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ENTERTAINMENT

The Mint and Bechtler art museums focus on their own collections and collectors

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Charlotte collectors talk about what moves them, how much they appreciate getting to know artists, and how one artist, Ivan Mares, talked about his process in a way that's like ... collecting art. BY MITCHELL KEARNEY



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2023 Charlotte Fall Arts Guide

The Charlotte Observer's annual guide to the new arts and culture season highlights returning favorites as well as new exhibitions and performances.

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As the new season unfolds for Charlotte's art museums, the organizations are emphasizing their commitment to community engagement while preparing a range of exhibitions from Icelandic art to "the humble chair."

The Charlotte Observer recently spoke with officials at the [Bechtler Museum of Modern Art](#) and [The Mint Museum](#) about what lies ahead for them and their visitors.



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“Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler: Flora,” 2017.” Synchronized double-sided film installation with shared soundtrack, 30-minute loop. This Bechtler Museum of Modern Art exhibit is a multimedia project about overlooked American artist Flora Mayo. Ugo Carmeni *Courtesy the artists, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles and Lora Reynolds Gallery, Austin, Texas*



THE BECHTLER MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

For the Bechtler Museum, its newest exhibition provides the opportunity to tell a story that until now has been unfairly overlooked.

The Bechtler will debut this month “[Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler: Flora.](#)” The show, which runs from Sept. 23 to Jan. 21, 2024, features a multimedia project by the Swiss American duo that’s based on their discoveries about the overlooked American artist [Flora Mayo](#).

In the 1920s, Mayo studied alongside Swiss sculptor [Alberto Giacometti](#) at the [Académie de la Grande Chaumière](#) in Paris and had a romantic relationship with him. While Giacometti is a revered artist of the 20th century, the Bechtler said Mayo’s work was relegated to a footnote in Giacometti scholarship.

Hubbard and Birchler “reframe this story from a feminist perspective.”



A related exhibit will run at the same time, “[Giacometti and the Artists of the Grande Chaumière](#).” It features works by artists affiliated with the academy that was a gathering place for many avant-garde artists in the early 20th century.

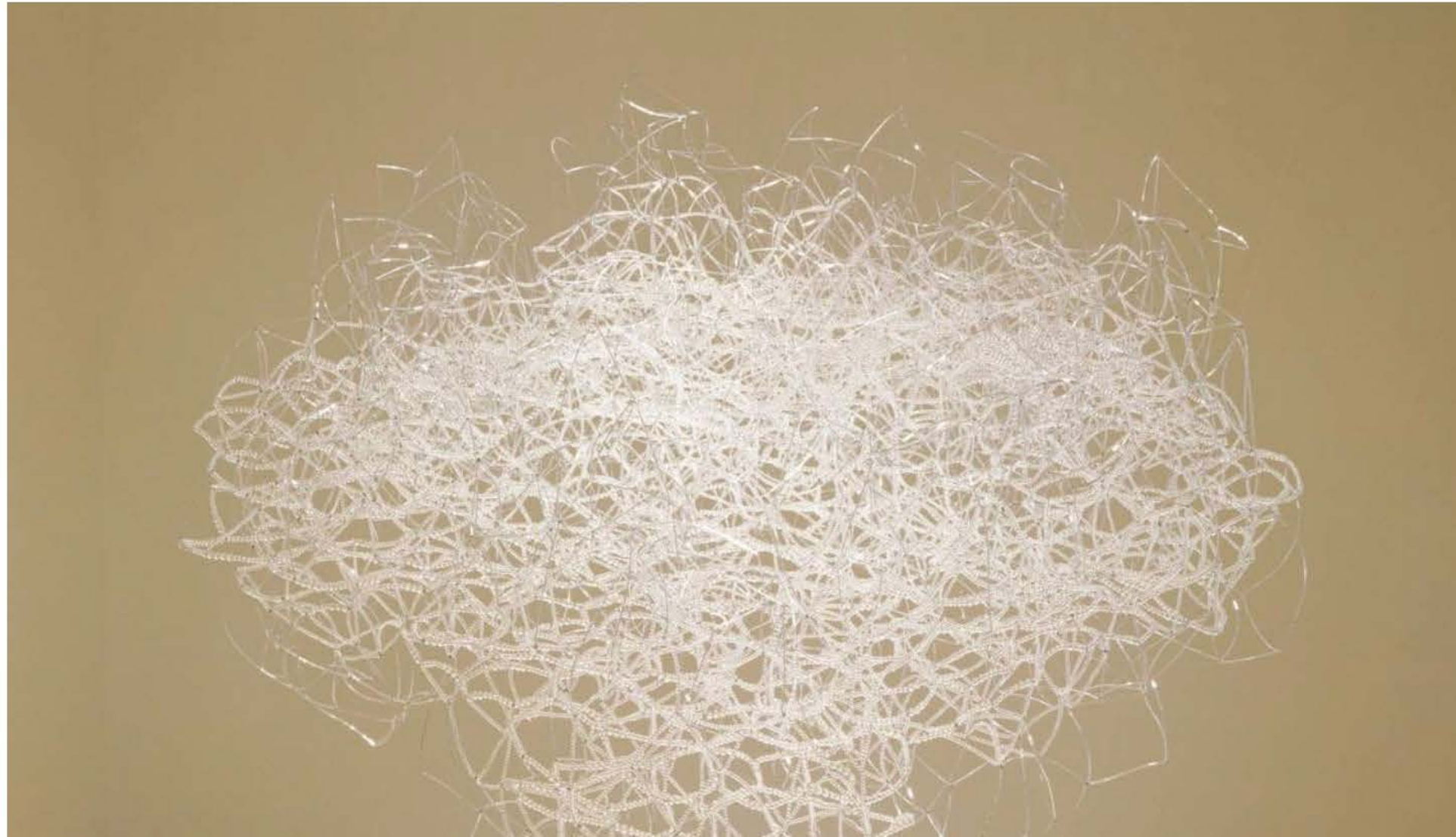
Other highlights of the Bechtler’s new season include:

