



American Federation of Arts

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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS INTRODUCES CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL ART FROM CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART, FEATURING NEARLY FIFTY WORKS BY TODAY'S MOST ACCLAIMED ARTISTS

AN INTERNATIONAL LEGACY: SELECTIONS FROM CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART PREMIERES AT OKLAHOMA CITY MUSEUM OF ART IN MAY 2003 AND TRAVELS TO NEVADA MUSEUM OF ART IN JANUARY 2004, AND ADDITIONAL VENUES

January 6, 2003 (New York, NY) — Organized by the American Federation of Arts (AFA), a leading cultural organization and originator of acclaimed traveling art exhibitions, and Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, *An International Legacy: Selections from Carnegie Museum of Art* features nearly fifty works from that preeminent institution. This major exhibition will be the first to present key works from the collection and will travel to museums across the country, including Oklahoma City Museum of Art, May 16–August 10, 2003; Nevada Museum of Art, January 9–April 4, 2004; and additional venues. Support for *An International Legacy* has been provided by the Founders Circle of the AFA and the Henry L. Hillman Foundation.

Drawn from the museum's rich holdings of contemporary art from around the world, this exhibition, organized by guest curator Sheryl Conkelton, surveys the dominant trends in art of the last thirty years. Stylistic developments in photography, video, and multimedia installations, as well as the renewed enthusiasm for figurative painting in recent years, will be examined.

"Part of the American Federation of Arts' mission is to bring important art to a greater public and we are particularly interested in increasing the exposure of contemporary art," says Julia Brown, Director of the American Federation of Arts. "We are pleased to be creating in collaboration with Carnegie Museum of Art a major exhibition of contemporary art from their valuable holdings. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring these art works to audiences around the country."

"It is an unusual and welcome opportunity, thanks to the AFA, for Carnegie Museum of Art to be able to share its exceptional collection of contemporary art with a wider audience in America. The legacy of the *Carnegie International* exhibition is rich and thought-provoking as demonstrated here," states Richard Armstrong, the Henry J. Heinz II Director of Carnegie Museum of Art.

Since 1896, Carnegie Museum of Art has presented the finest contemporary global art in an exhibition series known as the *Carnegie International*. Today, the museum's collection, which includes a number of acquisitions from past *International*, comprises unusually rich holdings of post-Pop art.

Sheryl Conkelton selected works of art that range from Minimalist sculptures to examples of various schools of painting in the 1980s, to recent works that incorporate objects that refer to real-life activities. "My concept in creating this show is to trace the principal artistic movements of the last three decades and to explore the reduction and expansion of the artistic gesture in relation to the choice and manipulation of materials used," she explains.

The exhibition features Minimalist art of the 1960s–70s, including Donald Judd's *Untitled* (1974) and Carl Andre's *Aluminum-Lead Plain* (1969), using materials that evoke the machine and disguise the artist's presence. *An International Legacy* ... highlights conceptual art, which focuses on the artist's thinking process, transferring the artistic act from the object as seen in John Baldessari's *That Is* (1986) and Lawrence Weiner's *Ever Widening Circles of Shattered Glass* (1984–85).

Conkelton's selection also includes German Neo-expressionism and American figurative painting, as the '70s and early '80s witnessed a resurgence of painterly complexity and expressionist ambition. Anselm Kiefer's *Der Rhein* (The Rhine) (1983) and Georg Baselitz's *Die Verspottung* (The Mocking) (1984), represent German

Neo-expressionism; Elizabeth Murray's *Don't Be Cruel* (1985–86) and Julian Schnabel's *Sir Herbert Read* (1983) represent the New Image painters of the United States. Neo-expressionists also revived past painting styles and superimposed images in collages that depict the visual experience of a shifting world, as seen in works such as Sigmar Polke's *Hochsitz II* (Watchtower) (1984–85) and Gerhard Richter's *612-1 Untitled* (1986). Photography was also appropriated by a number of American artists and became a rich field of exploration, as in Jeff Wall's *Diagonal Composition #2* (1998) and Cindy Sherman's *#147* (1985).

