

Exhibits celebrate the art of Carnival krewes

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In celebration of a recently completed two-year project to place more than 5,500 original float and costume designs from the “Golden Age of Carnival” online, the Louisiana Research Collection at Tulane University is exhibiting “The Art of Proteus” on the uptown campus.



This 1894 Krewe of Proteus float designed by Carlotta Bonnecaze reflects the parade theme that year ? “Shah Nameh, the epic of the kings.” This float was “TahÃ©mers: the binder of demons.” (Image from the Louisiana Research Collection)

“This is a rare opportunity to view original artworks from the world's largest Carnival design collection,” says Leon C. Miller, head of Louisiana Research Collections. “Particularly interesting are handwritten notes on the designs indicating sizes, colors and measurements.”

The exhibit, which will be on display through May 30, will showcase costume and float designs of the Proteus krewe from 1882â€“1907. The exhibit in Special Collections, room 205 of Jones Hall, is open from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

“The designs are not only stunningly beautiful works of art in their own right but working drawings used by highly-skilled artisans, with pin holes where the designs were tacked to a wall or board while being used,” Miller says.

The bulk of the online [collection](#) includes designs from Comus (1882-1975) and Proteus (1882-1939) as well as Momus (1902-1913) and Rex (1912-1914). It shows the work of Carnival's most notable designers, including Charles Briton, Jennie Wilde, Carlotta Bonnacaze and Bror Anders Wikstrom.

“The effort to place the collection online had three purposes: to make Carnival designs easily available to students and scholars around the world, to reveal the true artistry and beauty behind Carnival in New Orleans, and to digitally preserve these international treasures,” Miller says.

Library staff made high-quality scans using the latest archival-grade equipment and digital preservation standards. Master files are stored on an off-campus server, which is backed up daily to servers out of state, to ensure preservation of the files.