- “[Eduardo Chillida: 100 Years](#),” commemorating the centenary of the birth of the influential Spanish sculptor, is set to run from Dec. 9 to April 14, 2024. Known for monumental sculptures, [Chillida also created](#) smaller sculptures, drawings, collages and prints, examples of which will be on view from the Bechtler’s permanent collection.



Eduardo Chillida, Leku I, 1968, Steel, 22 ½ x 18 ¼ x 39 ½ in. © Zabalaga-Leku, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, 2023. The Bechtler exhibit about the late Spanish sculptor coincides with the centenary of his birth. © JoAnn Sieburg-Baker

- “[Alyson Shotz: Coalescence](#)” focuses on [Shotz](#), whose sculptures and installations use synthetic materials like glass, mirrors and stainless steel to harness intangible forces such as gravity, space and light. The one-installation exhibition centers around Shotz’s “Coalescence” (2006), on loan to the Bechtler from [the Bank of America Collection](#). The sculpture of glass beads and wire hangs from the ceiling, resembling a cloud, a massive spider web glistening with morning dew or a cluster of atoms magnified to monumental scale. The exhibit goes from Dec. 9 to Aug. 9, 2024.





Alyson Shotz, "Coalescence," 2006, Glass beads and wire. On loan from the Bank of America Collection. The single-installation exhibition at the Bechtler Museum runs from Dec. 9 to Aug. 9, 2024. *Courtesy of the artist*

▪ [“Hildur Ásgeirsdóttir Jónsson: Infinite Space, Sublime Horizons.”](#) This is the [Icelandic artist’s](#) first solo museum exhibition in the U.S. in nearly a decade, and her first monographic show in the Southeast. Jónsson, who has spent the last 30 years in Cleveland, blends painting, weaving and drawing in her works that the Bechtler said “blurs the boundaries between abstraction and representation, and between fine art and craft.” The show runs from Feb. 17, 2024, to June 2, 2024. It will feature 45 pieces, many of which have never been exhibited before, including large-scale paintings created on a loom.

