

Mint Museum Uptown in Charlotte, NC, Reopens with Artwork on the Plaza at the Levine Center for the Arts

A larger-than-life outdoor diorama, entitled, *Tune In*, is coming to the plaza at the Levine Center for the Arts just outside Mint Museum Uptown in Charlotte, NC.

This 4,000-pound multidimensional diorama created by local artist Richard Lazes and his studio team of fellow creatives at the Art Factory, is a sculpture of six stacked televisions from the 1960s in an enclosed room with wallpaper, pictures and linoleum that replicate a TV room of the time.

Tune In has been installed on Wells Fargo Plaza outside Mint Museum Uptown in tandem with the grand re-opening of the museum, which took place last month.

Televisions in the installation display a collage of rolling snippets of media programming from the 1950s and '60s, including news segments like the launch of Apollo 11, sitcoms and tv dramas, live musical performances by the likes of Little Richard and The Beatles. It's a reflection of history that is mirrored in society today, as well as a display of media that has - and continues to - heavily influence the way people think and act. He hopes that *Tune In* stimulates conversations among viewers to consider where we have come from and where we are going as a society.

Lazes wanted to create a piece of art that put the pandemic crisis of 2020 and social unrest in some type of historical perspective. The massive sculpture was created by dissecting vintage television sets found in antique shops, and then assembled into a precarious formation indicative of the dysfunctional state of our society today. Six LED screens replace the old television tubes. In order to create content for the screens, he created a video collage mined from 100 hours of TV shows and news media during the 1960s to create iconic TV shows, great musical performers by the entertainers of that day and news clips of current events during that time period.

"It's been 60 years since these programs were broadcast on TV and while video programming has become more politically correct it is unclear whether American culture and society has become any more fair and equitable," he says.

Lazes recognizes that shows like "The Jeffersons," "The Little Rascals," "Lucille Ball", and "Sanford and Son" were misogynistic, chauvinistic and racist, portraying a



"Tune In" on view in Martha's Vineyard.

very shallow and prejudiced view of women and blacks. "These portrayals of minorities were indicative of that period. While we have moved a long way to a more magnanimous and politically correct viewpoint in our media, I wonder if our society has really changed in the way we treat one another," he says.

But television programming of that period also brought families together to watch favorite shows.

"With the introduction of the internet, personal computers, and smartphones, we have become isolated and no longer came together with friends and families to take in a shared media experience. Perhaps a silver lining of the pandemic is that it has brought us back together as families to sit in front of the TV set as newscasters and politicians brief us on the status of the pandemic. With all of the discord and alienation in society, we are all in need of some introspection and a positive message so I hope that my sculpture will contribute to the healing process."

Tune In is scheduled to travel throughout 10 cities, including Charlotte, Washington DC, Boston, New York, Chicago, Atlanta and Los Angeles. At each stop of the exhibit, Lazes along with co-director Aaron Atkinson will interview and film local artists to document how they are leveraging their creative talent to bring hope to each city. The documentary "Artists in Quarantine: American Creativity During the 2020 Pandemic" will showcase how creatives took their craft to showcase truth, justice and hope in a time of despair, and is scheduled to stream on Netflix in 2022.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings, call the Museum at 704/337-2000 or visit (mintmuseum.org).

Bechtler Museum of Modern Art in Charlotte, NC, Celebrates the Life of Walasse Ting

The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art in Charlotte, NC, is celebrating the life of Walasse Ting with the exhibit, *1 Cent Life*, which honor his landmark 1964 portfolio, on view in the Museum's second-floor gallery, through Feb. 7, 2021.

The exhibition presents a selection of color lithographs from the landmark 1964 print portfolio, *1 Cent Life*, written by Walasse Ting (born Ding Xionguan), edited by Sam Francis, and published by E.W. Kornfeld.

Developed by Anastasia James, Bechtler Museum of Modern Art Curator, the exhibition is dedicated to the life of Chinese-American visual artist and poet Walasse Ting and follows his journey from Shanghai to Paris to New York City.

The exhibition features 18 lithographs by 18 artists from the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art's signed limited edition of the *1 Cent Life Portfolio*, as well as poetry and a selection of books by Ting. Artists whose work will be on view include Andy Warhol, Joan Mitchell, Pierre Alechinsky, Kiki O.K. Claes Oldenburg, James Rosenquist, Robert Indiana, Bram Van Velde, Asger Jorn, and Allan Kaprow.

