

Flannery O'Connor's unseen visual art revealed on 100th birthday

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March 25th marked Flannery O'Connor's 100th birthday. 100 years after her birth, over 60 largely unknown pieces of art by Flannery were revealed at the opening reception of a new art gallery, "Flannery at 100: Hidden Treasures."

Scholars and fans alike, as well as GCSU president Cathy Cox, convened at Georgia College's Magnolia Ballroom for the event. The exhibit uncovered the work and the stories of Flannery's life. From oil paintings to woodwork, the new art gave insight to the people and the places that shaped Flannery's life.

The highlight of the exhibit, a self-portrait under a strict no-photography policy, may be the only piece of its kind. The portrait contained Flannery and a pheasant cock, a constant theme in Flannery's work and her life.

Other works include paintings of her home, her animals, flowers, churches, and several people who were important to Flannery. The woodworks include several different moonlight landscapes. The exhibit is tied together with stories and quotes from Flannery, explaining her work and her life.

This new gallery will be housed at Andalusia until Dec. 22nd. Andalusia is the home of Flannery and is depicted in several works. Cassie Munnell, the curator at Andalusia, spoke on how these new pieces of art came to be found.

"We received the donations of the work from the family and a family friend from the O'Connor's home on Greene St.," Munnell said. "It is an interesting new facet of Flannery's work. It gives [GCSU] and Milledgeville something new to talk about regarding Flannery. We have had publications from around the country come in to see the pieces."

Dr. Robert Donahoo, a professor of English at Sam Houston State University, delivered a closing speech for the new gallery. Donahoo discussed the background of Flannery, her life, and her art. Regarding the art, he believes the new work will change how people view Flannery.

"I think it will bring people in. For scholars, it gives us another piece of evidence and it will help us understand Flannery more," Donahoo said. "You know, Flannery was wiser than we give her credit for. I am convinced there is more art out there that we don't know about yet. As we see more, it will ultimately change the way we see and understand her legacy."