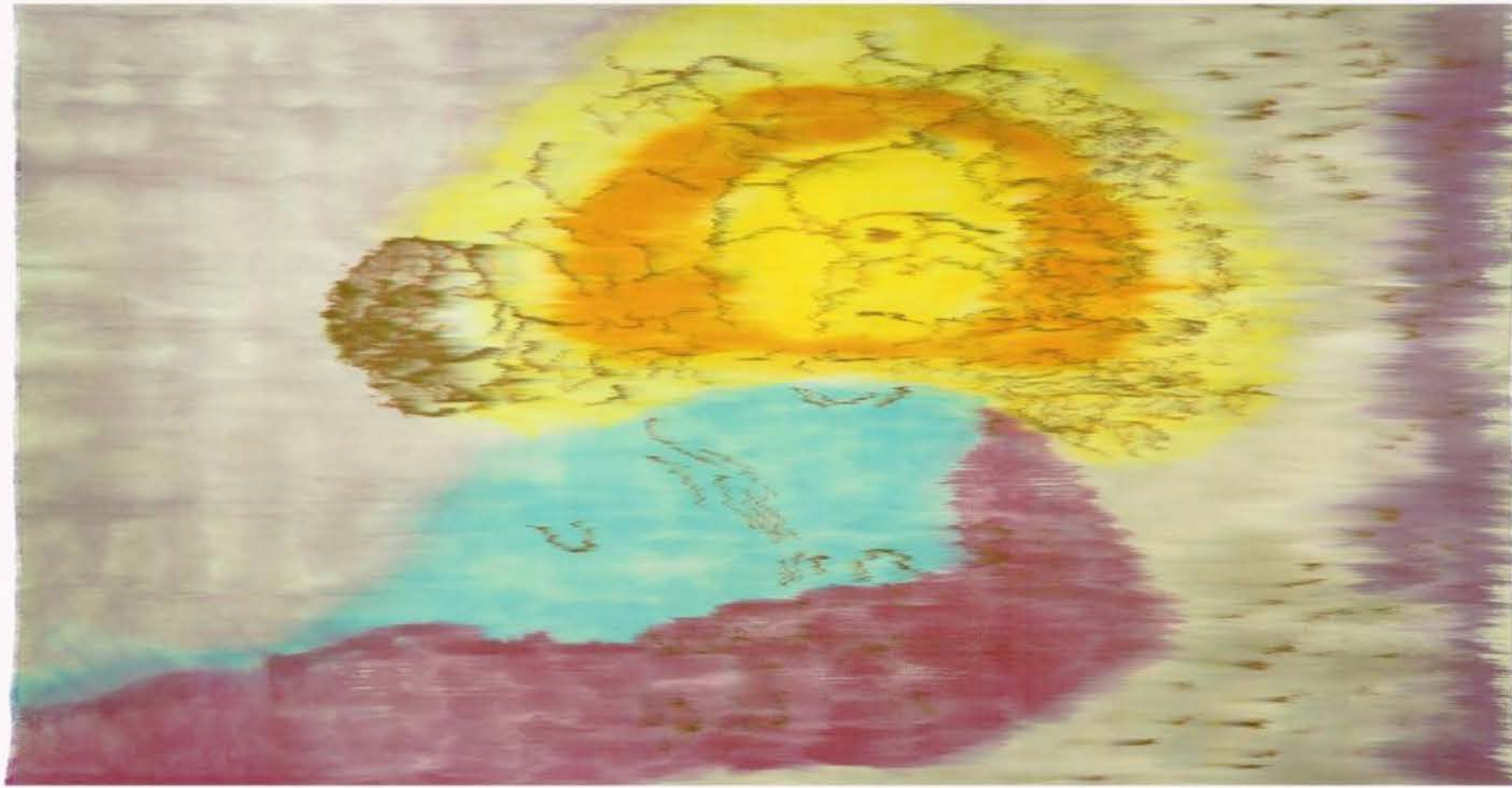
Bechtler executive director Todd Smith tied what’s coming up in this season to one of the museum’s bigger events last year, [“Pop to Now: Warhol and His Legacy.”](#)

That show featured classic work by pop artist Andy Warhol, as well as artists he inspired like [Jean-Michel Basquiat](#) and [Keith Haring](#). And it [included contemporary artists](#) whose work only exists digitally, through NFTs (non-fungible tokens).

“To be able to show NFTs at the Bechtler was a really important moment,” Smith said, “because it shows our audience that what we’re trying to do is celebrate our collection... (and) also make it relevant to what living and working artists are doing now.

“That’s really the thrust of where we’re going with our (new) exhibition program.”





Hildur Ásgeirsdóttir Jónsson, *Fragment*, 2018, Silk thread and dyes, 114 x 216 in. The Icelandic artist's show at the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art is her first solo museum exhibition in the U.S. in nearly a decade. *Courtesy of the artist*

He said that dynamic of relevancy also can be found in the Flora exhibition. “It takes some of the real strengths of our collection, the joy of our historical collection, especially the relationship of Alberto Giacometti to... Flora Mayo, and pulls their story through in a different way, through the eyes of two contemporary artists from Austin.”

The exhibit helps visitors appreciate the power of the Bechtler's collection while also making it speak to contemporary life and engaging living artists. It helps make the collection feel “fresh and new, which was a hallmark of our founder's collecting interests.” Smith said.





“Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler, *Flora*,” 2017. Synchronized double-sided film installation with shared soundtrack, 30-minute loop. The exhibit focuses on sculptor Flora Mayo, who also was in a relationship with fellow artist Alberto Giacometti. Ugo Carmeni *Courtesy the artists, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles and Lora Reynolds Gallery, Austin, Texas.*

THE MINT MUSEUM

One exhibit the Mint is winding down actually served as the kick-off to what museum officials are calling “The Year of the Collector.” Open through Sept. 17, [The Vault](#) features objects from the private holdings of four prominent Black art collectors living in Charlotte.

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