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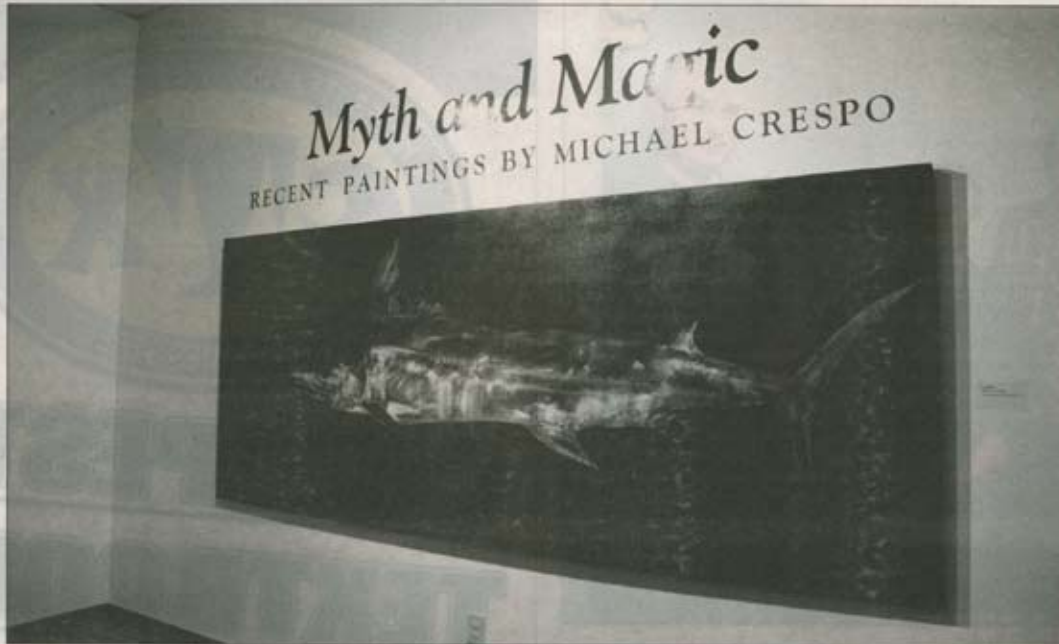


PHOTO BY CRAIG HICKMAN

## 'Myth and Magic': Michael Crespo shown at LASM

BY DAVE MANNINA  
Contributing Writer

A new exhibit has come to town at the Louisiana Art & Science Museum; however, the painter premiered is anything but a stranger to the area. The artist is Michael Crespo, native Louisianan and esteemed professor of art at LSU.

Crespo's exhibit, "Myth and Magic," is open until September 28 of this year and features 20 of his most recent paintings.

The exhibit hosts a variety of animals and dark landscapes set in oils and watercolors. Crespo draws his inspiration from a wide variety of sources, from literature and philosophy to ancient myths and stories, even back to the Italian Renaissance masters. The majority of his works center on animals such as fish and cattle due to the multiple symbolisms they are attributed by age-old myth and legend. His use of chiaroscuro in detailing the intensely dark multi-layered backgrounds, however, creates a dramatic

sense of lighting, which serves the dual purpose of adding an eerie glow to his subjects as well as calling attention to the philosophical void of the piece.

Overall, the exhibit seems to depict the darkened corners of the subconscious, illuminating the symbolic dreamscapes of the creative mind with the due reverence of past and present interpretations. Crespo lists his work as "Zen Baroque" and, after seeing this exhibit and searching out other works, one will definitely agree that the title

is fitting if not spot-on in classification.

His work is shown in galleries around the United States and, besides teaching at LSU since 1971, Crespo has also hosted a series of art workshops and seminars abroad as well as published numerous best-selling art instruction books. Obviously a master of his trade, Crespo and his art are definitely a vital artery of the Baton Rouge art scene.

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