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***“Serpents, Ships, and Open-form, Lath-sided Structures...”* Featured in an
Expansive New Exhibition at the Museum of TTU**

The Museum of Texas Tech University (MoTTU) proudly presents the extensive exhibition, ***Robert Stackhouse: Paintings, Sculptures, Drawings***, opening **Sunday, August 26**, and continuing through **November 11**, in **Galleries 1, 2 & 3** of the Museum.

This exhibition of 47 sculptures, watercolors, and drawings surveys more than 30 years of Stackhouse’s work from 1969 to 2000. The show traces the evolution of the artist’s career as he journeyed from New York to Florida, to Washington DC, to Georgia, to Kansas City, and many points in between. All influenced the development of his iconic images that include a serpent, ships and open-form, lath-sided architectural structures. The artist currently lives in St. Petersburg, Florida.

By the mid-1970s Stackhouse rose to national prominence as a result of a New York exhibition of one of his signature A-frame, lath constructions. Following this accomplishment, he was awarded several outdoor commissions including sculptures at the Cranbrook Academy, Cleveland’s Artpark, and the Hudson River Museum. His iconic sculptural vocabulary—serpents, ships, and open architectures—soon earned him a reputation as one of the United States’ most prominent sculptors.

Robert Stackhouse builds his sculptures using common materials: sturdy wooden beams and delicate slats he cuts, nails, and bolts into curving wails, sinuous A-frames and boat-like artifacts. These familiar materials and images turn richly ambiguous as he explores affinities between architecture and biological anatomy. In Stackhouse’s sculptures, and the paintings and works on paper they motivate, slats scattered across the shell of a hull-like sculpture might resemble bones; a boat keel assumes the appearance of an exotic plant, as patterns and colors shift and merge.

Originally trained as a painter, Stackhouse rejuvenated this interest and began in 1982 to paint more with watercolors. These large paintings provided him with a new avenue to explore his iconic, familiar subjects. During this time and throughout the 1980s, he continued to receive sculptural commissions, most notably in Canada, Australia and Brazil. Concurrently his painting became a more ambitious component of his creative life. His watercolors increased in both scale and number. While these paintings often investigated the imagery of his sculpture, they always maintained a distinct and powerful aura. In the early 1990s, Stackhouse reversed his method of working from

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MUSEUM OF TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY: Open 10 AM -5 PM Tue-Sat, open until 8:30 PM on Thu, 1-5 PM Sun. Closed Monday. **ADMISSION FREE**
MOODY PLANETARIUM - STAR SHOWS: \$2 adults, \$1 students & 60+, 5 or less Free; LASER SHOWS: \$2 adults, \$1 students & 60+, 5 or less Free.
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sculpture to watercolor. Creating large watercolors of historic luxury liners (notably the *Titanic*, the *Normandie*, and the *Queen Mary*), as well as the boats, serpents, and architectures of his earlier work, his paintings became a source for his sculpture.

Robert Stackhouse: Paintings, Sculptures, Drawings was curated from collection of the artist's work at the Belger Art Center of Kansas City, MO.

The Museum of Texas Tech University is located at 3301 4th Street (SE corner of 4th and Indiana Avenue), where ample free parking is available in the north and west parking lots. For more information or to request special assistance, contact the MoTTU Education Office at 806.742.2432, or email to museum.education@ttu.edu. Stay up to date with MoTTU exhibitions and events at www.museum.ttu.edu.

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"There's something for everyone at the Museum."

Additional Information:

ABOUT THE ARTIST by Phil Vander Weg, Guest Curator

Trained as an abstract expressionist, shaped in part by the simplicity of minimalism during his early formative years, Robert Stackhouse the painter became a sculptor with a singular rule to guide him for more than 30 years: keep it simple, keep it direct.

