

SMU alum John Alexander brings his rare art to the Meadows

By Michael Granberry



A critic once described the work of John Alexander as capturing “nature at its grandest and man at his worst.”

The ability to do that came in part from Southern Methodist University, where Alexander received a master of fine arts degree from Meadows School of the Arts in 1970. During his time on the Hilltop, he worked at the Meadows Museum.

So it’s more than fitting that the SMU alum is being honored with an exhibition of his work at the Meadows during the museum’s 50th anniversary year and the university’s centennial.

“Human/nature. The Ridiculous and Sublime: Recent Works by John Alexander” opens next Sunday and continues through June 28. The show’s 35 paintings and drawings are on loan from 26 lenders, including 12 in Texas.

“Our exhibition spans the past decade of John’s career, with the earliest work from 2002, yet it is representative of his trajectory as a whole,”

says Meadows Museum curatorial assistant Shelley DeMaria, who’s curating the show. “He is a consummate draftsman, a skillful satirist and a lover of nature. All of these characteristics will be on display in this exhibition.”

During his time at the Meadows, Alexander says he was influenced by the work of Francisco de Goya and in particular Goya’s four complete print series, which are part of the Meadows’ permanent collection.

“Alexander would take from the Spanish artist the ability to satirize the world he saw around him and meld it with his own Texas sensibility,” reads the Meadows’ description of the show. This includes “an acute awareness of the oil industry and its effects on the natural environment.”

These days, Alexander divides his time between New York City and Amagansett, Long Island. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and the Meadows, which houses his 1989 painting, *Demons*.

As Meadows director Mark Roglán says, “John’s brilliant paintings and drawings are an enduring testament to the way in which the Meadows has left a profound impact on students and artists over the last 50 years.”