

Bowdoin College Museum of Art Organizes First Exhibition to Examine Symbolic and Conceptual Portraiture in American Art

Opening June 25, the exhibition investigates abstract portraiture from the early 20th century to today, featuring works by Gertrude Stein, Marsden Hartley, Alfred Stieglitz, and others.

Brunswick, Maine, June 24, 2016—On June 25, the Bowdoin College Museum of Art (BCMA) will present *Abstract Portraiture: Symbolic and Conceptual*, the first exhibition to examine the emergence and evolution of symbolic, abstract, and conceptual portraiture in modern and contemporary American art. The show will feature more than 60 non-figurative portraits that explore the evolving understanding of personal identity over the last century and that reflect a revolution in the very nature of portraiture itself. The exhibition will be on view at BCMA through October 23.

“Marcel Duchamp’s

continues to pose provocative questions about identity established? What is the self? As the show demonstrates, the work of Duchamp, Marcel Duchamp, and others, challenges the traditional portrayal of self and others by art. This exhibition will illuminate the evolution of portraiture, and will explore the deeper

- The first focuses on works from the 1910s and 1920s, assembled by Jonathan Frederick Walz, director of curatorial affairs & curator of American art at the Columbus Museum, Columbus, Georgia. This section highlights artists such as Charles Demuth, Marcel Duchamp, Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, Marsden Hartley, Francis Picabia, Alfred Stieglitz, Gertrude Stein, and their contemporaries.
- The second is dedicated to works from the early 1960s to 1970, selected by independent curator Kathleen Merrill Campagnolo, and featuring works by artists such as Eleanor Antin, Walter De Maria, Jim Dine, Dan Flavin, Jasper Johns, Joseph Kosuth, Yoko Ono, and Robert Rauschenberg, among others.
- The final section centers on works from the early 1990s through today, curated by Anne Collins Goodyear, co-director of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. This concluding section includes works by artists such as Janine Antoni, Ross Bleckner, Mel Bochner, Tom Friedman, Roni Horn, Byron Kim, Glenn Ligon, Sarah Sze, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and more.

By focusing on specific periods, the curators are able to delve into the political and social realities that shaped American identity

surge in the production of unconventional portraits. “While portraiture

the College's founder James Bowdoin III and his family that included Gilbert Stuart's magnificent portraits of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

The Museum is housed in the landmark Walker Art Building, designed in 1894 by Charles Follen McKim. Located on the historic quadrangle of Bowdoin College, the building is graced by murals by John La Farge, Kenyon Cox, Elihu Vedder, and Abbott Thayer. A \$20.8-million renovation and expansion in 2007 provided a stunning setting for objects as diverse as monumental Assyrian reliefs from Nimrud, Iraq; European old master paintings; and works by American modernists. The Museum is the centerpiece of Bowdoin's vibrant arts and culture community and offers a wealth of academic and educational programs. The Museum is also a prominent summer venue for major exhibitions such as

(2013), (2011), (2012),
(2015). (2014); and

Fully accessible, the Bowdoin College Museum of Art is open to the public free of charge from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday through Saturday; 10:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, and from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Media Contacts:

Suzanne Bergeron
Bowdoin College Museum of Art
207-725-3124
sbergero@bowdoin.edu

Hanna Gisel | Samantha Sharon
Resnicow + Associates
212-671-5162 | 212-671-5154
hgisel@resnicow.com | ssharon@resnicow.com