



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Discover the Essence of Blue Dog: Hilliard Art Museum Welcomes  
'Sitting with George Rodrigue' Exhibition from January 27**

Lafayette, LA – [The Hilliard Art Museum](#) is thrilled to announce the opening of the highly anticipated exhibition, ['Sitting with George Rodrigue.'](#) on January 27, 2024.

Showcasing the exceptional works of one of Louisiana's most celebrated artists, this exhibition reflects Rodrigue's deep connection to his Cajun roots, featuring influential cultural and political figure portraits alongside his iconic Blue Dog paintings. The Blue Dog, a symbol of human existential queries, is highlighted through Rodrigue's own words: "The yellow eyes are really the soul of the dog. He has this piercing stare. People say the dog keeps talking to them with the eyes, always saying something different." For the first time, Rodrigue's piece, *Aioli Dinner*, will be exhibited in Lafayette. In addition, a lapel pin of Rodrigue's Blue Dog, as seen in the work, *Cajun Man*, will be available to purchase in the museum's store to mark this exhibit.

Educated at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and the Art Center College of Design in Southern California, Rodrigue's career was marked by his profound affection for South Louisiana. His publication, "The Cajuns of George Rodrigue," brought Acadian culture to national attention. The 1990s saw the rise of his Blue Dog, achieving global recognition through collaborations with Absolut Vodka, Neiman Marcus, and Xerox.

In tribute to Rodrigue's legacy, the George Rodrigue Foundation for the Arts has supported arts education in Louisiana since 2009. Rodrigue's philosophy, "My father's connection to ULL runs deep, and it's incredibly meaningful to our family that the Hilliard Museum is celebrating his life's work," states Jacques Rodrigue, son of Rodrigue. "The university played a pivotal role in shaping my father's artistic journey, and it's where he

first began to explore his passion for art. This retrospective exhibition is a testament to the profound impact that ULL had on his career and the enduring influence of both his Cajun and Blue Dog series. It's a rare and special moment when an artist receives such accolades in their home region, but my father felt the genuine love and support of the ULL community early in his career, which made Lafayette a place close to his heart where he always found admiration and encouragement.”

Wendy Rodrigue Magnus, Rodrigue’s widow and founder of the Life & Legacy Foundation and Art Tour observed, “For more than thirty years, I have seen firsthand, as George Rodrigue’s wife and partner, the universal impact of his regionally inspired, highly personal artwork. Valued and studied worldwide within collections, publications, and classrooms, there is no greater ambassador for Louisiana, and even America, exemplified through not only his powerful Blue Dog Series, born from the Cajun loup-garou, but also his ability to capture, as he explained, ‘not what Louisiana looks like, but what it feels like.

Rodrigue Magnus also went on to credit Frances Love, the Hilliard’s first director, for recognizing the, “quality in young Rodrigue, hosting his first-ever solo exhibition in 1969, as the first living or local artist spotlighted by the Lafayette museum.” She was excited to find that, “Fifty-five years later, the Hilliard Museum and Curator Benjamin Hickey acknowledge George Rodrigue’s extraordinary legacy with his first major on-campus exhibition since that time.”

Esteemed figures like E. John Bullard and journalist Tom Brokaw have championed Rodrigue's work, featured in prestigious venues worldwide, including the Société des Artistes Français and the Grand Palais in Paris.

Interim Director and Curator Ben Hickey has skillfully brought together this comprehensive collection, ensuring Rodrigue's legacy continues to resonate with audiences of all ages. “There are two stories behind every work of art Rodrigue created,” states Hickey. “The first is a story that can easily be understood based on the subject matter, and a sense of shared cultural heritage in Louisiana. The second is more personal. Rodrigue shared the creative process with those who commissioned his work and those who were depicted. As a result, his oeuvre has a rich layered sensibility this exhibition is hoping to capture.”

#### Event Details:

- Who: Art lovers, cultural enthusiasts, and the general public
- When: January 27, 2024 – July 13, 2024
- Where: 710 East St. Mary Boulevard, Lafayette, LA 70503
- Live: General Public and Media are invited to attend

Join us at the Hilliard Art Museum to experience the rich tapestry of Rodrigue's artistry and celebrate the enduring spirit of Acadian culture.

#### **Museum Hours, Admission & General Information**

The Hilliard Art Museum is located at 710 E. Saint Mary Blvd. on the campus of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Sunday and Monday. For general information, please visit [HilliardMuseum.org](http://HilliardMuseum.org) or call 337-482-2278.

### **About George Rodrigue**

George Rodrigue was an acclaimed American artist from Louisiana, renowned for his Blue Dog series, which gained international fame in the 1990s. His work, deeply rooted in his Cajun heritage, often explored themes of Louisiana culture and folklore, reflecting a unique blend of traditional storytelling and contemporary art. Beyond his artistic achievements, Rodrigue was a philanthropist, supporting arts education through the George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts, established to inspire and empower the next generation of artists.

### **About the Hilliard Art Museum**

Our Museum is a bridge. Our Museum is a catalyst. Our Museum is for everyone. We connect art and education, our university and our community, generations, heritage and cultures. The Hilliard Art Museum-University of Louisiana at Lafayette is not just a place to look at art. It is a place where visitors are encouraged to truly see art. It is a place of learning, where students sketch in the galleries and artists talk about their work. It is a destination for families, where kids express their own creativity through hands-on activities. And it is a resource for academic research and observation. Museum experiences build skills that extend into every aspect of life. Viewing art promotes dialogue and understanding between individuals, among families, and throughout our community. Art makes life richer and better for everyone.

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IMAGE AND PRESS KIT LINK [HERE](#)