Directness for Stackhouse is a natural result of many factors such as his rather traditional choice of materials and techniques: paper, watercolor, pencil, charcoal, and wood. For him, be it sculpture of wood fabricated with basic carpentry, or monumentally scaled watercolor, it remains a hands-on exercise throughout. It may also be found in the simplicity of his recurrent form motifs: the serpent and the ship. Of course these shapes have a multitude of meanings and associations for us all. They can be about comfort, aggression, enclosure, openness, exclusion, joy, fantasy, history and any number of conditions. Although we may never have encountered forms quite like Robert Stackhouse builds for us, they always have elements we are directly familiar with in some fashion. He rarely explicitly tells us directly of his specific ambitions for a particular piece, yet he has upon occasion confessed that these forms are nonetheless portraiture for him. The serpent becomes his inner self-portrait, while the ship signifies an outer self-portrait. Not to be overlooked is how Robert Stackhouse relates to others and the world about him. He is a people person, a teacher's teacher that loves students. He is accessible and prefers direct interaction on many levels with others. Sensing a student volunteer's discomfort upon first meeting him, his instant greeting of "just call me Bob" made all the difference in the world for the intense working days ahead. Nor is he reticent to tackle difficult, sometimes subconsciously charged issues. Long time close

friend and dealer, Myra Morgan, has said, "Bob will confront the fear and turn it into an asset."

There is a uniquely cyclical nature to the way Stackhouse works and the manner in which pieces inform one another. Since his first one-man show in 1972, Robert Stackhouse has been sought by various collections and sculpture parks, as well as museums to form unique site-specific sculptures. Most often he starts with a straight forward mechanical, or plan drawing, that allows him to determine material constraints, dimensions and the like. He is then able to use these initial two-dimensional abstractions to think three-dimensionally prior to actual construction. Once the sculptural work is underway, however, he is no longer thinking three-dimensionally. "I've figured all that out by then," he points out, "now I'm thinking about what I have to do to this form to make the two-dimensional work I seek."

Following his sculpture installation, he frequently does drawings, paintings and prints which document the work and afford a permanent record of pieces that are often transient. Clearly the energy and nuances that he invests these objects with become far more than simple documentation of the three-dimensional origins. Yet other works evolve out of personalized juxtapositions of multiple images and their more rudimentary beginnings. His sensitivity and ability to command scale is remarkable, going from delicate drawings of a few inches, *Red Glass Study*, to complex watercolor forms measuring nearly 8x14 feet like *Indigo Way*. A visit to *Michigan Swell*, measuring just over 100 feet in length on the Western Michigan University campus, reveals a refined ability to control not only size, but to also maximize the variables of site to best advantage. The ambiguities and surplus of narrative meanings in Robert Stackhouse's mature work set him apart from most of his contemporaries. Although he is capable of entertaining one for hours with anecdotes and narrative tidbits, he never insists, or intrudes upon our individual interpretations. Put another way by critic Carter Ratcliff, "Since it is our responsibility to make sense of his works, the sense that we make receives no challenge from him."

EXHIBIT INFORMATION	
Name of Exhibit:	<i>Robert Stackhouse: Paintings, Sculptures, Drawings</i>
Dates:	August 26 – November 11, 2007
Lender's Name:	Belger Arts Center 2100 Walnut Street, Kansas City, MO. 64108 Phone: 816.474.3250; Fax: 816.474.3250 Email: <i>mdickens@belgerartscenter.org</i>
No. of Objects:	123 works
INTERVIEWER INFORMATION	
Contact for Interview:	Dr. Peter S. Briggs, Helen DeVitt Jones Curator of Art Museum of Texas Tech University Phone: 806.742.2442 <i>peter.briggs@ttu.edu</i>
Contacts recommended by Mo Dickens, Gallery Assistant, Belger Arts Center, <i>mdickens@belgerartscenter.org</i>	
Contact for Interview:	Evelyn Craft, Director, the Arts Center, St. Petersburg, FL Good contact person regarding Robert Stackhouse's work. She can be reached at <i>evelyn@theartscenter.org</i> . She has had a lot of contact with Bob in recent years.
Contact for Interview:	Rick Gruber, Director, Ogden Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA Wrote a biography about Stackhouse about five years ago. Rick says he'll be traveling a lot this summer and isn't familiar with Stackhouse's most recent work, so he would be more for general comments about Bob's career. His email is <i>rgruber@ogdenmuseum.org</i>