

Midwest Art History Society Conference, April 8, 9, 10, 2010—Omaha, Nebraska

The Midwest Art History Society will hold its 37th annual Conference in Omaha, Nebraska April 8 – 10, 2010. Host institutions will be the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the Kaneko center and the Joslyn Art Museum. Conference Sessions on Thursday, April 8 will be held at the Joslyn Art Museum, with opportunities to view the permanent collections of European and American art as well as the Center for Western Studies and the newly installed sculpture garden, with works by Jesus Moroles, Maya Lin, Jun Kaneko, George Sugarman, Leonard Baskin and many others. The Friday and Saturday sessions will be held at Kaneko, with tours of Jun Kaneko's work available. Kaneko was established as a center for the advance of contemporary art. The recently completed research center is a joint project of Kaneko and the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Criss Library, to provide students and scholars up to date facilities for research projects, not available in most other sites. The nearby Bemis Center for Contemporary Art will also be available for those interested. The Bemis is an urban artists' colony housed

in a converted warehouse which brings together artists from around the world for residencies of several months.

Omaha is a strong supporter of the arts. The Joslyn Art Museum is housed in a beautiful Art Deco style

building, erected in 1931 with an addition built in 1994 by Sir Norman Foster, his first American project. Other outstanding buildings are the Durham Western Heritage Museum, housed in the former Union Pacific train station, another fine Art Deco structure, and the recently

completed Holland Center for the Performing Arts. Near to the site of the Conference is the Old Market, a one-time warehouse district that has been turned into an area of restaurants, shops, art galleries and other amenities.

The Omaha Community Playhouse is the largest such company in the country and served as the theatrical springboard for Henry Fonda, Dorothy McGuire, Nick Nolte and many others. It is just one of many theater companies in Omaha. Film Streams at the Ruth Sokolof Theater is a relatively new addition to the scene, a movie house dedicated to showing classic, experimental and independent films. There is an abundance of other venues for the arts, as well.

On the afternoon of Saturday, April 10, an afternoon side trip to Lincoln to visit the Sheldon Museum of Art is



Joslyn Art Museum, Peter Kiewit Foundation Sculpture Garden, Jesús Moroles (American, b. 1950), *The Omaha Riverscape* (detail), 2008–2009, granite and water installation with Academy Black granite reflecting pool, three column fountains of Mountain Red, Camelian, and Dakota Mahogany granite, and Dakota Mahogany granite water wall, Museum purchase with funds from the Patron Circle for Contemporary Art and Helen and Ted Kolderie, 2009.

Conference

continued from the front

being arranged. The Sheldon, opened in 1962 in a building designed by Philip Johnson at the center of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, possesses an outstanding collection of American Twentieth Century Art.

Come to Omaha, April 2010! Experience the Joslyn Art Museum, the Kaneko, the Sheldon Museum of Art, and the warm camaraderie of the Midwest Art History Society.

The residence hotels for the conference are the Courtyard by Marriott and the Hilton Garden. Both are located within easy walking distance of the Kaneko. A shuttle will be provided to the Joslyn Art Museum for the activities scheduled there.

Registration forms and travel and lodging information are available on the back pages of the Newsletter and online at the MAHS website (www.mahsonline.org). Proposals for papers are due by December 15, 2009 to the session chairs. The call for papers is included in this newsletter and is also available online. To receive the early bird rate for conference registration, please register by February 15, 2010.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Midwest Art History Society Annual Conference 2010

Omaha, Nebraska, April 8–10, 2010

Concepts of Classical Monumentality in Antiquity and the Present

This session will examine the nature of classical monumentality in antiquity and in the present. It will include the analysis of aspects of its original character- which go beyond simple issues of scale- as revealed in the examples of monumental art and architecture in classical Greece. First examples are of particular value in the analysis of antiquity because they are the products of conscious choice, as opposed to the blind following of tradition, and thus provide the opportunity to examine meaningfully the question of why these choices were made, of what specific problems they were trying

to solve. Beyond the analysis of its original appearance and meaning, this session will also address more recent choices and interpretations of classical monumental form in examples of contemporary art and design and in the changing conventions of archeological illustration.

Robin Rhodes
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 University of Notre Dame

Monumental Medieval Art and Architecture

This session invites papers addressing Monumental works in all media and all periods and regions of Medieval Art and Architecture. Authors may

Exploring Monumentality: Re-Thinking Scale Relationships in Art

Proposals are due to session chairs on or before December 15, 2009.

