

# AROUND THE block

ACTIVITIES OF THE MARY AND LEIGH BLOCK MUSEUM OF ART • NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY • SPRING 2012



## GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Block friends and supporters,

This summer we present the most comprehensive exhibition yet of works from our collection. What a revelation it has been for me, as I settle into my role as the Block's Ellen Philips Katz Director, to get acquainted with these diverse works of art and the many individual donors who have helped the Block to build its collection. The collection is the foundation of our teaching mission. The Museum's Eloise W. Martin Study Center enables students, faculty, and Museum visitors to engage in close looking in an intimate setting where the Museum staff can share its expertise. To experience a work of art firsthand can be transformative in the life of a student. I can remember the first time a print by Rembrandt was placed in front of me to behold. Unforgettable!

Our new website brings the collection directly to you so that you can learn more about these works of art before and after your visit to the Block. In addition, you will have easy access to information about our events, read blog entries by students, faculty, and Museum staff, and even watch videos and listen to podcasts! This is just one more way for you to go "Around the Block."

The Block's collection is full of surprises. It has unique strengths that define its special character: works by Chicago's own Marion Mahony Griffin, one of the world's first licensed women architects; an internationally renowned collection of pioneering digital works on paper; and superb examples of art from our region, from the WPA era to the Hairy Who—the group of Chicago Imagists that included the late Northwestern faculty member Ed Paschke—and beyond. The



Museum is now poised to acquire two monumental prints by Sarah Sze, recipient of a MacArthur "genius" fellowship who was recently named the artist to represent the United States in the 2013 Venice Biennale. This significant acquisition is made possible through your contributions at our recent "Why Make Art?" benefit and your ongoing support.

Indeed, "Why make art?" is one of the most important questions a museum can raise in the minds of its visitors. Come to the Block this summer to ponder this question with us and to explore the wonder of the human imagination and our impulse to image and to reimagine our world through art on paper.

Lisa G. Corrin, *The Ellen Philips Katz Director*

## KEEP THIS ART AT NORTHWESTERN SARAH SZE, NIGHT AND DAY

2003, color offset lithographs and screenprints. Edition 7. Published and printed by the LeRoy Neiman Center for Print Studies, Columbia University, New York. Courtesy the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York.

The Block Museum is asking supporters to help us complete the acquisition of two works on paper by Sarah Sze (Chinese-American, born 1969), an artist best known for gallery-size intricate installations con-

structed from everyday objects. Sze's diptych *Night and Day* will enhance the Block's collection of prints by such sculptors as Claes Oldenburg, Alice Aycock, and Alexander Calder.

Five years in the making, *Night and Day* explore the boundaries between two- and three-dimensional art. While distinctly works on paper, they possess the complexity and scope of a quintessential Sze sculpture. In a recent conversation with the Block Museum, Sze compared the creation of the two with the construction of her installations, saying, "Because printmaking is so process-oriented, and because you can tinker so much in a way that you can't so much with drawing, the



## SPRING/SUMMER 2012 EXHIBITIONS Admission to exhibitions is free of charge

### Art on Paper: Prints, Drawings, and Photographs from the Block Museum

May 11–August 26 • Main Gallery

*Art on Paper* reflects the depth and diversity of the nearly 5,000 objects in the Block Museum's permanent collection. Featuring culturally important and technologically innovative works on paper by a range of artists—Albrecht Dürer, Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, J. M. Whistler, Mary Cassatt, Wassily Kandinsky, Robert Motherwell, Andy Warhol, Ed Paschke, Robert Mapplethorpe, Laura Letinsky, and more—spanning more than seven centuries, the exhibition examines the role of the collection as a cross-disciplinary research and teaching tool at Northwestern.

Support for this exhibition is provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art on behalf of William Osborn and on behalf of David Kabiller; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; Rubens Family Foundation; and Evanston Arts Council.

### MFA Thesis Exhibition from the Department of Art Theory & Practice

May 4–June 17 • Alsdorf Gallery

This exhibition is the culmination of the course of study leading to the master of fine arts degree from Northwestern University. This year's exhibition features the work of Robert Chase Heishman, Zach Meyer, Madsen Minax, Rachel Niffenegger, and Megan Schvaneveldt. An exhibition catalogue is available.

