

**Exhibition Development/Publication/Research: Producing New Research for the Hilliard Museum's Exhibition "Acadian Brown Cotton: The Fabric of Acadiana"**

Project Abstract

*please provide a condensed (2-3 sentence) description of your project.*

Production of new scholarly research and documentary photography necessary for the development of the Hilliard University Art Museum's exhibition "Acadian Brown Cotton: The Fabric of Acadiana," which will utilize an interdisciplinary approach to better understand the historical significance and cultural impact of the 250+-year-old Acadian brown cotton tradition, which is unique to Acadiana. The final products will also be included in an evergreen post-exhibition publication.

Project Description\*

*Describe your project, including its measurable goals, format and humanities content. 300 word limit.*

The Hilliard University Art Museum (HUAM), a department within the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, respectfully requests a Rebirth grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities to assist in the development of the exhibition "Acadian Brown Cotton: The Fabric of Acadiana" (ABC). LEH funds will support the production of new research and documentary photography for the exhibition; the final products will also be included in an evergreen post-exhibition publication.

Opening in September 2020, ABC will utilize an interdisciplinary approach to better understand the historical significance and cultural impact of the 250+-year-old Acadian brown cotton tradition, which is unique to Acadiana. HUAM will employ interpretive text, video, soundscapes, photography, and archival documentation to highlight the artistry of these artifacts, and trace the tradition's evolution from necessity to craft, then from craft to artistry, and finally from artistry to industry. ABC is a community-focused, collaborative project; in addition to the approximately 90 brown cotton textiles and artifacts that will be included in HUAM's exhibition, more than a dozen satellite venues will concurrently mount small, pop-up style exhibitions of brown cotton textiles and tools from their permanent collections. While there are two major cultural institutions participating (the Historic New Orleans Collection and the LSU Rural Life Museum in Baton Rouge), the majority of satellite venues will be smaller libraries, museums, historical societies, and collections that serve rural populations. HUAM will create a "Passport to Acadian Brown Cotton" to connect and cross-promote this statewide network of brown cotton exhibitions, allowing tourists and residents to explore South Louisiana through the lens of this unique textile tradition.

This project's measurable goals include: (1) documenting the work and processes of Acadian brown cotton weavers and farmers (part of the Field to Fashion Project, whose growing roster of brown cotton farmers is working toward creating a local, sustainable

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### Excerpts

secondary crop that can support a burgeoning textile industry); (2) production of new research and original scholarship; (3) photography of the final exhibition installation and artifacts; and (4) increased visitation to HUAM's rural ABC partners. All research, documentation, and photographs will be used in the exhibition's interpretation as well as the post-exhibition publication.

### Humanities Content\*

*List which HUMANITIES DISCIPLINES relate to your project and describe the critical, analytical, and/or historical application of these disciplines, illustrating by specific example. How will these humanities disciplines be used to address the important cultural topics in your community and throughout the state? Click here for a list of humanities disciplines. 500 words max.*

ABC will explore and analyze the history of handwoven brown cotton textiles. Using genealogy, historic maps and documentation, documentary and historic photography, a/v components, furniture, tools, and brown cotton textiles, ABC will demonstrate the historical significance and cultural impact of this tradition. It will also seek to educate regional audiences about an aspect of their culture they may be unaware of, casting new light on the itchy, brown blankets in people's attics by demonstrating their artistry and value, as well as the tradition's continued vitality and relevancy. ABC will explore the idea that the high value Acadian culture places on self-sufficiency played an important role in the development of the Acadian brown cotton tradition. The exhibition will highlight the process by which Acadian brown cotton textiles were created and the domestic context in which they were used by including a full suite of weaving tools alongside an installation of mid-19th century Acadian furniture, all handmade by the Acadians using native materials.

ABC will seek to answer questions about the power of cultural persistence and transmission: How is a tradition taught? How is it learned? How and why has this tradition remained intact for over 250 years? It will acknowledge the important work of culture bearers of the past, including but not limited to Madame Dronet and Gladys LeBlanc Clark, as well as the greatest living Acadian weaver, Elaine Bourque. It will examine the role and influence of cultural activists such as the Avery/Weeks Sisters (New Orleans Christian Exchange) Louise Olivier (The Acadian Handicraft Project, 1940-1962) and Sharon Donnan (co-director of the 2015 documentary ("Coton Jaune: Acadian Brown Cotton") by looking at brown cotton's three waves of cultural revitalization—when attempts were made to market Acadian brown cotton textiles beyond the bayous of southwestern Louisiana—and their effect on the tradition. The Field to Fashion Project, the third and current wave, is an organized effort with a growing roster of members and supporters. ABC will contextualize Field to Fashion using the faces and words of its participants—the farmers, artisans, and scientists. They will be depicted in large documentary photographs and their voices heard via a mounted speaker discussing their experiences with the project and thoughts about its future. Maps and interpretive texts will present research on brown cotton's botanical origins and unique traits, demonstrating the importance of saving and propagating the seed. Further research must be done to complete the cultural-geographic profiles of weaving communities such as Coulée Kinney. [Scholar name] hypothesizes that two interrelated factors will reveal important geographic aspects of these

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folk communities: connection to the weaving/spinning tradition and kinship connections determined through consanguinal (blood) and affinal (in-law) marriage relationships.

### Sustainability\*

*Please state any plans to replicate this project in the future, and/or any related initiatives for the project director and sponsoring organization. 500 word limit.*

This project will live on in the form of an evergreen, post-exhibition publication that will be published in the Spring of 2021. It will include articles and other content produced using the research conducted by project scholars, as well as the documentary and installation/object photography. The production of the publication postexhibition serves as a way to ensure the exhibition's content will continuously live on in addition to supporting the growing wave of revitalization and increased interest among the local community.

