

North Carolina Museum of Art

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MUSEUM INAUGURATES NEW BUILDING WITH INSTALLATION FEATURING DOZENS OF RECENT GIFTS AND ACQUISITIONS ADDED TO PRESTIGIOUS COLLECTION

Nearly 200 recent acquisitions—representing commissions, gifts, promised gifts, and purchases—have vastly enriched the wide-ranging collection of the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) on the occasion of its expansion. The new works encompass important and diverse examples of historic and contemporary art from around the world. Some fifty of them will be installed in the Museum’s new building and the surrounding landscape when the NCMA **reopens on April 24, 2010**, following a seven-month closure.

The Museum is in the final stages of a major expansion and revitalization, the centerpiece of which is a new 127,000-square-foot, light-filled building designed by New York-based architects Thomas Phifer and Partners. The single-story structure, which dramatically transforms the visitor experience of the Museum, was created to house its growing collection.

Established in 1947, the NCMA was the first major art-museum collection in the country to be formed by state legislation and funding—an extraordinary example of public support for the arts. Since that time, it has been immeasurably enriched by acquisitions that include many generous gifts, and today spans more than 5,000 years of history. Particular strengths include European painting, Egyptian funerary art, ancient Greek and Roman sculpture and vase painting, American art of the 18th through 20th centuries, the largest collection of Rodin sculptures in the American south, international contemporary art, and Jewish ceremonial objects.



Ursula von Rydingsvard, *Ogromna*, 2009. Cedar and graphite, h. approx. 19 ft.; installed next to new NCMA building. Photo Courtesy the NCMA.

New and Recent Acquisitions

Among the acquisitions are major new works of contemporary art that demonstrate the Museum's deep and active commitment to the art of our time. These include large-scale sculptures by such internationally acclaimed artists as Roxy Paine and Ursula von Rydingsvard, sited in the landscape near the Museum, and by El Anatsui, Jaume Plensa, and Patrick Dougherty, installed in the new building along with such works as a video by Jennifer Steinkamp and art by many other leading and emerging contemporary artists.

Many of the new works are generous donations from important collectors. Among these are a promised gift of mid- to late-twentieth-century art from the collection of North Carolina natives Jim and Mary Patton, including works by Jackie Ferrara, Adolph Gottlieb, Ellsworth Kelly, Per Kirkeby, David Park, and Sean Scully; and a promised gift by Josie and Julian Robertson, of New York, comprising five significant paintings by luminaries of European Impressionist and modern art, including Pablo Picasso, Alfred Sisley, Maurice de Vlaminck, Emil Nolde, and Kees van Dongen.



View of the Rodin galleries. Photo Courtesy Thomas Phifer and Partners.

Among other highlights are 28 sculptures by Auguste Rodin, given to the Museum by the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation. These will be installed both indoors and out. In addition to the modern and contemporary works, the Museum's historic collection has been enriched by acquisitions including a false door from an ancient Egyptian tomb and 17th-century Torah finials, among other objects.

Highlights of new acquisitions include the following. Images and captions are attached.

El Anatsui, Ghanaian, active in Nigeria

Lines That Link Humanity, 2008

Found aluminum and copper wire, 18 x 25 ft.

El Anatsui's tapestry-like sculptures elicit wonder at the beauty gleaned from common materials. *Lines That Link Humanity*, specially commissioned by the Museum, is made from bottle caps and remnants of liquor packaging. In addition to their beauty, these materials evoke the ongoing trade in alcoholic beverages in Africa, a complex history that

infuses this dazzling work with a sobering undercurrent. The title suggests the interconnected histories, fates, and circumstances of people and cultures worldwide.

This large-scale work is unique among El Anatsui's metal sculptures in that it is "site responsive," resulting from an extended interaction between the NCMA and the artist. *Lines That Link Humanity* makes reference to the Museum's works by Gerhard Richter and Anselm Kiefer, and shares a gallery with them.

Roxy Paine, American

Askew, 2009

Stainless steel, h. approx. 43 ft.

Askew is part of a series of works described by Roxy Paine as "dendroids," treelike forms with elaborate branching structures. The monumental sculpture has been installed in the Museum's south garden, adjacent to the main entrance of the new building and visible from numerous vantage points both inside and outside the Museum.

As Paine has stated, "I've processed the idea of a tree and created a system for its form. I take this organic, majestic being and break it down into components and rules. The branches are translated into pipe and rod."



Roxy Paine, *Askew*, 2009.
Photo Courtesy the NCMA.

Jaume Plensa, Spanish

Doors of Jerusalem I, II, & III, 2006

Resin, stainless steel, and light, h. 47 1/4 x w. 62 3/16 x d. 80 11/16 in.

This complex work by Jaume Plensa consists of three larger-than-life-size figures cast in translucent resin and lit from within. Embossed excerpts from the "Song of Solomon" (or "The Song of Songs"), an iconic collection of poems from the Bible, cover the figures' arms like tattoos, while their eyes and mouths are covered by the names of the eight gates to the walled city of Jerusalem. The glowing figures are mounted high on three walls of the new building's lobby.

Jennifer Steinkamp, American

Mike Kelley, 2007–2008

Video installation, dimensions variable

Jennifer Steinkamp's video projections utilize light, color, and movement to create hybrid images inspired by the natural world. *Mike Kelley*, a luminous eight-minute projection, depicts a single tree as it changes through the seasons. As the imagery changes, the radiant trees take on anthropomorphic qualities, as if they were inhabitants of an enchanted forest. (Indeed, the artist has cited a childhood memory of the talking apple-trees in *The Wizard of Oz* as an influence on her work.)