This exhibition is co-organized by the Department of Art Theory & Practice at Northwestern University. Support for the exhibition is provided by the Norton W. Walbridge Fund and the Cary Lane Graduate Stipend courtesy of Dr. Madeleine Wing Adler.

### The Immortal Art Project

May 10–June 17 • Ellen Philips Katz and Howard C. Katz Gallery

A collaboration with the One Book One Northwestern program, this exhibition displays a scroll of colorful thumbprints made by members of the University community in response to the book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, the non-fiction account of an African-American woman from whom cells were taken without her knowledge and used in groundbreaking medical research.

layers in the print are really almost like sculptural elements that can be moved and manipulated."

As with the artist's sculptures, *Night and Day* reveal themselves to the viewer over time, rewarding sustained examination with a sense of rapture. "When you scale it to a certain point where the scale tips," says Sze, "as a viewer you can actually enter it. You can't really see yourself in relationship to it as an object because it kind of encompasses you."

And it is true: to view *Night and Day* are as disorienting and enchanting as galaxy gazing through a constantly shifting telescope or

watching nano-scale machinations through a roving microscope.

See for yourself. The pair is on display at the entrance to the new exhibition *Art on Paper: Prints, Drawings, and Photographs from the Block Museum*.

To keep this art at Northwestern, call Helen Hilken at 847.491.4178 or make a gift at [giving.northwestern.edu/nu/block](http://giving.northwestern.edu/nu/block).

Frankie DiCiaccio (School of Communication, 2012)



# ART ON PAPER

## Prints, Drawings, and Photographs from the Block Museum



This spring and summer the Block presents its most comprehensive exhibition yet of works from its permanent collection. Northwestern student Isaac Alpert (Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, 2014) spoke with senior curator Debora Wood about the show and how it represents the span and depth of the Block's holdings.

**Isaac Alpert:** Because the exhibition is drawn from the Block's permanent collection, I thought it would be useful to first ask how the Block began collecting.

Debora Wood: The exhibit begins by giving insight into what Northwestern University collected before there was a museum. The Block Museum—it was called the Mary and Leigh Block Gallery at its founding in 1980—inherited many artworks that had been acquired over many years by various University departments. We've been able to trace that one of the first donations to the University that made its way into the Block Museum's collection came from the Carnegie Corporation. In 1933 the organization gave a number of prints to Northwestern, including a beautiful little Giovanni Piranesi etching that will be in the exhibition. Also, in 1962 and 1964, Norman H. and Marie Louise Pritchard made two major gifts of about 270 prints and drawings, mostly older works, that helped lay a solid foundation for the University collection. In 1949–50, Marion Mahony Griffin made a very important donation of drawings and architectural reproductions by her and her husband, Walter Burley Griffin. Thomas Folds and J. Carson Webster, faculty in what was then the Department of Art, headed an accessions committee for Northwestern, and they

played an important role in bringing that Griffin collection here. Finally, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences Dean Rudolph Weingartner saw to it that important Kandinsky and Matisse prints became part of our collection.

After opening, the Block received a grant from the Illinois Arts Council to buy prints by Chicago artists. So right away, artists such as Jim Nutt and Roger Brown were represented in the collection. In 1986 Richard L. Sandor made a very large gift of photographs by W. Eugene Smith. In a letter written at the time of his gift, Sandor said, "Because of Northwestern's strengths in theater and music, I felt it was important to include Smith's work, which relates to these fields."

**IA: How did the collection's initial foundation influence subsequent acquisitions?**

DW: The foundation laid a basis for more thoughtful and careful building of a graphic arts collection over time. We've continued to acquire prints, for example, but we've been building a fuller and wider history of the media, acquiring older works as well as works that show new directions that the media is taking. The collection's foundation in prints and photographs also informs our mission, to study and exhibit reproducible media and its capacity for reaching a wide audience and instigating change. We see this as an important role for a university museum, because the university is a place of learning and a place of growing.

