



July 18, 2007

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Smithsonian American Art Museum Presents Free Public Programs to Complement “Earl Cunningham’s America”

The Smithsonian American Art Museum has organized a wide variety of programs to complement the exhibition “Earl Cunningham’s America,” which features 50 paintings by one of the foremost folk artists of the 20th century. This retrospective, on view from Aug. 10 through Nov. 4, presents the artist as a folk modernist who used flat space and brilliant color to create sophisticated compositions with complex meanings about the nature of American life. Cunningham’s imaginary landscapes are marvels of the unexpected and the unlikely: pink flamingos dot the shoreline of the Maine coast; New England cottages sit at the edge of Florida swamps; Viking ships float in harbors with schooners; and Seminole Indians wear feathered headdresses.

A full schedule of exciting events at the museum, from talks with artists to performances to behind-the-scenes tours, is available at americanart.si.edu. For additional information, the public should e-mail saamprograms@si.edu or call (202) 233-0667.

“SAAM I Am” – Family Program

Saturday, Aug. 18, 1 to 4 p.m.

Listen to a reading of “Sail Away, Little Boat” by Janet Buell and Jui Ishida (Carolrhoda Books, 2005); construct your own ship in a bottle during a kid-friendly craft workshop with an expert model ship instructor; and enjoy sea chanteys in the exhibition galleries.

“The Dragon of St. George Street”

Wednesday, Sept. 5 and Thursday, Oct. 11 at 5:30 p.m.

This documentary, produced by WMFE-TV, recounts the life of visionary American artist Earl Cunningham, his adventures as a wanderer and mariner, and the history of his studio and gallery. (60 minutes)

“Contemporary Folk Art in America” Roundtable Symposium

Thursday, Sept. 6, 1 to 3:30 p.m.

Join us for an informed discussion on folk art with distinguished panelists Bernard Herman (University of Delaware), Jane Kallir (Galerie St. Etienne) and Carolyn Weekley (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation). The symposium is moderated by Lynda Roscoe Hartigan (Peabody Essex Museum) and Wendell Garrett (Sotheby’s).

Fiber Bird Sculpture Workshop

Wednesday, Oct. 3 and Saturday, Oct. 6, 1 to 6 p.m.

Fiber sculpture artist, Maria Simonsson, guides you through the process of making unique bird sculptures. There is a \$25 materials fee and advance registration is required. Please email saamprograms@si.edu or call (202) 633-8490.

“Sea and Surf En Plein Air”

Sunday, Oct. 7 at 3 p.m.

Marine artist Deborah Chapin discusses painting on location in Brittany, France and comments on clips from a documentary about her experience.

Gallery Talk with Senior Curator Virginia Mecklenburg

Wednesday, Oct. 17 at 6 p.m.

Curious to know more about the Fork Over Gallery, its owner, Earl Cunningham, and his paintings? Join us for an enlightening talk by Virginia Mecklenburg in the exhibition galleries.

“Earl Cunningham: Folk Modernist”

Sunday, Oct. 28 at 3 p.m.

In his illustrated talk, Frank Holt, director of the Mennello Museum of American Art, ‘bridges the gap’ between Cunningham as a folk painter and an early modernist. He will examine the works of Marsden Hartley, Charles Burchfield, Arthur Dove and John Marin in relation to Cunningham’s paintings.

Publication

The catalog, published by the Smithsonian American Art Museum and distributed by HarperCollins, is written by Mecklenburg with essays by Wendell D. Garrett, senior vice president for American decorative arts at Sotheby’s in New York City and Carolyn J. Weekley, the Juli Grainger Director of Museums at Colonial Williamsburg. It will be available in the museum store and online at americanart.si.edu for \$45.

Credit

“Earl Cunningham’s America” is organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The exhibition is made possible by generous support from Darden Restaurants Foundation; the Elizabeth Morse Genius Foundation; the Arts and Cultural Affairs Office of Orange County, Fla.; CNL Financial Group; Bright House Networks; Lockheed Martin; and Friends of The Mennello Museum of American Art. The exhibition’s tour is supported in part by the C. F. Foundation, Atlanta.

About the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Museum hours are 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. Admission is free. Metrorail station: Gallery Place/Chinatown (Red, Yellow and Green lines). Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Recorded museum information: (202) 633-7970. Web site: americanart.si.edu.

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