



New York City artist Paul Villinski considers his butterfly selection carefully while setting up his “Alight” show at Tayloe Piggott Gallery. Now on display through mid-October, the show features sculptures concocted from more than 1,200 hand-crafted butterflies.

Ready for takeoff

A week of work turns Glenwood Street gallery into butterfly sanctuary.

*Text by Emma Breyse
Photographs by Travis J. Garner*

It takes two vehicles, five people and seven days to move 2,000 butterflies from New York to Jackson.

For Jackson’s Tayloe Piggott Gallery, that effort resulted in an exhibition, now showing, of Paul Villinski’s sculptures that filled the Glenwood Street venue with aluminum-can butterflies. The show runs through Oct. 16.

“It was fascinating to see the transformation of the gallery,” said Carolyn Ripps, associate manager of the gallery. “It’s just a beautiful exhibition.”

Villinski, who is from New York, brought his partner and three studio assistants to install nine pieces in the space, she said.

With 100 to 200 butterflies per sculpture — including one that is 8 feet tall — there are 1,500 to 2,000 butterflies now inhabiting Tayloe Piggott, Ripps said.

The sculptures traveled across the country carefully packed in the back of a 16-foot U-Haul truck driven by one of Villinski’s studio assistants.

The rest of the team arrived by plane Aug. 26 and spent a week working eight hours a day to put the pieces back together.

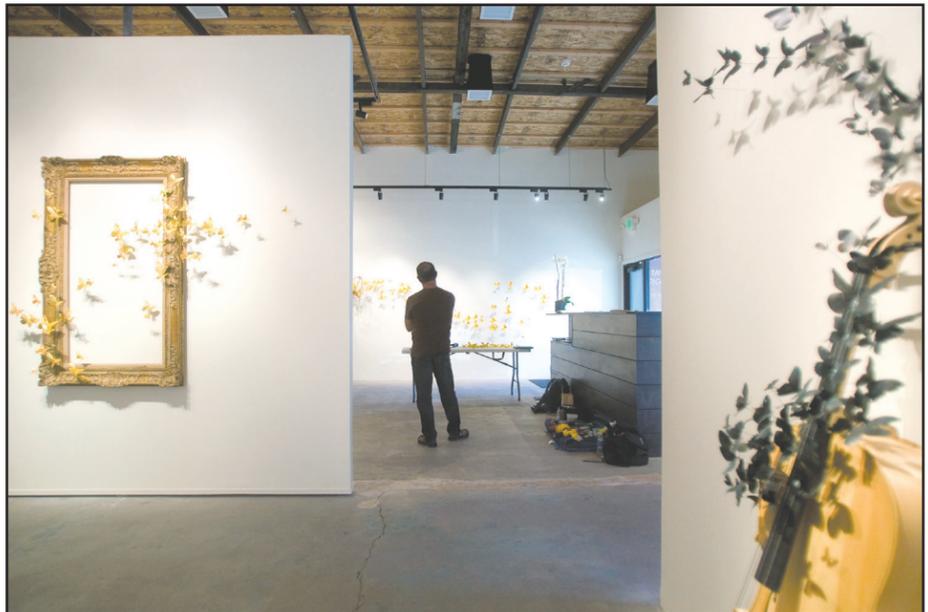
For several of the artworks, the team uses a template to put the components in the same places every time.

In one case, Villinski chose a spot in Tayloe Piggott and set the sculpture up to fit that space, Ripps said.

The site-specific piece includes 100 butterflies set up with counterweights that respond to everything from passing breezes to the motion of viewers, she said.

“They chose a location in the gallery that’s kind of a little hidden nook,” Ripps said. “It’s a very intimate kind of space, and you can really interact with the piece.”

For information about Villinski and his inspiration for the nine butterfly-themed sculptures, see page 12D of the News&Guide’s Fall Arts Festival supplement, inserted in today’s weekly paper. For exhibition dates and for more images of Villinski’s work, visit TayloePiggottGallery.com.



Villinski eyes a wall display while setting up “Alight.” Seeing the transformation of the gallery with thousands of butterflies was “fascinating,” said Carolyn Ripps, associate manager. “It’s just a beautiful exhibition.”



Villinski’s butterflies are made of recycled aluminum cans. As a group, the butterflies in “Alight” represent more than 40 species.