

THE JOHN & MABLE
RINGLING

MUSEUM OF ART

The Projects Spotlights Allan McCollum

This American conceptual artist is creating a work specifically for the Museum

The second *Projects* exhibition, created specifically for the Museum, brings the work of conceptual artist Allan McCollum to the New Wing in November.

McCollum, a forty-four-year-old artist who has been exhibiting regularly since 1971, has begun to receive significant critical attention only in the last five years, according to Joseph Jacobs, curator of modern art.

One of McCollum's most-noted concepts is *Perpetual Photographs*, large-scale photographs of a painting hanging on the wall of an interior scene of a movie playing on television, cropped to leave only the painting, which has become so distorted it is reduced to an abstraction. Another is *Surrogate Paintings*, abstract "paintings" in plaster — actually plaster sculptures that look like framed paintings. A third, *Perfect Vehicles*, is cast plaster shaped to look like Oriental vases, and mounted five to a pedestal.

"To varying degrees, McCollum in all these motifs is dealing with how art functions as status symbol and as commodity," Jacobs says. "The meaning is drained from a work of art as it becomes just the decorative shape of frame and canvas on a wall,

'McCollum is dealing with how art functions as status symbol and as commodity.'

or just an object on a pedestal. Art is reduced to a symbol of culture and wealth; it becomes just a commodity."

"McCollum's work evokes and comments on so much art history within what can be described as an abstract, almost minimalist, vocab-



Plaster Surrogates, 1987, by Allan McCollum (b. 1944). Acrylic and plaster, size variable. Courtesy of the John Weber Gallery, New York City.

ulary," Jacobs adds. "And yet, putting the conceptual issues aside, the work itself is quite beautiful."

The *Projects* are small-scale exhibitions or installations of work made for the Museum by younger or emerging artists, or by more-established artists whose work is undergoing a significant change or who are doing installations specifically for the Museum. The program is

designed to encourage new work by younger artists and to expose and introduce it to the public, and to give established artists an opportunity to produce installations of their work.

The Museum's first *Projects* exhibition was last fall's critically acclaimed "Doug and Mike Starn, The Christ Series."

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Curator's Spotlight: A Portrait of Military Nobility

by Dr. Anthony Janson, curator
of Northern European paintings

John Manners, Marquis of Granby (1721-1770), was one of the great military leaders of his time.

In 1745, at the height of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748), Granby received his first commission as a regimental colonel of the Leicester Volunteers. That same year he became Minister of Parliament for Cambridge, a post he held for the rest of his life. He was promoted to general in the concurrent war against the Pretender Prince Edward.

Granby served again during the

Seven Years' War (1756-1763), eventually becoming commander of the British forces. He was elevated to Commander-in-Chief in 1766, the year Reynolds completed this portrait.

Such was the etiquette of warfare at the time that the painting was commissioned by the marquis two years earlier as a memento for the Marchal de Broglie, whom Granby defeated at the battle of Kirchdenkern — a gesture that would be unthinkable today. However, the

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Carlos Alfonzo, American, born in Cuba, 1950, *Martyr*, 1987. Oil on canvas, 91 x 89 in. Courtesy of the Greene Gallery, Coral Gables, Florida.

Florida Artists Highlighted in New Exhibition

The first 'Featuring Florida' exhibition displays works by Alfonzo, Schneider, Young

Just a few more days remain to view the first in a new series of annual summer exhibitions highlighting work by Florida artists.

These "Featuring Florida" exhibitions are designed to be small in scale, featuring two to four artists. "The shows do not necessarily have a theme, nor do they claim to show the only outstanding art being made in the state," explains Joseph Jacobs, curator of modern art. "They will simply present high-quality work and attempt to document some of the artistic activity occurring within Florida."

This first exhibition, "Featuring Florida 1: Three from Miami," runs through September 11 in the New Wing. It presents the work of three Miami artists: Carlos Alfonzo, Deborah Schneider, and Purvis Young.

Alfonzo, a Cuban émigré, has a style Jacobs describes as "wild and highly energized."

His extremely colorful and textured paintings, filled with abstract shapes, "vaguely look as though they stem from Wifredo Lam's Surrealism," says Jacobs. "But unlike Lam's, the work has an overall look that recalls Jackson Pollack. Alfonzo's drawings of forms have a graffiti-like quality, with almost every square inch of his canvases filled with drawing."

Schneider is a young painter,

educated in New York, who moved to Miami in 1980.

"For want of a better term, her paintings and drawings can be described as a type of biomorphic abstraction," says Jacobs. "Her highly painterly works display a dark but colorful palette, and are populated with organic forms that beg to be read as specific objects but defy any interpretation. A primal force prevails, driving the streams of colors

'Alfonzo's style can be described as wild and highly-energized.'

and paint and the organic shapes that float across the surface of her paintings and drawings."

Young, a self-taught artist well-known in the Miami art world, has recently begun to gain a national reputation, according to Jacobs. All of Young's art occurs on discarded objects, many of them abandoned buildings.