**IA: How do you see the current collection and future acquisitions playing a part in the teaching and scholarship that goes on at Northwestern?**

DW: One way is through the Museum's Eloise W. Martin Study Center, where faculty and students, as well as outside scholars, come to study art from the collection. For example, art history professor Huey Copeland taught a freshman seminar class that focused on Andy Warhol, and students came here to study and write papers about the Warhol photographs in our collection. Melody Deusner, a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Art History, also used the Block's collection in teaching, sending her students here to look at and respond to WPA-era works in our collection.

**IA: How does student research inform exhibitions?**

DW: We've always had students working with us, either as fellows or as employees. One of the ways students have been involved is research—artists' bios, historical information, and other areas—that shapes our presentation of work in exhibitions and the content in exhibition catalogues and brochures. Some graduate students have even curated exhibitions from our collections. I think the different spin that we're putting on this exhibition is that we're asking students not only to be



involved in certain levels of research but also to select works from the show that interest them and share their personal response with the audience. These labels will be placed throughout the galleries with the student's name, school, and year, because we really want to show that this Museum and this collection are here for the students; it's here for the University to use. We simply want to make a much more active example of that engagement.

**IA: It seems symbiotic in a way: the Museum is influenced by Chicago artists, while also trying to provide the city of Chicago with a forum to see such artists.**

DW: Right; exactly. We have examples of this in our new exhibit, where we have worked with artists to benefit the Museum as well as benefiting them. A few years back, we bought studio time at Anchor Graphics and asked artists to simply make as many prints as they wanted, with the understanding that they would give one print to the Block collection and one print that we could sell in a benefit; everything else they made they could keep. It was a great opportunity, and it's always wonderful when we can work with the artists who are right here in the city.

**IA: Are there artists in the exhibition who don't see as much "wall time" as more famous artists?**

DW: One of the most difficult sections of the exhibit for me to select was a very small grouping of early 20th-century American works. We have a few hundred of these in the collection, and they're really remarkable. Many of these artists are lesser known, but they were so critical to the history of American art in the early 20th century: WPA artists, Farm Securities Administration artists, and others. One who comes to mind is Hughie Lee-Smith, an African-American artist who was employed through the Ohio WPA and had a lot to do with the art and culture at that time. We have a fantastic print by him that will be on view. We also have a beautiful, very small

Esther Bubley photograph from 1943 of a schoolgirl waiting at a bus stop. There is so much that can be read into this image, but it's never been on view before this show. Another aspect that we're known for, a collection that was started by Rudolph Weingartner, is prints by sculptors. However, not many people have seen our drawings by sculptors, so we'll have a Robert Morris drawing on view, a Dorothy Dehner drawing, and a Bryan Hunt drawing that was made at the same time as his sculpture that is in the Block's sculpture collection. I'm hoping this show will give insight into a broad range of works that we have in the collection.

**IA: Is there a particular work that stands out to you?**

DW: That's a hard one! It's so hard to answer because every time I cross through each section of the exhibition, I'll say, "That one's really good, no wait, that one is really good." I think I have an affinity for some of the more political works. We have a remarkable print by Daumier (*Rue Transnonian*) that documents the slaughter of a family by the French government in the mid-1800s. We are also displaying Hans Haacke's print *Tiffany Cares*, in which the artist reproduced a Tiffany & Company ad from the *New York Times*—a real ad. The ad argued that purchases by the wealthy, in this case diamonds, would help the unemployed. Haacke makes this cutting response, a very biting response, and prints it on tremendously large paper. I'm drawn to these works because they use the medium of print for what it can do so well—disseminate information to instigate social and cultural change. Consequently, I have become very drawn to those, but then I look at some of our very fine drawings that I know few people have seen before, and I say, "That one is awfully good, too."





## INTRODUCING THE NEW BLOCK WEBSITE

Noticed anything new at [blockmuseum.northwestern.edu](http://blockmuseum.northwestern.edu)? The Block Museum launched a redesigned version of its website late last year. If you haven't done so already, we invite you to explore the new site, which features regularly updated content, cleaner navigation, and bigger images (makes sense for an art museum, doesn't it?). For those of us still straddling the

print and digital worlds, here's a brief guide to the Block's new website.

**HOME PAGE** Our home page gets a brand new look while creating space for more content. The Block is a multifaceted institution, and the new design allows us to visually showcase the range of activities happening at the Museum. We've also added a calendar, making it easier find out what programs the Block is offering on a given day.