Born Ding Xionguan, Ting was raised in Shanghai while the city was under Japanese occupation. At the age of 17, directly following World War II, Ting fled to Hong Kong, then a safe haven for dissidents and



Detail of "Dust jacket for 1 Cent Life with Portrait of Walasse Ting", 1964 by Machteld Appel © 2020 Estate of Walasse Ting / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

political refugees. Six years later, he moved to Paris where he immediately anglicized his name, tacking on "sse" in emulation of the famed painter Henri Matisse. In Paris, Ting met former members of the CoBrA group, including Pierre Alechinsky, Asger Jorn, and Karl Appel. Their rebellious, intuitive, and democratic approach to artmaking would greatly influence his work. CoBrA is taken from the first letters of the cities (Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam) where the group's founding members lived.

In December 1956, bolstered by newfound success as a painter, Ting boarded the SS Liberte in Paris for New York City. In 1961, while living in a one-room studio near Times Square, he wrote a series of sixty-one poems. Simultaneously spiritual and secular, these poems became the genesis for what would become the now-legendary

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1 Cent Life portfolio. Communicating the wide-eyed ambition of a recent immigrant, the poems reference both the tone and metrical patterns of classical Chinese poetry and the rhythm of American Beat prose, Jazz music, and the urban environment.

Each page of the portfolio radiates with a breathless immediacy that exudes a sense of the vital dynamism of New York City in the early 1960s as Ting was experiencing it. Soon after their completion, Ting approached his close friend, the American painter, Sam Francis, with the idea of inviting a group of artists to create color lithographs in response to his poetry. In the early 1960s, color lithography was still a relatively under-explored medium by artists as it was primarily associated with commercial printing. The artists invited to participate in the project were given lithographic plates, ink, and crayons so they could experiment with the unfamiliar medium and respond to Ting's poetry in their preferred artistic style. Included in the exhibition is Andy Warhol's first published editioned lithograph which is accompanied by Ting's poem, "Jade White Butterfly." This print is also the first combination of text and image on the same page since Warhol's illustrated books of the 1950s.

The resulting portfolio printed by Maurice Beudet in Paris, France and published by E.W. Kornfeld in Bern, Switzerland contains sixty-two original lithographs by twenty-eight artists, reproductions of French, Japanese, and American advertisements, postage stamps, photographs, Chinese seals, and sixty-one letterpress poems by Ting set in multicolored inks. It is, as Ting envisioned, "as exciting as Times Square, color bright as neon light, hot as espresso." *1 Cent Life* is a vibrant celebration of art and life that acts as a testimonial to a brief period in time when no single art movement dominated, and uninhibited

experimentation reigned.

"Walasse Ting is an important Chinese-American artist and poet who became an interlocutor between the European avant-garde of the 1950s and the American Pop artists of the 1960s and while his work gained some critical traction in the late 1950s, he has since been completely written out of the larger art historical narrative," said Anastasia James, Bechtler Museum of Modern Art curator. "It is my intention to re-center the narrative of *1 Cent Life* on Ting as the portfolio's creator and driving force. *1 Cent Life* stemmed from Ting's desire to capture the zeitgeist of a creative community by inviting a group of artists to respond to his poetry in the medium of color lithography in the same manner that he had approached his early catalogs where he combined poetry with reproductions of his own works."

Home to Charlotte's iconic Firebird sculpture by Niki de Saint Phalle, the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art is filled with works by Miro, Giacometti, Calder, Warhol, Klee, and a wealth of other 20th-century notables. The Bechtler collection juxtaposes whimsy with work of significant intellectual depth and historical significance. Cosmopolitan in nature yet intimate in scale, the museum, designed by Mario Botta, provides an experience that is inspiring and approachable. The artworks were committed to the city of Charlotte by Andreas Bechtler, who, along with his family, built the collection over 70 years. Located in the heart of Uptown, the Bechtler is a light-filled community space created to engage audiences of all ages through exhibitions, jazz and film series, interactive art activities, and family days throughout the year.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings or visit (bechtler.org).

The deadline each month to submit articles, photos and ads is the 24th of the month prior to the next issue. This will be October 24th for the November 2020 issue and Nov. 24 for the December 2020 issue. After that, it's too late unless your exhibit runs into the next month.

But don't wait for the last minute - send your info now.

And where do you send that info?

E-mail to (info@carolinaarts.com).