"His imagery is often apocalyptic, with surfaces sometimes covered with wild curvilinear patterning punctuated by dots or circles of paint. Other times it is filled with a seemingly continuous wiry, scribble-like line," notes Jacobs. "There is a surprise in these works, however: the discovery that embedded in this abstraction is a turbulent world densely populated with hysterical figures, in scenes often frenzied and ritualistic." ❧

Annual Crafts Festival Showcases Artisans

From hand-thrown pottery to hand-blown glass, from delicate jewelry to sturdy wooden toys, crafts in a broad variety of media will be on display at the Museum's seventeenth annual Crafts Festival in November.

More than 130 craftspeople from thirty-one states will offer their wares for sale during the three-day event, to be held from Friday, November 18, through Sunday, November 20, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. These exhibitors were chosen from nearly 400 applicants by a five-member jury composed primarily of previous festival award-winners.

For the first time this year, Crafts Festival tickets will be offered for sale in advance to the general public beginning October 10, using mail-in coupons. Advance tickets will also be sold in the Museum shops.

Festival visitors who buy their tickets in advance will receive preferred parking in the Caples lot, just south of the Museum grounds.

Admission is \$5 for adults; children under 10 are admitted free. ❧



The festival offers varied crafts.

Volunteers Needed!

It's that time again . . . time to volunteer to help at this year's seventeenth-annual Crafts Festival, to be held November 18-20.

Volunteers are needed for a variety of interesting tasks at the Festival, including selling beer, wine, or soda; selling and collecting tickets; and staffing the information booths.

If you want to be a participant in this year's Crafts Festival, not just a visitor, sign up on the Crafts Festival volunteer form you will be receiving in the mail.

FOUNDATION NOTES

New Corporate Members, Colleagues Recognized

Two major business firms recently joined the Museum as Corporate Members: Publix Super Markets, Inc., and Southern Bell.

The Museum thanks these two companies for their generous support.

New Donor Members

The Museum would like to welcome the following new Ringling Society members and Colleagues to the Donor Membership program:

Ringling Society

Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Culverhouse

Colleagues

Mr. & Mrs. Ronald M.

Greenbaum

Ms. Jacqueline B. Holmes

Mr. Rogers B. Holmes

Mr. & Mrs. Bennett N. Oxman

Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Schiff

Grants

The Museum would like to thank the National Endowment for the Arts for three generous grants awarded recently. The Museum has been awarded \$15,000 for the tapestry-conservation project, \$8,500 for acquisition of art, and \$45,000 for the upcoming special exhibition, "Contemporary Perspectives I, Abstraction in Question."

Volunteer Appreciation

Thank you to all the hard-working volunteers who made the spring Children's Art Festival such a success, as well as to those who help out with the Museum's mailings on a regular basis. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Governor Martinez Praises Museum's Restoration Progress

In an early-July visit to review progress of the Museum's \$20-million repair and restoration project, Florida Governor Bob Martinez complimented the Board of Trustees, Museum Director Dr. Laurence Ruggiero, and the Museum staff on their efforts so far, urging them to "continue to achieve their best for the people of Florida."

"The repair and restoration of this important museum is a major contribution to the state of Florida and to the nation," said the governor at the end of his two-hour tour. "The funds spent so far have been spent wisely and well, and I will continue to do all I can to see that this project continues to be funded annually at the levels required to do the job."

Martinez also thanked State Senator Bob Johnson for his unfailing support for the Museum and for the arts in Florida in general.

Since 1981, successive state legislatures have appropriated \$15.5 million of the Museum's total requested funding of \$20 million. The approximately \$8 million spent so far has paid for new roofs for Ca' d'Zan, the art galleries, and the circus galleries; the structural stabilization and environmental-systems modernization of the art galleries; and major emergency repairs.

Structural stabilization of Ca' d'Zan is going on now; the privately funded reinstallation of the circus galleries, estimated to cost about \$500,000, is also underway.

The newly restored South Wing will reopen in February. At that time, the Rubens and surrounding

galleries on the east and north sides of the Museum will close for a year-long restoration.

Completion of the restoration of the art galleries and Ca' d'Zan will require an additional \$4.5 million over the next three years.

Much of the work already completed is not readily apparent to the visitor, according to Dr. Ruggiero, but was essential to safeguard the buildings and to bring the Museum's interior environment up to the proper standards for temperature and humidity. "From now on," he explains, "our work will be perceptible to all our visitors, and will dramatically improve the quality of the presentation of Florida's splendid collections." ❧



Museum Director Dr. Laurence J. Ruggiero (left) explains the latest restoration projects to Governor Bob Martinez (center) and State Senator Bob Johnson.

Un-Gala Gala Offers Dining, Dancing Under the Stars

The Museum's third annual Un-Gala Gala promises alfresco fun, with dining and dancing under the stars.

The fund-raising event — a non-black-tie, off-season evening — is scheduled for Saturday, October 8, from 7 p.m. to midnight.

