

North Dakota Museum of Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thirteen artists are featured in the first exhibition. They include Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, Douglas Kinsey, David Madzo, Duane Penske, Kiki Smith, Frank Bigbear, Peter Dean, Shana Kaplow, Sterling Rathsack, Magdalena Abacanovich, David Krueger, John Snyder and Kal Asmundson.

Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons grew up in Cuba. Since coming to the States in 1991, she has exhibited extensively all over the U.S. and Canada and won numerous awards and fellowships for her art. Through her art, Campos-Pons explores her place and identity. She explains that *Seven Powers*, which is currently on display at the Museum, emphasizes “the idea of invisibility and anonymity that so terribly permeates the narratives and stories of Blackness in the New World.”

Douglas Kinsey’s bold and brutal paintings often depict people caught in disaster, attempting to survive. *Angels at the Gate* and *No Man’s Land*, two paintings that are part of the Museum’s permanent collection, are examples of this theme. Kinsey’s work has been seen all over the world, including in Japan, England, and Sweden, and throughout the U.S. He has taught at the University of North Dakota, Berea College, Oberlin College, and Kobe College in Japan. Currently, Kinsey is Professor Emeritus at the University of Notre Dame.

David Madzo is a Minneapolis artist who attended the University of North Dakota. His pieces, including the three that are currently on display at the Museum, are wholly contemporary while at the same time full of symbols and archetypes reminiscent of the Middle Ages. Says Madzo, “Artists are chroniclers or detailers of their times within the confines of their studio but they also access a whole history of paintings ... I have a moral responsibility to maintain that tradition.”

Duane Penske, who grew up on a farm near Vesta, Minnesota, says his paintings “are like a visual diary for me to go back and remember situations.” The four three-dimensional, cartoonish pieces that are now on display mix Penske’s personal experiences with imagination, and his color-saturated, image-oriented work is often a favorite among children.

A New York City-based artist, Kiki Smith explores the body’s inherent possibilities in two- and three-dimensional media. Her work, from printmaking to sculpture, explores how the body functions as a vessel for knowledge, belief and storytelling. Always evocative, Smith wishes the viewer to know and share the body’s functions, its joys and its pains.

Frank Bigbear, Jr., who grew up on Minnesota’s White Earth Indian Reservation, is a self-described “urban Indian.” His large, colorful drawings, like the one currently on display at the Museum, *Dolly’s Discotheque*, are often about the merger—the good and the bad—of historic Indian life into contemporary, urban culture. Says Bigbear of his career, “I was born to be an artist. I can’t stop.”

Born in Germany, Peter Dean fled with his parents to New York during WWII. Basically self-taught as an artist, Dean painted what compelled him, whether it be ugly or beautiful. Dean was one of the artists to exhibit at the Museum’s Grand Opening in 1989, and like then, his active and bold-colored canvases fill the main floor galleries during this exhibition, each telling a story about humanity. Dean died of Lou Gehrig’s Disease in 1993.

Painter and video artist Shana Kaplow has received many awards for her work, and she has exhibited across the country. She currently teaches painting and drawing at St. Cloud State University. Her stunning piece *Hats* is part of the Museum’s permanent collection.

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Sterling Rathsack has maintained a studio in Superior, Wisconsin for over twenty years. He works in a variety of media, often using recycled, salvaged or renewable materials, and feminine figures, as evident in *Flora*, the sculpture now on display at the Museum.

Born in Poland in 1930, Magdalena Abacanovich witnessed years of war and political turmoil, and her art is often a reflection of this heritage. Although she is most famous for her large abstract figures which have been dubbed “abakans,” she has explored a variety of media throughout her career, including painting, sculpting, weaving and educating.

Painter and sculptor John Snyder is influenced heavily by the past. His gigantic painting, *The Communion*, which was recently donated to the Museum and is currently on display, is reminiscent of 14th century Italian art. While it is full of biblical themes and historic references, he has also included objects and ideas from his personal experiences, culminating in a magnificent, complex painting on the human condition. Eleven artists are featured in the first exhibition. They include Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, Douglas Kinsey, David Madzo, Duane Penske, Kiki Smith, Frank Bigbear, Peter Dean, Shana Kaplow, Sterling Rathsack, Magdalena Abacanovich and John Snyder.

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Krueger's interest in art developed at a young age when he began to draw cartoons, copying them from newspapers then later making up his own. He did not have an art class until he was in Jamestown High School, where his teacher encouraged him to become a studio art major. Krueger never saw an art museum until a college trip to New York City.

Krueger's expressive paintings are figuratively loaded with iconography of his home state. Landscapes from rolling hills to flat plateaus, juxtaposed with figures or objects. His work is rooted in a surrealistic fashion, depicting the dynamics of the land and how man is in opposition to it.

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Kal Asmundson, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, draws directly from his painful past - directly from memory. At a time when many artists were working on subject matters others had experienced; Asmundson tackled his dark family history. He has worked to put memory into visual form in order to confront larger issues such as how memory functions in the present to unveil the realness of the past. He has turned back to the childhood he hasn't thought about in years. These memories were not repressed memories, but rather experiences set aside in order to live.

Asmundson created seventeen pieces of work for this exhibition. Each work contains a text scrawled across the face of the image, or enclosed in the text box below. Doubting himself, he erased the words. Then doubting himself again, he replaced the text. In reading the text and viewing the images, one is reminded of the numerous children who face the daunting days Kal faced.