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Traveling exhibition by trailblazing fiber artists debuts in Muskegon

***Innovators and Legends: Generations in Textiles and Fiber*, an exhibition of artwork by multiple generations of top-tier, internationally celebrated fiber artists is on display at the Muskegon Museum of Art through March 17, 2013.** The MMA and guest curator Geary Jones have organized the exhibition for national tour.

After closing at the MMA on March 17, 2013, the exhibition will travel to three venues: the Schweinfurth Memorial Art Center in Auburn, New York, from May 26 to August 11, 2013; the Art Museum at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky from September 8 to December 1, 2013; and the University Art Museum of Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado from January 24 to April 11, 2014.

Innovators and Legends explores the explosion of fiber as a fine arts movement during the latter half of the 20th century with over 75 works by 50 artists. The exhibition tells the story of the ongoing transformation of fiber arts from the functional and decorative to the innovative and experimental, and the creative potential of the wide array of diverse materials and techniques being used today. Contemporary themes such as narrative, identity, ecology, recycling, and political thought are explored, while continuing to draw upon the beauty and visual richness achieved through color, pattern, texture, and form.

The idea for the exhibition was conceived by Geary Jones, a Grand Rapids, Michigan based artist and teacher. Jones approached Museum staff with the idea of bringing to West Michigan an exhibition that would give the casual viewer and scholar alike a chance to see some of the extraordinary originality that suffuses the world of fibers and textiles. MMA Assistant Curator Art Martin wrote in an article for *Fiber Arts Magazine* that “Actually, the initial conversation [with Jones] went a little more like: ‘I know some amazing artists, who know other amazing artists, and we could put together a fiber and textile show that will be absolutely spectacular.’” Geary’s excitement was infectious, and the exhibition was a perfect fit for a schedule celebrating the Museum’s 100th Anniversary in 2012.

Curator Jones comments that *Innovators and Legends* contains art by “some of the best fiber artists in the world” and that “it will be a stunning exhibition, and regardless of personal taste, there should be something that just about anyone can relate to.”

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Participating artists are among the finest in the field of fiber art. Beginning with artists active in the 1960s—and Katherine Westphal from the 1940s—*Innovators and Legends* uses the art as a framework for exploring the recognition of fibers as fine art and the innovations that have occurred in the field. As each generation of artists in this exhibition pushed the boundaries of tradition, they enabled subsequent artists to expand further, challenging the very nature of fiber arts. Internationally celebrated artists such as Gerhardt Knodel, Arturo Alonzo Sandoval, Tom Lundberg, Nancy Crow, and Sherri Smith recommended peers and former students for inclusion, establishing a base of teaching and reciprocal inspiration upon which to build the exhibition.

MMA Assistant Curator Art Martin notes, “The art is as impressive as the careers and talent of the artists, and is a something-for-everyone experience. To touch on a few of the highlights: the knitted superhero costumes of Mark Newport and a *Soundsuit* by Nick Cave will share space with Gyöngy Laky’s natural wood construction *Globalization III: Red Ink*, Nancy Crow’s monoprint textile *Self-Portrait: Day Dreams and Focus*, baskets by Jane Sauer, hand-dyed quilts by Mary Anne Jordan, and a felt sculpture by Joan Livingstone. Arturo Alonzo Sandoval has contributed two pieces from his *Pattern Fusion* series, Ted Hallman two woven works from different points in his career, and Gerhardt Knodel a new mixed media work, *Do You See What I See?*”

Innovators and Legends opened December 13 with a reception, comments from the curator, and a panel discussion led by Gerhardt Knodel, a renowned fiber artist and former director of the Cranbrook Academy of Art. The opening event is free and open to the public. Call (231) 720-2598 to make reservations to attend the opening.

An exhibition catalogue, published by the MMA, accompanies *Innovators and Legends*. The 120-page, 10 by 10 inch softcover book fully illustrates all the works in the exhibition and includes curatorial essays, artists’ statements, and resume information about all of the artists. The books can be ordered by calling the MMA Gift Store at (231) 720-2580 or by e-mailing slarabee@mpsk12.net. They are priced \$22.95 each, plus shipping and tax.

Local exhibition sponsors include SPX Corporation, Blue Lake Public Radio, and MLive/Muskegon Chronicle. Additional support is provided by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

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Image Captions and Visitor Information on following page.

IMAGE CAPTIONS

(The following images can be found, in high-resolution format, at www.muskegonartmuseum.org in the website Media Room:
<http://muskegonartmuseum.org/images-list>

Gerhardt Knodel

Do You See What I See?

Tyvek, felt, horsehair, cotton, wood, plastic, metal, 2011

90 x 90 x 12 inches

Photography: jp Rearick

Nick Cave

Soundsuit

Mixed media, 2011

109 x 34 x 30 inches

Photography: James Prinz/Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Muskegon Museum of Art is located at 296 W. Webster Ave. in Muskegon, Michigan. Call 231-720-2570 or visit www.muskegonartmuseum.org for information.

Admission:

\$7.00 (Free on Thursdays)

Free admission for MMA Members,

\$5.00 Students (with I.D.)

Free for ages 17 and under

Extra admission may be charged for special exhibitions and events.

Winter Hours:

SUN noon-4:30pm

MON & TUES closed

WED, FRI, SAT 10am-4:30pm

THURS 10am-8pm

Museum Office Hours: MON-FRI 8am-5pm.