Last year's Un-Gala Gala was enjoyed by a capacity group, and this year's committee members, representing both Sarasota and Manatee counties, are planning another delightful party. The Un-Gala Gala begins with outdoor refreshments (complimentary wine, plus a cash bar for cocktails), followed by a buffet dinner on the Loggia and danc-

ing in the Courtyard to a lively band playing contemporary music.

Tickets for the Un-Gala Gala are \$80 per couple, \$40 for individuals. Committee members organizing the event are Deborah and Eugene Bay, Cindy Carter, Nikki and Michael Corbino, Richard Davidson, Susan and Richard Filson, Dr. Michael Fleck, Margaret Hoskinson, James Long, Judy and Keith Mann, David Merrill, William Merrill III, Susan Mitchell, Robert Monaghan, Kent Stottlemeyer, and Stuart Barger.

The Un-Gala Gala is underwritten in part by a corporate gift from NCNB. ❧

Meet the Staff:

Chief Development Officer Doug Kerr Keeps Contributions Flowing



H. Douglas Kerr

Although John Ringling left the people of Florida one of America's premier art collections, he did not, despite a still somewhat popular misconception, establish an endowment to fund the operation of his Museum.

Until the creation of the Museum's Foundation, the burden of providing operating funds — money for everything from insurance and utility bills to education programs and exhibitions — fell exclusively to the state of Florida. Now that situation is changing . . . and Doug Kerr is at the center of that change.

"My job," Kerr explains, "is to develop funds for operations and

Part of Kerr's job is to 'lobby like mad for capital funding for the Museum.'

programs from private donors, foundations, corporations, and the federal government, to supplement the state's contribution."

As executive director of the Museum's Foundation, Kerr is the institution's chief development officer. Reporting to the director, Dr. Laurence Ruggiero, Kerr assists the staff and the Board of Trustees — and particularly its development committee, headed by trustee William Burson — in attracting gifts and grants for Museum programs.

"The state of Florida provides only about fifty percent of the Museum's annual needs of more than \$4 million," Kerr says. "Admission fees give us another million, but we've got to make the rest ourselves."

To generate that remaining \$1 million each year, Kerr and his staff run the Medieval Fair, the Crafts Festival, the annual Gala, the fall Un-Gala Gala, and many other fundraising events. But Kerr is proudest of the major increase in gifts and grants to the Museum; these rose from \$27,000 in 1984 to more than \$277,000 during the past year.

Kerr is quick to credit the quality of the Museum's staff and programs, the generosity of donors from all over Florida, and the Museum's recognition by the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., for this impressive accomplishment.

Kerr, who joined the Museum team in November, 1985, has a background in marketing and advertising, both in New York City and locally. This experience has proved useful in his current role, which he sees as being "somewhat like an investment counselor, encouraging a wide variety of donors to invest in the Museum."

Kerr describes his nearly three years as the Museum's chief development officer as a fast-paced building experience, "building the Museum's own funding infrastructure alongside that of the state." His goal, he adds, is "a long-term partnership between the public and private sectors."

Kerr acknowledges the herculean role being played by the state in providing more than \$15.5 million for the Museum's repair and reconstruction program. Part of his job is to "lobby like mad for capital funding for the Museum — a job made successful in no small part because of the efforts and continued support of State Senator Bob Johnson and the Sarasota/Manatee legislative delegation."

Locally, Kerr's activities with organizations such as the Downtown Association and the Chamber of Commerce's legislative committee bring the Museum's interests to the attention of community leaders. His involvement in Leadership Florida, a civic organization sponsored by the state Chamber of Commerce, and his membership on the Florida Chamber's cultural affairs task force help give the Museum further

exposure on the statewide level.

Dr. Ruggiero gives Kerr high marks for his success in legislative lobbying and in starting the Colleague program, which now generates more than \$100,000 annually. "Doug has done a fine job for us in a challenging environment," the director says.

Kerr is currently working with the trustees to develop the Corporate donor program, now getting underway.

"The importance of the Museum is that it offers values not only for today, but for future generations," Kerr believes. "The mission of the development office, and my role, are to develop funding programs to insure that future."

And, he adds with a smile, "if anyone wants to know how to help the Museum more, just give me a call!"

Jazz Pianist McShann in Starlight Concert

Jay McShann, a noted jazz pianist who started with a Kansas City blues band in the 1930s, brings his special musical style to the Museum grounds in a Starlight Concert scheduled for Wednesday, November 2.

The concert, organized in cooperation with the Jazz Club of Sarasota, is part of a special "Blues Week" celebration going on locally that week.

The concert begins at 7:30 p.m.; admission is \$12.

From the Shops' Bookshelves: New Museum Guidebook Available this Fall

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, a four-color, forty-eight-page book on the Museum and its founders, is expected in the Museum shops in September.

The book, written by Museum communications officer Pat Buck, provides an authentic overview of the history of the Museum and an intriguing portrait of John and Mable Ringling, along with information about the Museum and its collections. It will be available in all Museum shops, priced at \$9.95.

