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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Gyotaku Artist Leslie Charleville Creates Special Edition Blue Alligator Print to Benefit LASM's COVID-19 Relief Efforts**

**BATON ROUGE, LA** – Gyotaku artist Leslie Charleville has created and donated a special edition Blue Alligator print to benefit the Louisiana Art & Science Museum's COVID-19 financial recovery. Those who donate \$25 or more to LASM's online COVID-19 relief efforts during the week of **#GivingTuesdayNow**, from Monday, May 4 to Friday, May 8, will be entered to win this piece, which is valued at \$2,000. Donations will be recorded as entries in increments of \$25 – \$25 results in 1 entry, \$100 results in 4 entries, and so on. The winner will be chosen by random number generator at noon on Saturday, May 9.

"I created this piece for LASM because I recently heard a statistic that up to a third of museums in this country may not survive this pandemic," stated Leslie Charleville. "I want to do my part to ensure that LASM can continue offering quality programs and outreach to the community. Blue has become a symbolic color during COVID-19 – I hope that this Blue Alligator inspires feelings of positivity for the future in the LASM supporter who wins it."

Like many nonprofit organizations, the LASM is struggling to weather the financial challenges caused by the COVID-19 crisis. Since temporarily closing in March, the Museum has had to lay off over 2/3 of its staff and is projected to lose over \$380,000 in earned revenues by the end of June. LASM has expanded the global day of giving #GivingTuesdayNow, which was designed as an emergency response to the need caused by COVID-19, to five days of giving in order to raise as much money as possible.

"We are so fortunate to have Leslie's generosity in response to this crisis," stated Serena Pandos, LASM's President & Executive Director. "It is my sincerest hope that our community answers LASM's call for help, and that Leslie's beautiful gyotaku print inspires folks from all over to donate to the only art and science museum in the region, which includes the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium, the largest and most technologically advanced planetarium in the state of Louisiana. Donations from those who are able – of any amount – help us offset our significant financial losses, continue producing virtual content at [virtual-lasm.org](http://virtual-lasm.org), develop our new hospital outreach program, and enable us to reopen safely when that good day comes."

Donate online at [lasm.org](http://lasm.org). Since the LASM is a 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable organization, all gifts are tax-deductible. As part of the new CARES Act, contributions of up to \$300 are eligible for an above-the-line tax deduction, regardless of whether or not the individual itemizes.

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**Image:** Gyotaku artist Leslie Charleville stands with her special edition Blue Alligator print, measuring 34" by 72" and created in response to COVID-19, in the Louisiana Art & Science Museum's Solar System Gallery.

### **About the Louisiana Art & Science Museum**

Housed on the banks of the Mississippi River in a historic railway station on the banks of the Mississippi River in downtown Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum believes that art and science shape each other, our lives, and the world. While the Museum is temporarily closed due to COVID-19, access to the Museum's online portal for at home art and science experiences is available at [virtual-lasm.org](http://virtual-lasm.org).

The Museum, founded in 1962 and accredited by the American of Museums since 1972, is home to the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium, the largest and most advanced planetarium in Louisiana and one of the largest in the southeastern United States; a permanent collection including over 4,000 objects; one of the only permanent ancient Egypt galleries in the southeastern United States; and displays changing art exhibitions of local and international acclaim.

A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, the Museum relies on the support of donations to operate; support the Museum at [lasm.org](http://lasm.org). Stay in touch at [lasm.org](http://lasm.org) and on social media, where plans for reopening will be shared.

### **About Leslie Charleville**

Artist Leslie Charleville, of Rosedale, Louisiana, has been inspired by the outdoors for all of her life; she grew up fishing, hunting, and visiting Grand Isle. For nearly ten years, she has used the Japanese printmaking technique of *gyotaku*, which means "fish rubbing," to create prints of fish, alligators, octopi, sand dollars, and more. This technique originated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when fishermen would use it to record the size and species of their catches.

Leslie's art goes beyond just documenting the appearance of the animal. She uses the *gyotaku* technique because it is an authentic art form, serving as proof that the animal truly lived and existed in nature. Her prints preserve the unique physical qualities of the animal, imperfections and all, while also showing her appreciation and awareness of the animal as a living being. She experiments with materials, using traditional Japanese sumi ink along with acrylic and oil paint, to create her often-colorful prints. A true South Louisiana outdoorswoman, Leslie is always adventurously looking for critters to ink!