

***2018 Fall Tour Committee***

September 10, 2018

***For Immediate Release:***

**Clementine Hunter House Ribbon Cutting Honors Gitter Gallery and Cane River Art Corporation**

The highlight of the 64th Annual Natchitoches Fall Pilgrimage will be the preserved Clementine Hunter House at Melrose Plantation. On Friday Oct. 12th at 4:00 pm, the APHN Candlelight Tour will begin with the ribbon cutting and reveal of the artist’s home. The event is sponsored by the Association for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches.

Honorees of the event will be Gitter Gallery and Cane River Art Corporation. Designer Doug Gitter partnered with the CRA Corporation to produce Clementine Hunter inspired hand-made home décor products known as The Clementine Hunter Collection. A portion of every purchase goes to the preservation of the Clementine Hunter House and the interpretation of her life and work at Melrose Plantation.

“We designed the collection to take artwork which was once affordable and make it affordable again so that others would enjoy a piece of American History,” explained Gitter.

Once the ribbon is cut at the 4:00 pm ceremony, **Candlelight Tour** ticket holders will see the reveal of the preservation work on the structure’s exterior and interior as well as interpretative panels throughout the home telling the story of the artist’s life and work. Preservation work has included foundation repair, painting and completion of a deck and accessibility ramp in the rear of the structure. The design of the original wallpaper was painstakingly recreated by artists from archive photographs and one small fragment, and the paper has been installed in the room where she first painted.

The **Candlelight Tour** will continue from 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm at the Northwestern State University Historic District with hors d’oeuvres at the President’s Home/Alumni Center on the NSU Campus. The evening meal will be served as part of the tour at Russell Hall. *Cane River Ladies*, a play by Dr. Vicki Parrish will have performances at 7:30 pm and 8:30 pm in Varnado Hall. A Dessert Reception will conclude the evening’s salute to the honorees at Nelson Hall, the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training. Doug Gitter will be signing The Clementine Hunter Collection at both the Ribbon Cutting and the Dessert Reception.

On Saturday Oct. 13,9:00 am – 4:00 pm, the **Town Tour** will feature Clementine Hunter originals and the entire Clementine Hunter Collection by Gitter Gallery throughout the homes. A Speaker Series highlights Saturday morning at the Lemee House. The Clementine Hunter House will be part of the **Cane River Country Tour** on Saturday and Sunday Oct. 13 – 14, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm, with a Speaker Series in the barn at Melrose Plantation on Saturday afternoon including a 3:30 pm special screening of Art Shiver’s documentary *Clementine Hunter’s World*. Combined, the three tours make up The 3rd Clementine Hunter Biennial, will once more be the largest exhibition of Hunter originals in history. The Clementine Hunter has been recognized by the National Trust of Historic Places as a Distinguished Historic Artist’s Home and Studio. It is the only home of an African-American artist so recognized. Melrose Plantation already has National Landmark status. The Clementine Hunter House is currently in the second phase toward recognition as a National Landmark on its own accord by the United States Park Service.

“Doug Gitter’s contribution has been enormous. He brought Clementine’s art to an international audience. Millions saw her art for the first time when The Clementine Hunter Collection was one of Oprah’s Favorite Things,” said Gary Cathey, this year’s Natchitoches Fall Pilgrimage and Tour of Homes Chair. “His work with the Cane River Art Corporation allows the artist’s home to be preserved for future generations. Their contribution is lasting and everyone who loves Clementine Hunter owes them much gratitude for what they have given.”

For more information: [www.melroseplantation.org](http://www.melroseplantation.org). One tour: $25, Two Tour Package $40, Three Tour Package, $50.

For more information: [www.gittergallery.com](http://www.gittergallery.com). To schedule an interview with Doug Gitter please call (504) 919-4040.