

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

For Immediate Release

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SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART TO PRESENT A SURVEY OF WORK FROM WILLIAM WEGMAN

Artists Including Me: William Wegman **October 3, 2015 – February 7, 2016**



William Wegman, *Ocean View*, 2015
Pigment print; 44 x 34 inches
Edition of 7; Courtesy of the artist and
Marc Selwyn Fine Arts, Los Angeles
© William Wegman

SAN JOSE, California (September 11, 2015) – The San Jose Museum of Art will present an exhibition of work by renowned American artist William Wegman, best known for his conceptually driven photos and videos of his Weimaraners. *Artists Including Me: William Wegman*, on view October 3, 2015, through February 7, 2016, introduces viewers to lesser known, deeply personal works in which Wegman reflects on his lifetime of engagement with art history, popular culture, humor, and philosophy in art. *Artists Including Me* showcases approximately forty works from the 1970s to the present including his recent postcard paintings, photographic collaborations with the dogs, videos, and a selection of the artist's early conceptual drawings.

Originally conceived by the Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the exhibition has been expanded significantly for its presentation at SJMA. Also on view here will be new photographs with the artist's dogs Topper and Flo carefully posed on iconic modernist chairs designed by Charles and Ray Eames; a humorous video of an imagined "artist's lecture"; and five rarely seen stop-motion videos that Nokia commissioned in 2004 for display on smartphones.

The exhibition features several of Wegman's paintings from the last ten years, in which he used found postcards to create narratives about what might be happening beyond the frame. Drawing from his vast collection, Wegman affixes postcards onto the canvas and extends the ready-made images by embellishing a detail from one card and connecting it to the next, creating imaginary and dreamlike environments. The artist's postcard paintings include subjects that range from imagined masterpieces to fictional museum galleries to art about art. In these artworks, Wegman constructs impossible new spaces, renders the familiar surreal, and transforms the very artworks that were his inspiration in the process.

Among the artistic ancestors to whom Wegman pays tribute are Leonardo da Vinci, Edward Hopper, and Wassily Kandinsky, as well as landmark nineteenth-century Bay Area photographers Carleton Watkins (known for his sweeping views of Yosemite Valley) and Eadweard Muybridge (whose pioneering studies of motion were done at Palo Alto Stock Farm, Leland Stanford's property that is now part of Stanford University). In his four-panel postcard painting *I Kandinsky* (2011), the artist extends the

postcard imagery of Russian expressionist Wassily Kandinsky's work with his own exploration of figuration and abstraction. He seamlessly connects the visuals from his imagination with the source images. Wegman also plays with the pretenses and oddities of the museum world by "installing" picture postcards of artworks and architectural monuments in fictional museum spaces that he creates through painting and collage. Works such as *Reinstallation* (2013) and *Summer Show* (2014) playfully comment on the common museum practice of organizing summer group shows as well as permanent collection exhibitions.



William Wegman, *Hopper Origami*, 2014. Oil and postcards on wood panel; three parts, 72 x 48 inches each; Courtesy of the artist. © William Wegman

Artists Including Me also features a number of Wegman's quick, cartoon-like ink sketches done in a deliberately naive style. In these wittily captioned drawings, Wegman combines words and images in absurd, often irrational juxtapositions. He enlists humor and wordplay to illustrate ideas about the art world and everyday life.

"Wegman's early conceptual interests continually color his work, especially his love of language and visual puns," says Rory Padeken, assistant curator at SJMA. As seen throughout the span of his works in various media, these playful visual puns often reveal Wegman's appreciation for the work of art itself, but they also invite the viewer to imagine what lies just outside the field of view."

The exhibition was organized by the Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and curated by Kathryn Koca Polite and Kathleen Harleman. It is sponsored in part by the Krannert Art Museum Exhibition Support Fund. The exhibition has been expanded for presentation at the San Jose Museum of Art by the Wegman Studio and Assistant Curator Rory Padeken.

RELATED PROGRAMS:

Friday, October 2, 2015, 7-8 PM

Creative Minds: The World of William Wegman

William Wegman will make a special appearance at SJMA to discuss his work, his inspiration, and his dogs at this Creative Minds talk. Tickets are \$10 (\$6 for members) and go on sale to the general public September 14. Lecture tickets include admission to the opening reception to follow.

Friday, October 2, 2015, 8 PM

Opening Reception

Tickets are \$10 (free to members). No-host bar.

Thursday, November 12, 2015, 12:30 PM

Gallery Talk on *Artists Including Me: William Wegman*

Assistant Curator Rory Padeken will walk visitors through the exhibition *Artists Including Me* and take a look at art history from William Wegman's point of view.

Details and tickets for these and other public programs are available online at sjmusart.org/calendar.

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

The San Jose Museum of Art celebrates new ideas, stimulates creativity, and inspires connection with every visit. Welcoming and thought-provoking, the Museum rejects stuffiness and delights visitors with its surprising and playful perspective on the art and artists of our time.

The San Jose Museum of Art is located at 110 South Market Street in downtown San Jose, California. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, \$6 for students with ID, and \$5 for children ages 7 – 18. Members and children ages 6 and under are admitted free. For more information, call 408-271-6840 or visit www.SanJoseMuseumofArt.org.

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