokes, Andy Warhol's view that everything is art, and Chuck Close's in your face portraiture," Walton said. "I try to take all of those concepts and blend them together to make art that I like."

When he graduated high school in 1987, Walton never envisioned that he would make art a career. However, in 2000, he started to accumulate a lot of work and his friends were blown away by what they saw hanging on his apartment walls.

"When people would hang out at my apartment, they would always comment on how they loved my stuff and they would ask how much each piece would be," Walton said. "I never thought about it because I have a personal bond to each piece I do."

After that, Walton started showing his work at student shows and co-op galleries in Pensacola. In 2006, he even had a solo show in New Orleans. Now, he is once again returning to the city he used to call home.

"Last year's was a blast and a reunion in part," Walton said. "I was amazed and overwhelmed at all the people from St. Charles Parish who came to opening night, some who I have not seen in 20 years. It amazes me how they are there to see my art and the awesome things they saw that they liked about my art."

Walton's exhibit will open with an artist reception on Oct. 5 that will last from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The price of the

paintings do vary, but for the show they will cost between \$500 to \$3,000. While it's a given that Walton stands to make a lot of money from a successful show and that he is excited to see friends and family, there is one particular person he really hopes makes an appearance.

"I would love for an art critic to show up, even if they give me a negative review," he said. "It won't change my art, but it would be a great thing to experience.

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