

Weisman Art Museum
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Images: Digital images available upon request



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to DiscoverSM

June 2012

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**WEISMAN ART MUSEUM 2012 – 2013 EXHIBITION SEASON
WRESTLING WITH THE REAL**

MINNEAPOLIS – In a series of exhibitions and programs for the 2012-13 season, the Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota embarks on a yearlong investigation of the oft-overlooked and taken-for-granted concept of the Real. Central to many and varied human concerns, the idea of reality has been defined and understood in a multitude of ways over time.

A brief overview of Western history reveals the significance of the idea of the real in fields such as philosophy, art, and science—consider the ancient Greek debates about the real versus the ideal, the changing view of physical reality revealed by scientific experiments, the redefinition of the self by Enlightenment revolutionaries, Einstein’s questioning of the seemingly immutable concepts of space and time, and the altered view of the human body offered by recent biotechnological advances.

The import of the real is also imprinted on the fabric of contemporary everyday life—witness the growing popularity of reality TV shows, online virtual reality games and social spaces, and the ubiquity of high-definition video capabilities. It is precisely this overwhelming onslaught of new technologies of the real and their intrusion into our daily lives that makes this subject ripe for reconsideration.

The first exhibition of the season, *Guy Tillim: Avenue Patrice Lumumba* (October 13, 2012 through January 6, 2013), is an examination of modern history in Africa against the backdrop of its colonial and post-colonial architectural heritage by South African photographer Guy Tillim. Originally a photojournalist, Tillim records the architecture and infrastructure of colonial and postcolonial Africa. Tillim’s photographs use architecture, landscape, and people to present the repercussion of social conflict in Africa without showing the action itself. His pictures portray the crumbling institutional buildings—post offices, schools, hotels, and offices—that were built by colonial governments in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, and Mozambique.

Patrice Lumumba was one of the first elected African leaders in modern times. In 1960 he became the first prime minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo after his country won independence from Belgium. Only ten weeks after his speech at the independence celebrations, in which he listed various injustices and human rights violations implemented by the Belgians, Lumumba’s government was deposed in a coup. He was imprisoned, beaten, and murdered in circumstances suggesting the

complicity of the governments of Belgium and the United States. Lumumba became revered as a liberator of independent Africa, and streets that bear his name in western and southern Africa have come to represent the loss of an African dream.

As Tillim describes his work, “These photographs are not collapsed histories of post-colonial African states or a meditation on aspects of late-modernist colonial structures, but a walk through avenues of dreams. Patrice Lumumba’s dream, his nationalism, is discernible in the structures, if one reads certain clues, as is the death of his dream, in these de facto monuments. How strange that modernism, which eschewed monument and past for nature and future, should carry such memory so well.”

The exhibition *Guy Tillim: Avenue Patrice Lumumba* has been organized by the Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College Chicago. Major funding for this exhibition has been provided by the Lannan Foundation.

OTHER EXHIBITIONS

The WAM Files: The Art of the Archives

July 14, 2012 through February 17, 2013

On loan from the University of Minnesota Archives in Elmer L. Andersen Library, *The WAM Files: Art of the Archives* presents the first forty years of the museum’s history as told through its scrapbooks, photographs, correspondence, and other printed historical documents. Showcasing the real items first featured on *The WAM Files* Blog, the exhibition seeks to consider how the past is articulated through different and changing technologies.

Contextual Flux

September 18 through March 10, 2013

The fall exhibition in the Target Studio for Creative Collaboration, *Contextual Flux*, demonstrates how nature can guide and inform better design solutions to human problems. Artist Jason Hackenwerth will create new sculptural forms with UMN graduate and undergraduate students. This exhibit connects faculty and students to the Weisman Art Museum, the College of Design, the College of Biological Sciences, and the Digital Fabrication Laboratory at the University of Minnesota.

Our Treasures: Highlights from the Minnesota Museum of American Art

February 2 through May 12, 2013

Our Treasures: Highlights from the Minnesota Museum of American Art, organized by Minnesota Museum of American Art, begins its tour in August 2012 at the Tweed Museum of Art in Duluth then travels to the Plains Art Museum in Fargo, North Dakota, and returns to the Twin Cities at WAM in winter 2013. Curated by MMAA’s Executive Director Dr. Kristin Makhholm, *Our Treasures* features the most significant works from the MMAA’s over 4,000 piece collection.

Laylah Ali: The Greenheads Series

February 16 through May 12, 2013

This is the first exhibition of the controversial Greenheads paintings as a complete body of work.

Williams College Museum of Art organized *Laylah Ali: The Greenheads Series*, and will hold the first showing, followed by WAM, and ending at the Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University. Created between 1996 and 2005, Ali's gouache on paper paintings chronicle an often dystopian and regimented world inhabited by enigmatic, large-headed figures. The genderless subjects of Ali's paintings evoke scenarios from the family, schoolyard, or war zone. Because of the minimal depiction of forms, the line is often blurred between perpetrators and victims, race and gender. The ultimate decision of what is real in the American history that Ali depicts is up to the viewer.

Re-Viewing the Real

June 8 through September 15, 2013

In the arts, "the real" typically has been understood in the narrow terms of realism, a style of representation that has been opposed to the ideal, the romantic, and the new (modern). *Re-viewing the Real* will showcase the various ways that the idea of the real has been invoked, utilized, and mobilized by artists. In presenting selections from the Weisman's collection in this manner, the exhibition seeks to look again at key pieces in the collection in a way that moves beyond the traditional and limiting strategy of a necessarily hierarchical opposition between the abstract (modern) and the real (tradition).

ABOUT WAM

Since its origin in 1934, the Weisman Art Museum has been a teaching museum for the University of Minnesota. Today, education remains central to the museum's mission to create art experiences that spark discovery, critical thinking, and transformation, linking the University and the community. The Weisman Art Museum is located at 333 East River Road, Minneapolis, on the University of Minnesota campus. Admission to exhibition galleries is always free.

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