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Media only: Glenn Dixon (202) 633-2807; dixond@si.edu
Janice Kaplan (202) 277-5461; JaniceLKaplan@JaniceLKaplan.com

Media website: <http://newsdesk.si.edu>

Media preview: Oct. 15; 10 a.m.–1 p.m.: Remarks by Melissa Chiu, museum director, at 10:30 a.m. will be followed by curator-led tours. Refreshments will be served.

Hirshhorn Celebrates 40th Anniversary

Highlights Include Gallery Renovation, Two Major New Exhibitions, New Director

Forty years ago this month, the Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden opened to the public with great fanfare. As the first museum on the National Mall devoted to modern art and one of the world’s leading museums of contemporary and modern art, the striking round building is home to a highly regarded permanent collection and pioneering exhibitions that reflect the best art of our time.

Continuing in that tradition, the museum kicks off its yearlong 40th anniversary celebration with two new exhibitions Oct. 16. “At the Hub of Things: New Views of the Collection” and “Days of Endless Time” feature works by more than 60 artists. A series of free public programs is planned as part of the anniversary celebration. The museum has also made a number of new acquisitions in this anniversary year, including significant works by the Guerrilla Girls, Laurel Nakadate, Catherine Opie and Thomas Struth.

“The Hirshhorn is celebrating its 40th anniversary with exhibitions that forge new ties between artists of different eras and styles, acquisitions that make the collection deeper and more diverse and renovated gallery spaces that allow us to show a wider range of artworks than ever before,” said the museum’s new director Melissa Chiu, who joined the Hirshhorn this week. “We are presenting a completely new installation of our permanent collection, organized thematically rather than by artist or movement, and we are highlighting a new tendency in moving-image art, one that may seem counterintuitive at first but in fact presents a new way of engaging with media and culture.”

The refurbishment of the Hirshhorn’s third-floor galleries marks the first time these spaces have been completely renovated since the museum opened 40 years ago. Restored to architect Gordon Bunshaft’s original vision with the removal of drop ceilings and spur walls, the outer-ring galleries

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will host “At the Hub of Things,” a thematically arranged installation of works from the collection from the past 75 years. On the second floor, “Days of Endless Time” presents recent works of moving-image art that go against the tide of the accelerated media age.

Other exhibitions on view include “Speculative Forms” and “Salvatore Scarpitta: Traveler.” A key work in the Hirshhorn’s collection of contemporary sculpture, Richard Deacon’s rarely displayed “Fish Out of Water,” is newly installed in the museum’s first-floor lobby.

The 40th-anniversary fall season includes a full slate of public programs, such as Washington’s premier late-night art event, “After Hours” (Oct. 17) and the annual James T. Demetrian Lecture (Nov. 8), which welcomes pop pioneer **Claes Oldenburg**. The “Meet the Artist” series features sculptors and installation artists Charles Simonds (Dec. 10) and Spencer Finch (Jan. 22).

The recently inaugurated “Curators in Conversation” series continues Nov. 20 with a discussion by international curator **Francesco Bonami** and best-selling author **Sarah Thornton**. Renowned curators **Germano Celant** and **Paul Schimmel** examine the current exhibition “Salvatore Scarpitta: Traveler” Oct. 8. On Oct. 22, *Lapham’s Quarterly* founder and editor Lewis H. Lapham joins authors Jay Griffiths and Jim Holt to address the themes of “Days of Endless Time.”

The Hirshhorn’s celebrated film program continues with documentaries about artists Ai Weiwei (Oct. 2), Nan Goldin (Oct. 14) and Robert Wilson (Nov. 13).

About the Hirshhorn

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Smithsonian Institution’s museum of international modern and contemporary art, has nearly 12,000 paintings, sculptures, photographs, mixed-media installations, works on paper and new media works in its collection. The Hirshhorn presents diverse exhibitions and offers an array of public programs that explore modern and contemporary art.

Located at Independence Avenue and Seventh Street S.W., the museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). Admission to the galleries and special programs is free. For more information about exhibitions and events, visit hirshhorn.si.edu. Follow the Hirshhorn on Facebook at facebook.com/hirshhorn, on Twitter at twitter.com/hirshhorn, on Tumblr at hirshhorn.tumblr.com and on Instagram at instagram.com/hirshhorn. Or sign up for the museum’s eBlasts at hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/social-media. To request accessibility services, contact Kristy Maruca at marucak@si.edu or (202) 633-2796, preferably two weeks in advance.

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