**VIEW** Visit the view section to learn about what you can see at the Block—exhibitions, Block Cinema screenings, and the collection. The site's collection pages divide the Museum's holdings of more than 5,000 works into digestible categories, with slideshow highlights of prints and drawings, photographs, sculptures, computer-generated works on paper, and architectural drawings by Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin. We've also started showcasing individual artworks with our Object of the Month page.

**THE BLOCK MUSE** Navigate to the Muse for special content from Northwestern students and faculty and Block curators. You'll find videos, podcasts, and written discourse about exhibitions, films, and events at the Block and elsewhere at Northwestern and beyond.

**VISIT** Planning a trip to the Block? The visit section gives you the latest information about events, parking, and weekend tours. You can also book a group tour, plan a class trip, or make an appointment to see individual works from the Block's collection in the Eloise W. Martin Study Center.

**SUPPORT** Click to this section for information about the ways you can help grow and sustain the Block, from membership to gift opportunities.

**ABOUT** Learn about the Museum's history, find contact information for our staff, explore our interactive annual reports, get the latest news, and more.

## NORTHWESTERN'S "LINCOLN CENTER ON THE LAKE"

This summer Northwestern University will begin transforming the area around the Block Museum. Upon project completion in 2015, our neighborhood will feature a Music and Arts Green, University Visitors Center, and spectacular new building for the Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music with additional space for the School of Communication.

Lisa Corrin, the Block's Ellen Philips Katz Director, envisions the project creating a "Lincoln Center on the lake," as "prospective students and campus guests will enter the University by first passing through a precinct devoted to music, theater, film, and visual arts. This inspiring plan serves as a reminder of the significance of the arts to the Northwestern experience."

As a result of the construction, the Block will temporarily store some objects from the Outdoor Sculpture Garden. In late May we will remove all of the sculptures to the east of the Museum, including the iconic *Resting Leaf* by Hans Arp and *Interior Form* by Henry Moore. In addition, on the west side of the Museum, we will place a protective covering over Arnaldo Pomodoro's *Constructed Cylinder* and extract Virginio Ferrari's *Prism in Two Elements*.

The Block Museum apologizes for any difficulties you may encounter getting to our doors as a result of this construction project. Arts Circle Drive and the open air parking lot will be



closed beginning June 18. Parking will still be available in the garage south of the Museum. Enter the garage on the right immediately after driving onto campus. Handicapped-accessible parking is available in the lot northwest of the garage. After parking, proceed to one of the two pedestrian routes located at the northeast and northwest sides of the garage. Visitors parking in the handicapped-accessible spots will want to take the northwest route, which leads to a handicapped-accessible ramp that will bring you to the Museum entrance. Remember that parking is free after 4 p.m. on weekdays and all day on weekends. For all other times, you will need to purchase a parking pass at the Museum in advance of your next visit or buy one at the University Parking Office, located at 1819 Hinman Avenue, before using the garage.



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Block Cinema: Sonic Celluloid Friday, May 18, 8 PM

Sonic Celluloid is a collaboration between Block Cinema and WNUR, Northwestern's student-run non-commercial radio station (89.3 FM). Now in its ninth year, Sonic Celluloid is an experimental film and music event that features musicians performing original compositions or improvised scores to silent and experimental films of their choosing. It will be loud! Admission is \$4 for Block Museum members.

### Block Cinema: Cleo from 5 to 7 Thursday, May 24, 7 PM

(Agnès Varda, 1962, France, 35mm, 89 min.)  
A pioneering work of feminist cinema, *Cleo from 5 to 7* follows a young pop singer, Cleo, through the streets, neighborhoods, and parks of Paris as she awaits a meeting with her doctor to hear the results of a biopsy. Director Varda, part of a loose group of Parisian Left Bank film-

makers, infused her film with an existential questioning, as Cleo ponders her place in the world while waiting for her medical test results. Archival 35mm print courtesy of the Institut Français. Admission is \$4 for Block Museum members.

### Eloise W. Martin Study Center Open House Wednesday, June 13, 5:30 PM

The Museum's study center offers a space for members of the university community as well as the general public to view individual works from the collection. Come find out about this resource while viewing new acquisitions.

