

NEWS RELEASE

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Grand Reopening of East Building Features Four Free Exhibitions

NCMA offers expanded, diverse lineup of inaugural exhibitions

RALEIGH, N.C.—The North Carolina Museum of Art's East Building reopens November 7 with an unprecedented lineup of inaugural exhibitions, including four free shows in addition to a ticketed exhibition of Norman Rockwell's art. The exhibitions feature sculpture by North Carolinian Bob Trotman, children's book illustrations, contemporary photography by Vietnamese American artist Binh Danh, and John James Audubon's *The Birds of America*.

Today, with the permanent collection located in the new West Building, the Museum's former home has been transformed into a center for rotating exhibitions and education programs, with 40 percent more space for special exhibitions than was previously available. For the first time ever, the Museum can now host multiple concurrent exhibitions of varying scale.

"We're thrilled to have the space to present a diverse schedule of special exhibitions for our visitors," said NCMA Director Lawrence Wheeler. "East Building will certainly be a place of lively interaction with multiple shows and fantastic programming, fulfilling our mission to make the Museum and its range of art accessible for all."

The Museum's new North Carolina Gallery, a permanent space devoted to exhibiting work by North Carolina artists, debuts with sculpture by Bob Trotman. ***Bob Trotman: Inverted Utopias*** presents more than 20 carved and painted figures from the past decade by one of the state's most important artists.

Trotman's wood sculptures depict anonymous characters that appear to be in states of flux or change. Clothed in 1950s-style dresses and business suits, his "model citizens" convey an air of Rockwell nostalgia, but their startling poses—upside down, poised on the brink of leaping, or sinking into the floor—and cracked facades contradict an idealized image of American life. Simultaneously humorous and disquieting, Trotman's figures are infused with enigmatic narratives that lie beneath their carved surfaces.

Inverted Utopias includes loans from the artist, private collections, and museums, along with an existing work in the Museum's collection. The Museum also commissioned a major new work for the exhibition that will remain on view after the show closes on March 27, 2011.

(more)

Inverted Utopias was organized by the North Carolina Museum of Art. Support has been provided by The Windgate Charitable Foundation.

The Museum also opens its first special exhibition designed for families in East Building. ***Fins and Feathers: Original Children's Book Illustrations from The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art*** celebrates the artistic achievements of children's book artists through 33 original picture book illustrations from the last five decades. Focused on images of friendly and comical creatures, *Fins and Feathers* features some of the best works from The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Mass.

The exhibition includes a number of pictures by Arnold Lobel, who illustrated classic stories in *The Random House Book of Poetry* and *The Random House Book of Mother Goose*. Also highlighted are works by Leo Lionni, Eric Carle, Petra Mathers, and Ashley Bryan. *Fins and Feather* closes January 30, 2011.

Fins and Feathers was organized by The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Amherst, Mass. In Raleigh support is provided by Rex Healthcare.

A gallery devoted to photography features riveting images by Vietnamese-born artist Binh Danh. ***Binh Danh: In the Eclipse of Angkor*** includes chlorophyll prints, found butterfly specimens, and daguerreotypes that document and interpret the genocide in Cambodia from 1975 to 1979. This body of work stemmed from Danh's 2008 trip to the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Choeung Ek, the site of the Killing Fields of the Khmer Rouge; and Angkor Wat, Cambodia's famous Khmer temple.

Danh has emerged as an artist of national and international importance with work that investigates the collective memory of war. The artist uses his photographs, in which he appropriates and transforms archival images, as a way of recovering the past. The Museum acquired one of Danh's chlorophyll prints in 2008. The exhibition closes on January 30, 2011.

In the Eclipse of Angkor was organized by the Eleanor D. Wilson Museum at Hollins University. The exhibition and accompanying publication were made possible by the Frances Niederer Artist-in-Residence Fund, Hollins University. Unless otherwise noted, all works are courtesy of the artist. In Raleigh support is provided by the North Carolina Museum of Art Friends of Photography.

On November 7, the Museum also unveils its fully restored four-volume set of **John James Audubon's *The Birds of America*** in a special focus gallery devoted to the 19th-century artist and naturalist. For the first time, this treasure of art publishing that has belonged to the State of North Carolina since 1848 will be exhibited in its entirety.

In recent decades the Museum's copy of *The Birds of America* has been unavailable for viewing, except for a small number of prints separated from the volumes. *The Birds of America* is made up of 435 life-size, hand-colored prints produced by engraving and aquatint. The ensemble represents a heroic life's work that required Audubon to search for perfect specimens and undocumented species of birds in the rough backwoods of a young nation. Audubon was the first artist to vividly portray birds in their natural habitats.

Only about 200 complete sets of *The Birds of America* exist today. The spectacular 40-inch-tall volumes will be on display in new cases fitted with hydraulic lifts, which enable staff to turn the pages more frequently. The Audubon exhibition will be on view for at least three years.

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Visitor Information

Location

The four exhibitions will be located in East Building.

Hours

Each exhibition is open during regular Museum hours:

Tuesday–Thursday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Friday 10 a.m.–9 p.m.

Saturday–Sunday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Resources

Art labels and in-depth commentary accompany each of the exhibitions. *Fins and Feather* and *The Birds of America* will offer related reading materials in the galleries. A fully illustrated exhibition catalogue for *Inverted Utopias* will be available for purchase in the Museum Store.

Docent-led group tours for 10 or more are available with advance reservation by contacting the Museum's concierge at (919) 664-6785.

Shopping and Dining

A special exhibition store carrying exhibition-related merchandise and books will be open during Museum hours in East Building.

Rockwell Café will offer casual food service, including light breakfast fare, sandwiches, snacks, and beverages in East Building's former Blue Ridge Restaurant space November 7 through January 30, 2011. Rockwell Café opens at 10 a.m. and closes 30 minutes prior to Museum closing.

Related Events and Programs

The four free exhibitions are accompanied by a series of educational programs, including lectures, family workshops, and special events. For information on related events, see the related events fact sheet.

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The North Carolina Museum of Art's permanent collection spans more than 5,000 years, from ancient Egypt to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the Southeast. The Museum's collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through monumental works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing national touring exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

The Museum recently opened its new gallery building, home to the permanent collection. The North Carolina Museum of Art, Lawrence J. Wheeler, director, is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, Beverly Eaves Perdue, governor, and an agency of the Department of Cultural Resources, Linda A. Carlisle, secretary. Admission to the Museum's permanent collection and Museum Park is free. Museum hours are Tuesday–Thursday and Saturday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.–9 p.m.; Closed Monday. For information call (919) 839-NCMA, or visit www.ncartmuseum.org.