Mike Kelley will be projected onto a prominent wall in the new building, near the main entrance, where it will provide a counterpoint to Roxy Paine's *Askew*, which is located just outside. The juxtaposition of the two works will continue the

dialogue between art and nature that is central to the experience of the new museum and the surrounding gardens.

Patrick Dougherty, American

Out of the Box, 2009

Red maple saplings, 15 ft. 6 in. x 75 ft. 4 in.

Using branches and boughs from the surrounding area, this site-specific sculpture comprises a series of massive spirals curling across the length of a wall near the NCMA entrance. Indeed the building, with its crisp, contemporary lines, provides a perfect canvas for Dougherty's swirling sticks, inspiring a dialogue between man and nature, indoor and outdoor, natural and artificial materials, and linear versus nonlinear.

Ursula von Rydingsvard, American, born Germany

Ogromna, 2009

Cedar and graphite, h. approx. 19 ft.

The undulating, honeycombed layers of von Rydingsvard's sculptures link abstraction to the reality of everyday objects. Dramatic in scale and physical presence, they are created of roughly hewn cedar blocks that have been cut and stacked to evoke such ordinary domestic implements as bowls, vases, spoons, or shovels, setting up a dialogue between monumentality and intimate detail. The sculptures may also suggest the rocky cliffs of a natural landscape, the human body, and architectural structures.

Ogromna was created for installation next to the west façade of the new building, where it provides a dramatic first encounter with art for vehicles entering the property.

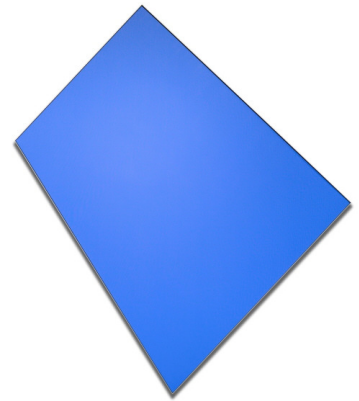
Ellsworth Kelly, American

Blue Panel, 1980

Oil on canvas, 109 1/2 x 95 in.

Part of the Patton family's promised gift to the NCMA of more than 100 works of mid- to late-20th century art, *Blue Panel* is one of several paintings from the gift that will be on view in the new building. In this work, color takes on a palpable presence, immersing the viewer in a visceral and voluptuous field of blue. Deceptively simple at first glance, it explores complex ideas of visual perception and the contemplative power of pure abstraction.

The Patton gift complements the NCMA's permanent collection and enables the presentation of a more comprehensive picture of the significant trends and movements in modern and contemporary art.



Ellsworth Kelly, *Blue Panel*, 1980.
Photo Courtesy the NCMA.

The Rodin Gift

With the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation's 2005 gift of 28 sculptures by Auguste Rodin, the NCMA became the largest repository of Rodin sculptures in the Southeastern United States. Including *The Three Shades*, *The Kiss*, and *The Thinker* (plus an additional work by Camille Claudel), the sculptures will be installed both inside the new building and outdoors, in the specially designed Cantor Garden.

An additional installation devoted to the 10-step lost-wax casting process of Rodin's *Sorrow*, along with the finished bronze itself, will go on view in the adjacent 1983 Museum building in fall 2010, when renovations to that facility are complete.

Attributed to Willem Hendrik Rosier, Dutch

Pair of Torah Finials, ca. 1765

Silver and brass; cast, repoussé, chased, partly gilded, h. 16 5/8 in. (42.2 cm).

The NCMA has one of only two permanent displays of Jewish art in an American art museum. This splendid pair of Torah finials, attributed to Willem Hendrik Rosier, was originally made for Amsterdam's *Grote Synagoge* (Great Synagogue) and was acquired by the Museum in 2006 from the Jewish Community of Amsterdam.

When not in use, the Torah scroll is traditionally wrapped in a rich mantle with the protruding handles of its staves capped by decorative finials. The finials in the NCMA collection are architectural in form, perhaps reminiscent of a church tower such as the crowned steeple of Amsterdam's *Oude Kerk*. The finials' bells, which would chime as the Torah was carried in procession, may recall the bells adorning the robe of the high priest of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem.



Pair of Torah Finials, ca. 1765.
Photo Courtesy the NCMA.

Egyptian False Door, probably from Saqqara

Old Kingdom, Dynasty VI, reign of Pepy I or Merenre, circa 2321–2278 B.C.

White limestone with traces of paint, 63 1/2 x 44 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.

The false door was an important architectural element of private tombs in ancient Egypt, serving as a passageway through which the *ka*, or soul, of the deceased could travel between this world and the next. It was the centerpiece of the tomb's above-ground chapel, where offerings were brought to the deceased. With its realistic depiction of a door, including jambs, lintels, and even a rolled-up reed curtain above the doorway, the false door was inscribed with offering formulas and, more important, the name and titles of its owner. The false door acquired by the NCMA belonged to the nobleman Ni-ankh-Snefru, nicknamed Fefi.

North Carolina Museum of Art

The North Carolina Museum of Art houses the art collections of the State of North Carolina. The State's initial 1947 appropriation of \$1 million was used to purchase 139 European

and American paintings and sculptures. In 1960, the Museum's collection was immeasurably enriched with the gift of 75 works of art from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, making the NCMA the country's second-largest repository of Kress gifts, exceeded only by the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, DC.

Today, in addition to presenting selections from its permanent collection, the Museum organizes and hosts a diversity of special exhibitions and offers a rich complement of education and public programs. Sited in a 164-acre park in Raleigh, the Museum offers a unique blend of art, architecture, and nature.

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