FALL ARTS PREVIEW

BLAZING THEIR OWN PATHS

Richard Hunt, Andy Warhol featured in art exhibitions slated for Chicago’s fall season

BY KYLIE MACMILLAN
For the Sun-Times

While a student in 1953, Richard Hunt attended “Sculpture of the 20th Century,” a traveling show at the Art Institute of Chicago in which he first saw the welded-steel work of Spanish sculptor Julio Gonzalez, a discovery that would set the course of his artistic career.

The now-octogenarian sculptor’s near-life-long connection with the museum, 111 S. Michigan Ave., will come full circle Sept. 17 with the opening of a solo survey — “Richard Hunt: Scholar’s Rock or Stone of Hope or Love of Bronze.”

One of Chicago’s best-known artists, he has completed more than 150 public commissions across the United States, including 45 in the Chicago area. He works in an abstract, organic and improvisatory style, bending, shaping and welding sheets of steel or bronze and sometimes incorporating found objects.

Ann Goldstein, who became the Art Institute’s deputy director and chair and curator of modern and contemporary art in 2016, first encountered Hunt’s work as a student at the University of California, Los Angeles, where one of his pieces stands in the school’s sculpture garden.

“He’s reach is far,” Goldstein said, “and it was an extraordinary privilege to meet the legend coming here.”

The exhibition will be divided between two locations at the museum. Featured outdoors on the Bluhm Family Terrace (which is free and open to the public) will be eight works created since 2000, including the 14-foot-tall centerpiece work that gives the show its title.

“He has lived with this piece and all these pieces,” said Jordon Carter, assistant curator of modern and contemporary art, “tinkering and continuously adding and taking away. His work is absolutely abstract, but each of them, within their titles, within his different references, carries a very nuanced and rich story.”

Providing a counterpoint to the outdoor works are 12 pieces from across Hunt’s career, including maquettes for some of his public works around the Midwest. These will go on view Sept. 26 in two galleries in the museum’s Modern Wing. The show is slated to conclude in mid-summer 2021.

Here is a look at nine other notable fall exhibitions around Chicago. Keep in mind that, because of COVID-19 restrictions, many museums and galleries are requiring
reservations or appointments and restricting the number of viewers. So check before going.

“What Is Home?” Catherine Edelman Gallery, 1637 W. Chicago Ave., through Oct. 31: Unlike many commercial galleries in Chicago, the Edelman Gallery isn’t requiring appointments. The nationally respected photography space is opening its fall season with works addressing the meaning of home by Kelly Anderson-Staley, Omar Imam and Ruben Martin de Lucas.

“Artists Run Chicago 2.0,” Hyde Park Art Center, 5020 S. Cornell Ave., through Nov. 1: To mark its reopening, this South Side cultural hub celebrates the important if often unsung contributions of 50 artist-run galleries and organizations across Chicago, like Chuquimiares, 5000 W. Bloomingdale Ave., and the Nightingale, 1984 N. Milwaukee Ave. The offering is a 10th anniversary reprise of the exhibition’s first iteration, from which just six featured spaces survive.

“Balkrishna Doshi: Architecture for the People,” Wrightwood 659, 659 W. Wrightwood Ave., through Dec. 12: Doshi won the 2018 Pritzker Architecture Prize, the top honor in the field, for a lifetime of work that extends international modernist principles to the culture and traditions of his native India. In its only American stop, this touring exhibition, organized in part by the Vitra Design Museum in Germany, offers a look at 23 of his most significant projects, from 1958 through 2014.

“PAN: Prints of Avant Garde Europe, 1895-1900,” Richard H. Driehaus Museum, 40 E. Erie St., through the end of 2020: This traveling exhibition explores a fascinating five-year period when conservative and more progressive styles collided across Europe. Featured are original lithographs, etchings and woodcuts from PAN, a German design periodical of the period, by such artists as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Käthe Kollwitz and Henry van de Velde.

“Wright Before the ‘Lloyd,’” Elmhurst Art Museum, 150 S. Cottage Hill Ave., through Feb. 14, 2021: Before Frank Lloyd Wright became a 20th century icon whose fame remains as strong as ever, he was a struggling architect known as Frank L. Wright. Curated by cultural historian Tim Samuelson, this show examines the designer’s early, exploratory projects, with rare building fragments and other artifacts and related images.

“The Efe’Eja People of the Amazon,” Field Museum, 1400 S. Lake Shore Drive, through June 20, 2021: This traveling exhibition, organized in collaboration with the Efe’Eja nation, offers an in-depth look at this little-known people who have lived in the Amazon basin for centuries. It combines documentary photographs with ancestral clothing, baskets, tools, animal figures and other traditional objects.

“Nine Lives,” Renaissance Society, 5811 S. Ellis Ave., through Nov. 15: This internationally known contemporary art space at the University of Chicago is hosting a group show featuring 11 artists that will weigh “questions of narrative and agency; how stories are told, where they can be found and what their effects might be, within single lives and on a more collective scale.”


“Jo Ractliffe: DRIVES,” Art Institute, Oct. 17–April 26, 2021: For much of the second half of the 20th century, the Black majority in South Africa was oppressed by a white-minority government through a brutal policy known as apartheid. Photographer Jo Ractliffe, who confronted this bleak time in her country’s history through haunting, often allegorical imagery, is featured in her first-ever survey, featuring more than 100 works from across her career.

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