

North Dakota Museum of Art

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NORTH DAKOTA MUSEUM OF ART RECEIVES GIFT OF MONUMENTAL PAINTING

The Communion by John Snyder

The Communion, a painting by artist John Snyder, was recently given to the North Dakota Museum of Art by Minneapolis collector Robert Mersky and Peregrine Capital Management, of which Mersky is President. Mersky, a long-time supporter of the Museum, requested that his 2005 and 2006 gifts be used to purchase the Snyder painting. This new acquisition is currently on view at the Museum in the first installment of a series of exhibitions highlighting the Museum's Permanent Collection. This series of exhibitions will result in a book about the Museum and its collections funded with a \$30,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Snyder began *The Communion* as the second Iraq War was starting. Interested in issues dealing with cultures and religion, the artist says he reflected upon Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and other religions and belief systems during the two years he was painting this twenty-foot long mural.

In *The Communion*, Snyder refers to historical events, such as the arrival of Europeans in the New World, juxtaposed with biblical events, such as the Annunciation and the Crucifixion. Snyder also includes figures, structures, and themes reminiscent of fourteenth-century Italian painting in *The Communion*. He specifically echoes historical Italian painters such as Botticelli and Giotto while including portraits of twentieth-century luminaries such as Martin Luther King. The meeting of cultures and ideas that come together in this work, ripe with symbols and references to the past, challenges the viewer to construct his or her own historical perspective.

Snyder is originally from Marion, Iowa. He spent several years in Minneapolis and currently is living in Micaville, North Carolina, where he continues to paint. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the Art Institute of Chicago. *The Communion* is one of three mural-sized paintings Snyder recently completed. The other two, *The Judgment* and *The Circus of the Night*, are also going into regional museum collections.

Martin Weinstein, of the Minneapolis Weinstein Gallery and Snyder's dealer, has been instrumental in placing Snyder's paintings in appropriate museum collections, including the North Dakota Museum of Art.

This exhibition from the Museum's collection brings together figurative work by New York artist Kiki Smith; North Dakota artist David Madzo who makes his home in Minneapolis; Polish artist Magdalena Abakanovich; Douglas Kinsey of East Bend, Indiana who taught at the University of North Dakota in the 1960s; Kal Asmundson of Winnipeg; Cuban artist Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons who lives in Boston; Duane Penske of Marshall, Minnesota; North Dakota artist David Krueger who lives in Maryland; Frank Bigbear and Shana Kralow of Minneapolis; Sterling Rathack of Duluth; and the late Peter Dean.

Martha Schneider, owner of the Schneider Gallery in Chicago, along with her husband Jorge gave the Compos-Pons photographic installation, *The Seven Powers*, to the North Dakota Museum of Art. When the exhibition closes here, the Compos-Pons painting will be loaned to the Saint Louis Art Museum for a mid-career retrospective of the artist's photo-based work.

Although not affiliated with the University of North Dakota, the North Dakota Museum of Art is located on Centennial Drive on the UND campus in Grand Forks. Gallery hours are weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekends from 11 to 5 p.m. The museum shop is open during these hours as well. Although the Museum does not charge an admission fee, the suggested donation is \$5 for adults and change for children.