

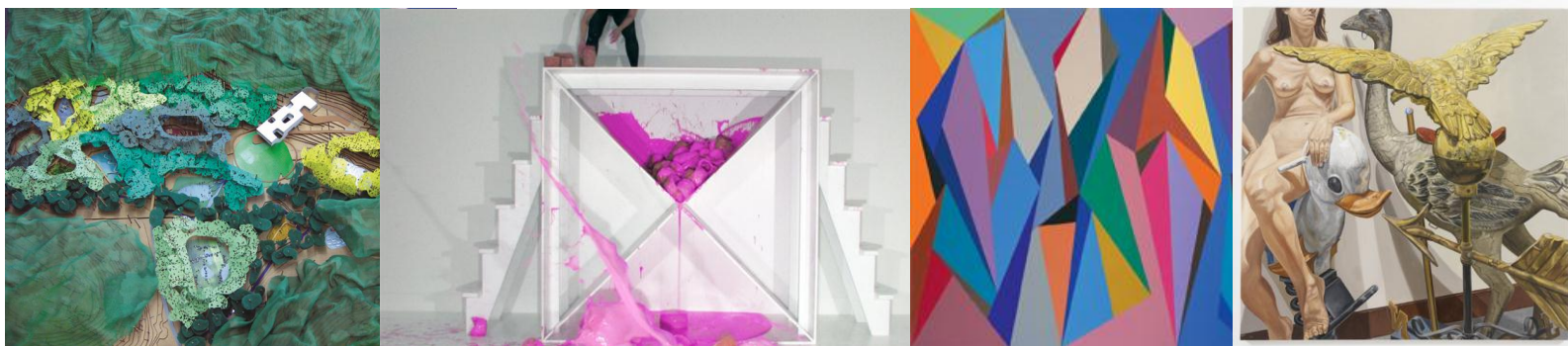
FOUNDED IN 1825, THE **NATIONAL ACADEMY** IS THE ONLY INSTITUTION OF ITS KIND THAT INTEGRATES A MUSEUM, ART SCHOOL, AND ASSOCIATION OF ARTISTS AND ARCHITECTS DEDICATED TO CREATING AND PRESERVING A LIVING HISTORY OF AMERICAN ART.

For Immediate Release

**THE NATIONAL ACADEMY'S ANNUAL EXHIBITION
ILLUMINATES CROSS-GENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS
IN CONTEMPORARY ART AND ARCHITECTURE**



OPENS JANUARY 25, 2012



Presenting over 100 artists and architects across three generations, featured artists include Ellen Altfest, Karl Benjamin, Joe Coleman, Lesley Dill, Chie Fueki, Jeanne Gang, Kate Gilmore, Joan Jonas, Philip Pearlstein, Robert A. M. Stern, Emma Tapley, Bernard Tschumi, Stephen Westfall and others

New York, NY (December 5, 2011) – The National Academy's Annual exhibition features works by over 100 artists and architects juxtaposing contemporary masters with emerging and mid-career artists. The **Annual** will be on view January 25 through April 29, 2012 at the National Academy Museum, 1083 Fifth Avenue at 89th Street. For more information, contact (212) 369-4800 or visit nationalacademy.org.

This year's new format has been designed to reveal the cross-generational dialogue occurring in the art world by showcasing Academicians and other invited artists and architects.

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Jeanne Gang, *Blue Wall Center (Greenville County, South Carolina)*, 2009, Mixed media; Kate Gilmore *Break of Day*, 2010 Video, Variable; Karl Benjamin #5, 1990, Oil on canvas; Philip Pearlstein, *Model with ostrich, eagle, and duck*, 2009, Oil on canvas

"Presenting three generations of artists and architects, this exhibition illustrates the continuum of American art," says Marshall Price, the Academy's Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. "The new format contextualizes contemporary art, indicating an evolution to 'new.' With a nod to the Academy's historic Annual, the 2012 exhibition is a forum for divergent aesthetic inclinations and in some cases for social issues being addressed by artists and architects."

This vibrant cross-generational exchange is evident throughout the Annual from the paintings of Philip Pearlstein and Ellen Altfest, to abstractions by Karl Benjamin and Stephen Westfall. Similarly in architecture, Chicago-based architect and 2011 MacArthur "Genius" Award recipient Jeanne Gang has inherited the mantle from Laurence Booth in this city rich in architectural history.

Featured artists and architects also include Lynda Benglis, David Diao, Lesley Dill, Kate Gilmore, Joan Jonas, Roberto Juarez, Glenn Ligon, Alison Saar, Arlene Shechet, Ursula von Rydingsvard, and Carrie Mae Weems. Architectural projects include work by Peter Gluck, Thomas Phifer, Robert A. M. Stern, Bernard Tschumi, Billie Tsien, Rafael Viñoly, and others.

