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Fact Sheet “Multiplicity”

Exhibition

“Multiplicity”

Nov. 11 – March 11, 2012

Location

Smithsonian American Art Museum
Eighth and F streets N.W.

Description

The concept of making multiple images from the same matrix has been integral to printmaking ever since the earliest prints were pulled from woodblocks and metal plates in the 15th century. Each impression is considered to be an original work of art. “Multiplicity” brings together a selection of prints by artists for whom the concept of multiplicity in its many forms provides a touchstone for their artistic expression. Many of the artists in the exhibition have expanded the idea of multiplicity beyond editions of identical impressions by creating series, sequences and images that comprise numerous parts. They explore repetition, pairing and variations on a theme as artistic strategies. Implicit in their exploration of multiplicity is a challenge to rarity and uniqueness as determinants of value.

The exhibition features 83 works from the museum’s permanent collection by contemporary artists such as John Baldessari, John Cage, Vija Celmins, Chuck Close, R. Luke DuBois, Sol LeWitt, Brice Marden, Julie Mehretu, Martin Puryear, Susan Rothenberg, Kiki Smith and Kara Walker. Nearly half of the prints included in the exhibition, selected by Joann Moser, senior curator, are recent acquisitions. These prints are the result of collaboration between the artist and professional printers who help realize the artist’s vision. They question the authority of the unique masterpiece and alter the stereotype of the artist working alone in the studio. The exhibition will travel.

Free Public Program

Moser moderates a discussion with artists Linn Meyers, Michael Platt, Lou Stovall and Andrea Way Wednesday, Nov. 16, at 6 p.m. in the museum’s McEvoy Auditorium.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum, located above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station, is open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Follow the museum on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, ArtBabble, iTunes and YouTube. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Website: americanart.si.edu.

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