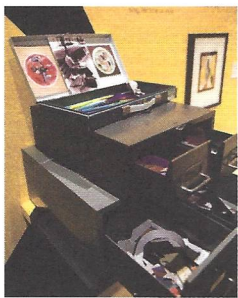




# EUGENE MARTIN

## THE CREATIVE ACT

On view until  
October 2, 2022



### COLLABORATIVE COLLAGE SPACE

Be inspired by  
Martin's work and  
add your piece to  
the collaborative  
collage wall in the  
gallery studio space.

(Above):  
Installation view of  
*Eugene Martin:  
The Creative Act*

*Eugene Martin: The Creative Act* is the first major exhibition of the artist's work. It features a selection drawn from the 2008 acquisition of 31 pieces and focuses on Martin's unique brand of abstraction. Born in Washington, D.C. in 1938, Martin dedicated his life to living and working as a full-time artist, creating artwork defined by stylistic periods, from black and white ink drawings to bright and colorful acrylic paintings and collages. Throughout these styles, Martin's hand is distinct and present. A mixture of organic forms, geometric shapes, and architectural worlds make up Martin's universe of figures and creatures. Though often hinting at figures and familiar forms, his abstraction offers delights of color that are free from time and place.

Highlighted in the exhibition are Martin's unparalleled collages, which feature pieces or photographs of previously completed works. This form of artistic cannibalism represents the artist's practice that was never static and always exploring. Also featured are Martin's circle drawings, a product of setting his own limitations on composition—just to see what he could do. Working only from within, he straddles styles and does not answer to outside influence. Rather, his works satisfy the impulse to simply create. In his last decade, Martin lived and worked in Lafayette, Louisiana. He achieved regional acclaim while continuing to exhibit across the country and abroad. His art is held in the collections of several Louisiana institutions.

LSU MOA thanks the generous donors to the LSU MOA Annual Exhibition Fund for supporting all exhibitions at the museum: Louisiana CAT; The Imo N. Brown Memorial Fund in memory of Heidel Brown and Mary Ann Brown; The Alma Lee, H. N., and Cary Saurage Fund; Charles "Chuck" Edward Schwing; Robert and Linda Bowsher; LSU College of Art + Design; Mr. and Mrs. Sanford A. Arst; and The Newton B. Thomas Family/Newtron Group Fund.

# IN CONVERSATION

## SUZANNE FREDERICQ

Suzanne Fredericq, the wife of late artist Eugene James Martin, donated LSU MOA's collection of Martin's works that made the exhibition *The Creative Act* possible. Olivia Peltier sat down to chat with Fredericq at her home in Lafayette, Louisiana, surrounded by many more of the late artist's works. Fredericq is the Freeport McMoran/LEQSF Regents Professor of Biology at the University of Louisiana Lafayette. Find the full transcript of their discussion about Eugene Martin, Surrealism, Marcel Proust, and so much more at [www.lsumoa.org/inside-lsu-moa](http://www.lsumoa.org/inside-lsu-moa).

**OP:** Tell me a little about yourself. Of course the exhibition focuses on the artist, but let's hear more about the person behind the work it takes to bring the artwork to the public.

**SF:** I'm originally from Belgium, from the North. I'm a biologist and did my undergraduate degree at the University of Ghent in zoology. I got [to Washington, D.C.] in March or April 1981, and was there for a year. In the meantime, the friend of my mother's where I was staying had a friend who wanted to use his house to show a lot of artifacts from the Far East, from India, to interior decorators. They would come to the house, but she needed some help from students. There was not much to do, just opening the doors for interior decorators who would come with their clients, et cetera. Everything in the house was antiques, and there was a little group of graphite drawings. I said, "What are those? I love them." She said "Oh, they are from Eugene Martin, a wonderful friend." A day or two later, a knock on the door and there he was, to say hello to Isabel. He was so handsome and then Isabel asked me, because I worked for her a little bit, "Suzanne, can you go to the post office?" and Eugene said, "Well I'll go with her." And that was it.

He was always so positive. I found it fantastic to live with someone—he was so generous with everything and he made life so much easier for me. Normal people

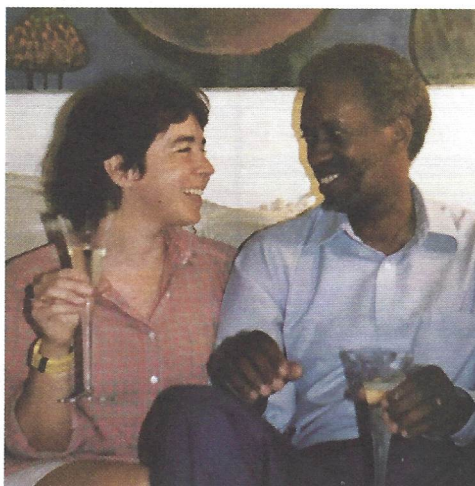
would make life difficult for people around them. Not him—he was just the opposite. He was really wonderful, and he was always wonderful from the moment I met him.

**OP:** Do you think that so much of his work is positive and fun because it's an expression of himself?

**SF:** I think so. He said "Well on Earth, you have one chance, so what am I going to do? Complain all day long and make my life miserable, or do I do something positive?" That's how he was, he was always looking at the best of what he can do and with his art too.

**OP:** Can you speak about your experience in keeping his work and his spirit out there?

**SF:** Everything that's not in private collections or placed is here. What to do in the future—I'm still thinking of it. It would be nice if it could be in a research institute. I show the work to a lot of curators but they don't see what's so special about Eugene. To really understand [his work], you need to know art history I think. I was not an art historian, but I really fell in love with him, and with all his work. I'm his biggest fan.



Suzanne Fredericq and Eugene Martin.  
Courtesy of Suzanne Fredericq.