

A glimpse into the world of artist Hunt Slonem

See his works at New Gallery of Modern Art on The Green.

BY OLIVIA FORTSON
ofortson@charlotteobserver.com

New York-based artist Hunt Slonem has works in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan and Guggenheim museums, along with 80 other museums worldwide, including an 80-foot mural that used to be in the lobby of the World Trade Center.

He was in Charlotte recently for a lecture at the Mint Museum Uptown, and the opening reception of "Butterfly World," his joint show of works with another acclaimed artist, Damien Hirst, that's on view through Oct. 23 at the just-opened New Gallery of Modern Art on The Green at 435 S. Tryon St. (www.newgalleryofmodernart.com).

Slonem is also the subject of the new book "The Worlds of Hunt Slonem."



COURTESY OF HUNT SLONEM

Hunt Slonem's work is in Charlotte through Oct. 23.

(Details: www.huntslonem.com).

During his visit, we talked with Slonem about his connection to Charlotte, what inspires him and the secret to his success.

Q: Have you been to Charlotte before?

I stopped here briefly in 1972 when I was a student at Tulane University visiting a friend, and haven't been back until now. It far exceeds what I remember. The museums are great, the skyline is beautiful and the city looks clean and prosperous. It has a booming feel.

I will always have a good feeling toward Charlotte because when I was first starting out in the art world, the collector Arthur Goldberg purchased two of my pieces in the late 1970s and donated them to the Mint Museum, where they're still a part of the permanent collection. That was very important for me because it was the first time my works were purchased for a museum.

Q: What's your inspiration?

There's a spiritual message behind everything I do, and I'm fascinated by

nature and its purity. I'm endlessly mesmerized by patterns in nature, which is why I use so much repetition, just as in nature there is repetition in blades of grass, the leaves of trees and feathers of birds.

Q: Why do you think you've been so successful?

Diligence. I'm a very hard worker. I paint almost every day. If I don't, I'm lost. And I'm always following through on things, whether it's getting in touch with a

contact in the art world or an idea for a painting. A bell goes off when I know I'm supposed to go somewhere or do something, and I always listen and act.

Fortson: 704-358-5222

Scene & Heard SOCIAL EDITOR OLIVIA FORTSON
TAKES YOU TO RECENT EVENTS

Party Tip: I had the chance to talk to artist Hunt Slonem, who's based in NYC and owns a Victorian mansion in upstate New York and two plantation homes in Louisiana. He recently hosted a fundraiser in NYC where the musician Moby performed until 4 a.m., and was at a pre-wedding bash for society couple Lauren Bush and David Lauren.

When entertaining, Slonem prefers sit-down dinners and always uses 100 white candles on his table. He showed me a photo in one of the books about him (the latest is "The Worlds of Hunt Slonem"). Styled like a still-life painting by a Dutch master complete with animals, his table was as breathtaking and fascinating as the artist himself.