They should be no more than 250 words, single-spaced, and sent by e-mail as MSWord files. Be sure to indicate MAHS in the subject heading of your e-mail. All papers presented at the MAHS conference must be in Powerpoint and ready for digital projection.

Session chairs will notify applicants of their decision by January 15, 2010.

Please remember to attach a c.v. and indicate your MAHS membership status. All participants must be MAHS members in the 2010 calendar year.

Registration forms for the conference and membership materials will be available soon at the Midwest Art History website. See mahsonline.org

Graduate students submitting proposals should do so with the approval of their adviser. Please provide the name and e-mail address of your academic adviser in your initial proposal. Graduate students whose papers are accepted may apply to the Charles D. Cuttler Student Travel Fund for assistance. Please contact the MAHS Treasurer if you would like further information. Papers delivered by graduate students are eligible for the "Graduate Student Presentation Award."

address works which are massive or imposing; works that are exceptionally great, as in quantity, quality, extent, or degree; works of historical or enduring significance; works of heroic scale; or works that serve to honor or commemorate.

Janet E. Snyder

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West Virginia University

20th Century Art: The Impact of Scientific Discovery on the Perception and Representation of Scale

This panel addresses the intersection of art and technology in the 20th century, with a particular focus on the way that scientific discovery and advances in engineering have contributed to our modern “view” of the world. Although artists and writers have for centuries imagined worlds both infinitesimally smaller (Pope’s “head of a pin”) and expansively larger (medieval cosmologies) than those of our daily phenomenological experience, it was not until the 20th century that innovations such as the electron microscope or Hubble Telescope allowed us to witness these shifts in scale through technologically assisted vision. This session asks how science and technology have affected artist’s representations of their world and, consequently, our perceptions of our place in the universe. What role might scale play in mediating the fascination and fear engendered by these new discoveries?

Catherine Jolivette

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Missouri State University



Jun Kaneko (Japanese, born 1942), *Untitled*, 2005, glazed ceramics, Joslyn Art Museum purchase with funds provided by Cathy and Troy Perry, Susan and A. J. Thomas, and Jan and Charles Vrana in memory of Jacqueline and Ernest Vrana, 2009

Monumentality in Contemporary Art

Contemporary artists, including Louise Bourgeois, Jeff Koon, Juan Munoz and Charles Ray, have come under attack by popular critics for the monumental objects they produce. For these commentators, such works lack the gravitas of large

Abstract Expressionist paintings, or the powerful references to the industrialized environment’s inhuman scale found in minimalist art. This session seeks papers that offer a scholarly perspective on the meaning and function of large-scale objects in contemporary art. Relevant papers on individual artists, specific themes, or a



Joslyn Art Museum, Peter Kiewit Foundation Sculpture Garden
 Foreground: Allan Houser (Chiricahua Apache, 1914–1994), *Dineh*, 1981, bronze,
 Lent from the collection of TIA, 2009

Background: William Zorach (American, born Lithuania, 1887–1966), *Spirit of the Dance*, 1932, bronze, Lent by the University of Nebraska at Omaha, 1974

universal perspective on the role of monumentality in contemporary art are encouraged.

Paula Wisotzki
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 Loyola University Chicago

Monumentality(?) in African and Native American Art

With the exception of a few highly centralized (and usually ancient) societies, African and Native American art is not normally described as monumental. This panel will focus on IF and HOW any art tradition or type of object from Africa and the Americas might be classified as monumental. It is hoped that the papers will define this concept as more than large in scale and long lasting. All cultures have not generated works of large

relative scale. Yet by utilizing creative approaches and analysis and also by broadening the definition of monumentality, new insights into African and Native American visual culture will result.

Fred T. Smith
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 Kent State University

Monumentality in Modern and Contemporary Asian Art and Architecture

Western visitors to Asia in the nineteenth century marveled at the gigantic building and sculptural programs they saw. Many of these remain standing today, but in various states of preservation, and some have recently been destroyed. After Western contacts encouraged industrialization and the introduction of new materials,

fabrication techniques, and alternative conceptualizations of art and architecture, Asian artists and designers began pushing the limits of size and scope farther in new quests to create even more colossal artworks and buildings of unprecedented heights.

This panel seeks to examine modern and contemporary Asian monumental art and architecture from various perspectives. Papers might consider: How are pre-modern monuments regarded by private individuals, preservation organizations and national governments? What is the impetus for large-scale, sometimes site-specific projects by modern and contemporary Asian artists and in what ways do they reference works created in pre-modern times? Why is it that the tallest skyscrapers in the world are now being erected in Asia and how might these be considered as reflections of the geopolitical and cultural climate of their particular locations? What among these projects can be identified as having the potential for as lasting a legacy as those of pre-modern Asia?