In the 1990s, several artists focused on the nature of experience and our understanding of it. Barely altered real-life materials were used to investigate the shifting definitions of personality, as in Mike Kelley's *Gussied Up* (1992) and Tony Oursler's *(Telling) Vision #3* (1994). In works such as Robert Gober's *Drain* (1989) and Rachel Whiteread's *Yellow Bath* (1996), the authenticity of both perceived and actual experience evolved as an artistic subject. Artists turned to the material history of art itself, reinvigorating and redefining the mediums and methods of traditional painting, as in Luc Tuymans' *Pillows* (1994) and Vija Celmins's *Night Sky #12* (1995–96). The end of the '90s found art in an energetic and complex dialogue between the object and its absence, as in Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Untitled* installation which displays the detritus of his making tea for visitors.

Since 1970, Carnegie Museum of Art also has been building a significant collection of video-based art, focusing on independent artists who used the medium in innovative ways (often surrounding an installation element), to comment on and investigate popular culture. Among the video works included in the exhibition will be Nam June Paik's *Global Grove* (1973) and Diana Thater's *The best space is the deep space* (1998).

Sheryl Conkelton is an independent curator. She has organized several exhibitions, including *Uta Barth, In Between Places* (2000); *Coming to Life: The Figure in American Art, 1955–1965* (1999); and *Annette Messenger* (1995). In addition to writing exhibition catalogues, Conkelton is the author of *Northwest Mythologies: The Interactions of Mark Tobey, Morris Graves, Kenneth Callahan and Guy Anderson* (2003); *Aaron Siskind, The Fragmentation of Language* (1997); and *Frederick Sommer* (1995). She has also contributed essays to *All Amazed: For Roy Kiyooka* (University of British Columbia, 2002); *Deep Storage, Arsenal of Memory* (Henry Art Gallery and P.S. 1, 1998) and *Twentieth Century Photography in America* (Fundacio La Caixa, 1990). Previously, she was Senior Curator at the Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle; Associate Curator in the Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York; and Acting Head of the Photography Department at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

A fully illustrated catalogue, published by the American Federation of Arts, accompanies the exhibition and features an essay by Sheryl Conkelton outlining the aesthetic and intellectual debates about shifting forms in contemporary art, and tracing the sources in and connections to earlier artistic movements and intellectual traditions. Additional texts on the artists and their work by Elizabeth Thomas, Assistant Curator of Contemporary Arts at the Carnegie, and Conkelton, and an introduction, written by Carnegie Museum of Art's director, Richard Armstrong, on the museum's holdings of contemporary art and the role the *International* have played in shaping the collection, are part of the catalogue.

For nearly a hundred years, the **American Federations of Arts** (AFA) has originated and developed traveling art exhibitions in partnership with member museums both in the United States and abroad. Under the leadership of Director Julia Brown, the AFA serves the museum community via its exhibition, education, and professional development programs. Current and upcoming AFA exhibitions include *The Sensuous and the Sacred: Chola Bronzes from South India*; *Degas and the Dance*; *Eternal Egypt: Masterworks of Ancient Art from The British Museum*; and *Millet to Matisse: Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century French Painting from Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow*. For additional information visit the AFA's Web site at www.afaweb.org.

Founded by industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1895, **Carnegie Museum of Art** is nationally and internationally recognized for its distinguished collection of American and European works from the sixteenth century to the present. The Heinz Architectural Center, part of Carnegie Museum of Art, is dedicated to the collection and exhibition of architectural representations and to the study of all aspects of the built environment. General support for the exhibitions and programs at Carnegie Museum of Art is provided by grants from The Heinz Endowments and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. For more information about Carnegie Museum of Art, call 412.622.3131 or visit our web site at www.cmoa.org.