Additionally, HUAM has a long-term partnership with AOC Community Media, a local cable access TV station that focuses on building an informed and engaged community through media, technology, and education. HUAM and AOC collaborate on the production of content generated from the museum's exhibitions and programs for AOC's on-air and digital viewership. To increase outreach and public access, the two institutions will co-produce a series of shows centered on the ABC exhibition. The videos will be made available on air as well as on both the museum and AOC's YouTube channels ensuring long-term accessibility and outreach.

### Target Audience\*

*The LEH is committed to maintaining a statewide impact and geographical considerations factor into each of these partnerships. Priority is given to projects that reach audiences in multiple parishes. Please estimate total audience size, projected demographics and location. 300 words max.*

HUAM has been in touch with museums, historical societies and collections across Acadiana, most having brown cotton textiles or objects related to the tradition in their permanent collections, and asked them to partner with HUAM by mounting pop-up exhibitions--to run concurrently with ABC--of their brown cotton textiles and tools. The venues will be linked via the "Passport to Acadian Brown Cotton" initiative, which will include educational information about Acadian brown cotton, and a list of the participating venues; HUAM visitors will be encouraged to visit all the venues and get their Passport stamped. This initiative will broaden the reach of the HUAM's exhibit, and drive visitation across South Louisiana while specifically increasing tourism in the region's rural areas. The proposed rural satellite venues span seven parishes, and include: Abbeville Historical Society, Acadian Museum (Erath), Bayou Teche Museum (New Iberia), Evangeline House (St. Martinville), General Mouton House (Lafayette), Jean Lafitte Center and Museum (Eunice), Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site (St. Martinville), the Avery Island Archives, Nunu's Community Center (Arnaudville), and Shadows-on-the-Teche (New Iberia). In addition, satellite exhibitions will also be held at two major museums, The Historic New Orleans Collection and the LSU Rural Life Museum in Baton Rouge,

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pulling from their audiences while also drawing our regional residents to their institutions. HUAM projects an audience of over 13,000 will visit ABC during its run.

Students are another target audience; HUAM projects that approximately 5,000 students (K-12, university/college) will visit this exhibition based on outreach with area schools, UL Lafayette campus, and community partners. In Louisiana, grade 3 educators teach Louisiana history and grade 8 educators focus on Acadiana history; due to the exhibition's natural correlation with state standards, we expect there will be an increase in student visitation.

### Outreach\*

*How will you publicize the project to audiences? Please detail any public relations and/or social media strategies. 300 words max.*

ABC will be featured in the museum's weekly eblasts and social media platforms to promote the content of the exhibition, the Passport program, as well as all associated programming. Additionally, the UL Lafayette Communications Department will assist us by distributing press releases and posting information on UL Lafayette's social media platforms and website. Mailing lists will be requested from all participating satellite venues for targeted exhibition-related promotion. Support from the Lafayette Visitors Enterprise Fund and the Louisiana Office of Tourism will enable HUAM to develop and implement a large-scale print and digital advertising strategy.

Additionally, HUAM will work with local and regional press organizations as well as affinity groups to reach audiences and build interest in the project through featured articles, interviews with scholars/contributors, and publishing the program calendar. The Marketing Manager will appear on local news stations to promote the exhibition, and do on-location and in-studio features with the major regional news channels. Whenever possible, exhibition contributors will also participate in press appearances.

As a part of promotion of the film, screenings were held for craft, weaver, and quilting guilds all over the country; many guilds expressed strong interest in traveling to see the exhibition once it opens. Marketing materials with exhibition and travel information will be sent to a nationwide list, including but not limited to: the Southeastern Fiber Arts Alliance, Textile Society of America, Fibershed, Texas Fiber Guild, and Fiber Guild of the Savannahs. Note: An article on ABC is slated for inclusion in the Fall 2020 issue of 64 Parishes.

## LEH Budget Form

Category	Outright LEH Funds	Applicant Cost Share		Anticipated 3rd Party Gifts	TOTAL
		Cash	In-kind		
<b>A. Salaries (Administration)</b>					\$0
<b>B. Honoraria (Scholars)</b>					\$5,000
Dr. [REDACTED]	\$1,400				
[REDACTED]	\$1,400				
[REDACTED]	\$1,400				
[REDACTED]	\$800				
<b>C. Consultant Fee (Technical)</b>					\$0
<b>D. Travel</b>					\$0
<b>E. Supplies &amp; Equipment</b>					\$2,000
Framing of Photographs		\$2,000			
<b>F. Facilities</b>					\$0
<b>G. Printing &amp; Publicity</b>					\$1,571
Printing of Photographs		\$1,571			
<b>H. Other</b>					\$1,429
F&A Cost 40% MTDC		\$1,429			
<b>Total</b>	(1) \$5,000	(2) \$5,000	(3) \$0	(4) \$0	(5) \$10,000

Total Applicant Portion (Cost Share + Gifts) (Columns 2+3+4)= \$5,000

Anticipated Gift Summary			Other Expected Income Summary*	
Source	Expected Receipt Date	Amount	Sales	
		\$0		\$0
		\$0		\$0
		\$0		\$0
		\$0	Admission Fees	\$0
		\$0		\$0
		\$0		\$0
		\$0		\$0
		\$0		\$0

\*Any expected income should be documented as Applicant Cash Cost Share. LEH sponsored projects must be open to the public. In general, admission fees are discouraged. If anticipated, include rationale in the budget narrative.

Note: Food, entertainment and liquor may not be used for cost share.

Auto mileage is allowed at the rate of \$.50 per mile plus tolls and parking