While the Annual's strength has often been found in traditional mediums (painting, sculpture, and printmaking), this year's exhibition includes video work by three generations of women artists, as well as a greater number of architectural projects than in the recent past.

Abstract painting is represented by multiple generations of artists.

Los Angeles hard edge painter **Karl Benjamin's** chromatic painting *#5* is reminiscent of the artist's breakthrough work from the 1950s, illustrating his ongoing vitality. Combining the vocabulary of minimalist and hard edge painting with sculpture, **Merrill Wagner** creates a referential landscape in colored sheets of steel, while geometry also plays a central role in the work of **Dorothea Rockburne**, expressed in her two paintings, *Drawing Distinctions* and *Still Blue Circle*.

While some critics have heralded a revival of figure painting, for many artists it has long been central to their practice. **Philip Pearlstein**, one the most significant figure painters of the last 50 years, is seen next to younger generations of realist painters such as **Ellen Altfest**. Pearlstein has mined a trove of tchotchkes and Americana as settings for nudes, and his *Model with Ostrich, Eagle, and Duck* boldly illustrates the artist's objective eye. Altfest's painstakingly detailed work, *The Leg*, recalls a mid-century revival of realism, manifested through her intense examination of the surface of skin.

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The diverse cross-generational continuum is vividly expressed in the video installations of three women artists, each a pioneer in her own right:

Joan Jonas' *Lines in the Sand*, commissioned for Documenta XI, is a multi-media video that transports imagist poet H.D.'s Helen of Troy to present-day Las Vegas, revealing a contemporary existential exploration of the self.

Carrie Mae Weems has long been a powerful voice among artists of her generation. In *Afro-Chic*, a three-channel video installation broadens and deepens Weems' poignant explorations into African American history, gender identity, and specific cultural stereotypes and signifiers.

The youngest of the three, **Kate Gilmore**, first emerged with video performances that place the artist in situations where she is purposefully destroying objects, breaking out of a confined space, or repeating a seemingly senseless task. In *Break of Day*, Gilmore engages with performance, sculpture, minimalist architecture, and painting.

While architecture has been included in the Academy's Annuals, this year there is a particularly strong presence. Drawings, renderings, and models represent civic, commercial, and residential projects recently completed, currently under construction, or in preliminary stages of realization.

Two generations of Chicago-based architects are featured. **Laurence Booth** has helped transform that city through adaptive re-use and restoration as well as large-scale commercial projects. His work in the domestic sphere is represented by a striking glass and steel residence on Lake Michigan. Recent MacArthur Fellow (and former architect in Booth's firm) **Jeanne Gang** is part of a younger generation of trailblazing Chicago architects. Her work pushes the envelope with creative, functional, and sustainable design.

Proving that drawing by hand in the architectural profession is not obsolete, **Rafael Viñoly's** elegant, understated ink drawing belies the dramatic sweeping monolithic roof of the Carrasco International Airport in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Robert A. M. Stern's Museum for African Art (scheduled to open in the fall of 2012) crowns Museum Mile on upper Fifth Avenue. The design resolves the many challenges of establishing a museum in a high-density urban area by integrating the public museum space within a residential tower where an adjoining plaza serves as a public gathering place.

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Support for this exhibition was provided by the Wolf Kahn & Emily Mason Foundation, the Dedalus Foundation and, in part, by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

ABOUT THE ANNUAL

Since its inception in 1826, the National Academy's Annual has been a reflection of contemporary American art and historically served as the standard for aesthetic taste in this country. This exhibition was the principal, and for many years the only, outlet for American artists to exhibit their work.

It continues as the locus of artistic discourse among artists and architects and serves as a venue to show recent artistic work to the general public. For the first time, this year's new format presents the work of Academicians with invited artists and architects. Selections are made by a curatorial team of artists and architects.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL ACADEMY

Integrating a museum, an art school and an honorary association of artists and architects, the Academy is dedicated to creating and advancing a living history of American art. The Academy's inception in 1825 represented a defining moment for American art. Its founders – including Samuel F. B. Morse, Thomas Cole and Asher B. Durand – were well aware of America's dependency on the European artistic tradition and the country's lack of venues for the exhibition or instruction of art. With the founding of the National Academy, their ambitious desire to establish an institution that would serve American visual culture became a reality.

Today, the National Academy envisions its original mission of exhibition and education through a contemporary lens. It is a continually evolving testament to the transformative power of art where tradition is celebrated and new visionaries embraced, connecting the past, present and future of American art and architecture.

EXHIBITION: *The Annual: 2012*

Dates: January 25 – April 29, 2012

Hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM

NATIONAL ACADEMY MUSEUM

1083 Fifth Avenue at 89th Street

Admission: Adults: \$12; Seniors (65+) and students with valid ID: \$7,

Children under 12, members, and students of the National Academy School: free

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