Patricia J. Graham
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 University of Kansas, Center for East Asian Studies

The Monumental Vernacular: Representing the Midwest

In 1913, Walter Gropius hailed the “monumental power” and “unacknowledged majesty” of the grain silos of the American Midwest, likening these anonymous structures to the grandeur of the monuments of ancient Egypt. He considered these structures to represent the “monumental vernacular” of the early 20th century and they, along with

paintings and photographs from the period have served to establish the Midwest as a place of national memory and mythology. As such, images of the land and its structures take on a monumentality apart from issues of sheer size – and become a fundamental tool for the construction of American identity. The Midwest also serves as a means of confronting or conceptualizing America from the outside, as in the recent “Heartland” exhibition, produced by the Van Abbe Museum in the Netherlands. This panel seeks to explore the ways in which the Midwest has been framed as monument and myth, as the heroic vernacular of American identity.

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Bradley University

Elizabeth Kauffman
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Reading the Large Print: Monumentality and the Printed Image

Since its invention, the printed image has had a monumental impact on culture and society, offering artists and their patrons a means of rapidly distributing visual art and information to a broader audience. Throughout the history of printmaking there have also been instances when artists have pressed beyond the bounds of the standard page. This session proposes to explore the history of large format prints and monumental printmaking in any culture or time period. Contributors are encouraged to consider the unique qualities of print media and the ways in which artists, patrons, or collectors, have used the original print or print series to monumental effect. Presentation themes may include, though not be

limited to, the meaning and function of very large prints, the logistics of monumental print production, and the print as monument.

James When
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Thrivent Financial Collection of Religious Art

Non-thematic Sessions

African-American Artists in the Midwest

While American art history tends to be fairly parochial with its emphasis on East Coast artists, African American art history seems to suffer even more strongly from this bias. This session will be devoted to African-American artists or art institutions in the Midwest. Although the Midwest was not historically populated by African-Americans, the Great Migration from 1913-1949 brought hundreds of thousands of black Americans to Midwest industrial cities like Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland and St. Louis. And some of these people made art. Indeed on a trip to Detroit in 1964, Langston Hughes said, “Harlem used to be the Negro cultural center of America. If Detroit has not already become so, it is well on its way to becoming it.” Literary historians have frequently taken up the topic of Midwestern African-American writers, but this is far less true in the case of black visual artists. Papers dealing with Midwestern African-American art from all time periods, colonial to the present, will be considered.

Julia R. Myers
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Eastern Michigan University

Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction: How Artwork’s Scale is Affected by Infinite Reproducibility

Walter Benjamin’s seminal essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” became the basis of much of the 20th century’s discourse surrounding the effects of reproduction on the concept of originality in artworks. Now in the 21st century we enter the age of digital reproduction that, while seemingly similar to mechanical reproduction, is inherently different. Mechanical reproduction allowed for the concept of the “copy” which conversely implied an “original.” In digital production, there is no original, only data – data that can exist in infinite replication. Almost 50 years after Benjamin, Paul Virilio writes of Dromology, or the science of speed, and the ability of technology to compress distance, space and time. Digital production eradicates the limitations of distance, space and time by the very nature of binary data and lossless reproduction. This lossless reproduction capability creates an environment where imagery can be reproduced identically not only in one location, but simultaneously anywhere in the world.

How does this lossless/spaceless aspect of the digital medium affect the production of artwork? This session invites scholars and image-makers to discuss the nature of images today and to share written and creative works that explore concepts related to digital reproduction.

Liz Murphy Thomas
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The University of Illinois Springfield



Joslyn Art Museum, Courtesy of the Joslyn Art Museum

Minor Artists of the Italian Renaissance

Scholars and amateurs alike rightly focus on the major artists of the Renaissance and their art. Still, artists of lesser talent often created works of interest and sometimes of beauty. Papers in this session will be about any aspect of minor artists and their art in Renaissance Italy. Papers should be limited to minor painters, printmakers, sculptors and architects. Papers that focus on a single work of art are especially welcome.

Norman E. Land

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University of Missouri-Columbia

Renaissance and Baroque Art Outside of Italy

Open session: Papers invited on all aspects of art and architecture produced in Spain, France, England, and the rest of Northern Europe in the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

Henry Luttikhuisen

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Calvin College

Italian Baroque Art

Open session: Papers invited on all aspects of Baroque art and architecture in Italy.

