Exhibition Announcement

PUNCTUATING SPACE: THE PRINTS AND MULTIPLES OF RICHARD ARTSCHWAGER
October 3 – December 13, 2015

The Weatherspoon Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro is pleased to be the only southeast venue for the unique exhibition, *Punctuating Space: The Prints and Multiples of Richard Artschwager*, on view from October 3 through December 13, 2015. The groundbreaking artist radically upset the conventional norms of art in the 1960s, inserting his signature *blp* (an oblong form) into unexpected sites and settings, triggering a new path in contemporary art.

Consisting of fifty-nine works, this exhibition is the first examination of Artschwager’s prints and multiples. Wendy Weitman, who served as a curator in the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books at the Museum of Modern Art until 2007, developed the show for the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center at Vassar College. “Encompassing both the hand-drawn and the fabricated, Artschwager’s prints and multiples remain a critically-acclaimed but under-recognized body of work,” Weitman notes.

Weitman knew Artschwager and helped to organize his body of prints, drawings, and posters at his studio in the last years of his life. Currently, she is writing a catalogue raisonné on his editioned work. Weitman will offer a members-only gallery tour of the exhibition at 6 pm on Friday, October 2, prior to the public reception from 6:30-8 pm.
Favoring commercial materials (his work features everything from Formica to Celotex to rubberized hair), Artschwager expanded the notion of artistic means to include the commonplace and industrial. “While his grisaille paintings imbue his landscapes, still-lifes, and portraits with a haunting, dream-like aura, his colorful, faux-wood sculptures of everyday objects arouse unsettling reactions that challenge the role of art,” says Weitman.

Born in Washington, D.C., in 1923, Artschwager grew up in a European intellectual atmosphere, the son of a German botanist father and Russian artist mother. Initially planning to be a scientist like his father, Artschwager studied biology, chemistry, and mathematics at Cornell University. He first earned a living as a child photographer and then became a furniture maker. By the mid-1950s his furniture-making business had grown substantially but he continued to take art classes. In 1960 he began making paintings from found photographs and sculpture from wood and Formica, and in 1964 his work appeared in a group exhibition with Pop artists James Rosenquist, Roy Lichtenstein, and Andy Warhol. By 1970 he was supporting himself as an artist and closed his furniture workshop.

Artschwager completed his first multiple in 1969, and doing so was a natural extension of his work as a furniture-maker. He intuitively understood the concept of the multiple and mass-produced objects. This includes his arguably most radical works of art—his blps. These are small, lozenge-shaped, usually black, objects that he surreptitiously installed in unexpected places.

The artist’s interest in space was not limited to interiors. Landscapes and architecture were frequent motifs as well. In the late 1970s and 1980s he completed several landscape etchings, Cactus I of 1981 among the largest. Closely based on a 1972 painting, Bushes III, this landscape harks back to his youth in New Mexico. In this print Artschwager depicts the saguaro cacti that are common in the area, but he uses a specific perspective to distribute the plants in precise rows at precise angles. His scientific background—his science and math studies at Cornell and his botanist father’s influence—is apparent in the exacting nature of this print.

Another important theme that runs through Artschwager's work is language. As the structure and perception of space intrigued him, similarly it was the structure and perception of language that he was drawn to. Thus, while words appear infrequently, his sculpture includes numerous examples of exclamation points, questions marks, quotation marks, and periods. The title of the exhibition is, in part, derived from this theme.

_This exhibition was organized by the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York with exhibition sponsorship by the Friends of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center Exhibition Fund._


**Related Public Programs**

**Members’ Gallery Talk: Wendy Weitman**  
Friday, October 2, 6 pm  
No reservations necessary.

**Public Reception, 6:30–8:00 pm**
Noon @ the ‘Spoon Public Tour  
Tuesday, October 13, 12 pm  
Our 20-minute Noon @ the ‘Spoon tour is a fun way to explore a new exhibition during lunch break. Offered the second Tuesday of the month. Free.

Film: Richard Artschwager: Shut Up and Look  
Thursday, November 19, 6:30 pm  
Film, 2012. 57 min. Free.

For a complete, updated list of related programs, visit http://weatherspoon.uncg.edu.

About the Weatherspoon Art Museum

Mission  
The Weatherspoon Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro acquires, preserves, exhibits, and interprets modern and contemporary art for the benefit of its multiple audiences, including university, community, regional, and beyond. Through these activities, the museum recognizes its paramount role of public service, and enriches the lives of diverse individuals by fostering an informed appreciation and understanding of the visual arts and their relationship to the world in which we live.

History  
The Weatherspoon Art Museum at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro was founded by Gregory Ivy in 1941 and is the earliest of any art facilities within the UNC system. The museum was founded as a resource for the campus, community, and region and its early leadership developed an emphasis—maintained to this day—on presenting and acquiring modern and contemporary works of art. A 1950 bequest from the renowned collection of Claribel and Etta Cone, which included prints and bronzes by Henri Matisse and other works on paper by American and European modernists, helped to establish the Weatherspoon’s permanent collection. Other prescient acquisitions during Ivy’s tenure included a 1951 suspended mobile by Alexander Calder, Woman by Willem de Kooning, a pivotal work in the artist’s career that was purchased in 1954, and the first drawings by Eva Hesse and Robert Smithson to enter a museum collection. In 1989, the museum moved into its present location in The Anne and Benjamin Cone building designed by the architectural firm Mitchell Giurgola. The museum has six galleries and a sculpture courtyard with over 17,000 square feet of exhibition space. The American Association of Museums accredited the Weatherspoon in 1995 and renewed its accreditation in 2005.

Collections + Exhibitions  
The permanent collection of the Weatherspoon Art Museum is the only of its kind in North Carolina and is considered to be one of the foremost in the Southeast. It represents all major art movements from the beginning of the 20th century to the present. Of the nearly 6,000 works in the collection are pieces by such prominent figures as Sol LeWitt, Robert Mangold, Cindy Sherman, Al Held, Alex Katz, Henry Tanner, Louise Nevelson, Mark di Suvero, Deborah Butterfield, Nick, Cave, Deb Kass, and Robert Rauschenberg. The museum regularly lends to major exhibitions nationally and internationally.

The Weatherspoon also is known for its adventurous and innovative exhibition program. Through a dynamic annual calendar of fifteen to eighteen exhibitions and a multi-disciplinary educational program for audiences of all ages, the museum provides an opportunity for
audiences to consider artistic, cultural, and social issues of our time and enriches the life of our university, community, and region.

Weatherspoon Art Museum
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