### Educating the Eye: Public Sculpture in Chicago Tuesday, July 17, 8:45 AM-2:30 PM

Boasting works by Pablo Picasso, Magdalena Abakanowicz, Anish Kapoor, and more, Chicago is a world-class city for outdoor sculpture. Join Lisa Corrin for a bus tour of Chicago's sculptural highlights. Cost is \$65 for Block members, \$80 for nonmembers. Tour leaves from and ends at the Block Museum. Lunch included. Space is limited; advance registration required. Call 847.491.5893.

### American Craft Artist Lecture: Cliff Lee Saturday, July 21, 9 AM Coffee; 10 AM Talk

Physician-turned-artist Cliff Lee applies his surgical skills to the creation of porcelain ceramics that mimic flowers, leaves, gourds and other natural forms. Lee will discuss his techniques and his work, which can be found in such collections as the White House and Yale University Art Gallery. Co-presented by the American Craft Exposition.



## MEMBERSHIP

To join, renew, or upgrade your membership, just visit [giving.northwestern.edu/nu/block](http://giving.northwestern.edu/nu/block) or call 847.491.7540.

Membership provides crucial support for the Block Museum and allows for deeper engagement with our exhibitions, programs, collection, and film series. Members enjoy benefits

such as invitations to exhibition preview receptions, discounts at the Museum shop, and reduced-price admission to special events and Block Cinema screenings.

### Block Leadership Circle Committee

The Block Leadership Circle Committee plans special events for Block Museum members and Block Leadership Circle donors while raising funds to expand the Museum's collection and its programming. The committee focuses on programs, both in and outside the Museum, that build on exhibition topics and the Block's art holdings and on engaging audiences looking for a deeper connection to the Museum. The Committee is part of a larger group of donors who support the Museum at the \$1,000 level and above.

If you would like more information about joining the Block Leadership Circle Committee or upcoming events, please contact Emily Forsgren at [e-forsgren@northwestern.edu](mailto:e-forsgren@northwestern.edu) or 847.491.7540.



### Block Leadership Circle Committee

- Patricia Barnes
- Elizabeth Bergmann
- Rosanne Dineen
- Sally Dumas
- Edith Eisner
- Pamela Elesh
- Susan P. Fuller
- Nancy Giampietro
- Jean Guritz
- Gail Hodges
- Connie Hodson
- Ruth Lasky
- Steffi Masur
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**WE'RE OPEN DURING CONSTRUCTION**

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[www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu](http://www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu)

Utagawa Sadatora, *Hotei at dusk*, from the series *The Seven Gods of Fortune*, ca. 1820s, color woodcut. Block Museum, Purchase funds provided by Connie and Tom Hodson, 2011.12.

**JOIN, RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP, OR MAKE A CONTRIBUTION ONLINE**  
[giving.northwestern.edu/nu/block](http://giving.northwestern.edu/nu/block)

**FALL EXHIBITIONS**

September 21–December 9, 2012

***De-Natured: German Art from Joseph Beuys to Martin Kippenberger***  
***Selections from the James Keith Brown and Eric Diefenbach Collection***

In the late 20th century, artists working in both the former East and West Germany were finding meaningful ways to address both the past and the present in their artworks. *De-Natured* presents the varied work of ten German artists, including Joseph Beuys, Gerhard Richter, and Sigmar Polke, from the mid-1960s into the first decade of the 21st century. Organized and circulated by the Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with funding provided by the William Hayes Ackland Trust.

***Shimon Attie: Selected Works from Sites Unseen***

During the 1990s American artist Shimon Attie presented a series of temporary installations in European cities that dealt with absence and legacies of the Holocaust, as well as the present day social and political realities. In collaboration with Northwestern radio/tv/film faculty Dave Tolchinsky and Debra Tolchinsky, the Block Museum is working with the artist to re-envision some of the projects in the Museum's Alsdorf Gallery.

Martin Kippenberger, *Untitled (The Mark)*, 1990, graphite and Letraset on hotel stationery, mounted on poster. James Keith Brown and Eric Diefenbach Collection. Courtesy Estate of Martin Kippenberger, Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne.