Gustav Medicus,

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Kent State University

Global Connections in Nineteenth-Century Art

The global reach of western nations extended to almost every continent by the end of the nineteenth century. The British Empire ruled in India, Australia, and parts of Africa and North America. They dominated trade with China and

Encountering the “Other”: Cross-cultural Exchanges between Asian and Euro- American Art

This session invites papers that explore artistic and cultural exchanges between Asia (China, India, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia) and Europe or America. Papers concerning any period of influence or exchange are welcome. Topics may relate to Jesuit encounters in the sixteenth century, import goods and trade items represented in Asian or Western art, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist appropriation of East Asian art subjects or styles, or contemporary cross-cultural responses in this age of rapid global communication. Equally welcome are papers that investigate artists who present issues of being stereotyped as “Other” in their own country (e.g. so-called Japanese-American artists, although perhaps 3rd-generation American).

Jan Kennedy

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Kansas City Art Institute

Issues in Contemporary Craft

Papers are sought for a session in which issues in contemporary craft scholarship are addressed. Subjects may include, but are not limited to rapidly developing technology, the “slow craft” movement, scale, materiality and Craft as social practice.

Michele Fricke

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Kansas City Art Institute

Constructing and Contesting Boundaries: Gender and Art

This session invites papers from all disciplines that investigate the construction, maintenance, and/or deliberate transgression of gender in the visual arts. Those papers that focus on twentieth century art and artists are especially welcome.

Reed Anderson

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Kansas City Art Institute

Registration Form

2010 Annual Midwest Art History Conference — Omaha, Nebraska Early registration ends February 15, 2010.

Name _____

Affiliation (as you would like it printed on your name tag) _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Billing address (if different from above) _____

***Please indicate if you will need any sort of special assistance at the conference _____

Conference fees:

Please note: you must be a member of MAHS to register for and attend the conference

The conference fee includes admission to all sessions, receptions, member luncheon, and shuttle service to the museum.

We highly recommend that you register online for the conference at mahsonline.org. You may also register at the conference, paying by check.

If you wish to register by mail, please fill out this form, enclose with a check made out to "MAHS," and mail to :

Laura Gelfand
Associate Dean, Honors College
The University of Akron
Akron, OH 44325-7801

Early registration fee \$100. _____

Student fee \$40. _____

Late registration fee (after 2/15/10) \$125. _____

Annual MAHS Membership for 2011 (if not already paid)

Professional \$45. _____

Student \$25. _____

Other (see newsletter or website for categories) _____

**Voluntary contribution to the Charles Cuttler
graduate student travel fund** _____

TOTAL _____

influenced political decisions in the Islamic Middle East. The French held Indochina and much of West Africa. The Dutch maintained their presence in Indonesia, Africa and parts of Central and South America. The Spanish continued to have profound influence in the Americas. The Portuguese held tightly to outposts in India and China. The United States “opened” Japan to western contact. This panel invites papers that explore the results of these international connections in nineteenth-century art. The myriad possible subjects could include stylistic exchanges, exhibitions, archeological discoveries, ideological clashes or acceptances, fantasy images of the “other,” misunderstandings, biases, business-driven art forms, and patronage. Or, a paper could deal with why global issues or new styles were ignored.

Nancy Wilkinson

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Oklahoma State University

The Permeable West: (Im)migrant Encounters and Aesthetic Entanglements in the Visual Culture of the American West

Throughout its history, the American West has been host to visitors, immigrants and migrants from around the world who came to the region for innumerable reasons. All but the first to arrive encountered already-present populations, and the resulting interactions played a vital role in the construction of the American West (in visual, literary and popular culture) as a discursively distinct space in the American ideological landscape. Strikingly, this distinction is not matched by geographical specificity or unity of purpose; the region referred to as “the American West” has always had uncertain and, at times, hotly contested borders. Moreover, there are many competing ideologies of the American West. This panel seeks to explore the permeability of the American West as a site for real and imagined diversities

— of population, class, ethnicity, race, national and regional origins, sexuality, aesthetics, etc. Individual papers might discuss the manifestation of those diversities in visual culture in terms of: strategies of representation, reception or audience, tourism and the art market, histories of race and racialization, discourses of nationalism (or anti-nationalism), or other vectors. Papers which address the relationship between constructions of identity and the historical experiences of migration, immigration, and bounding in/of the West will be particularly welcome.

Louise Siddons

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Oklahoma State University

Open Session

Papers that address issues surrounding art of any time-period or geographical region using any methodology are welcome.

Jane Hutchison

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University of Wisconsin-Madison