PRESS RELEASE

The Minneapolis Institute of Art To Present Acclaimed Film ‘The Living Need Light, The Dead Need Music’ and New Sculptures by The Propeller Group

Part of Mia’s “New Pictures” series, film will be accompanied by an installation curated by The Propeller Group of Asian, African, Classical, and Native American Art from Mia’s collection.

Minneapolis, March 9, 2017—On April 22, 2017, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) will present the latest installment of its “New Pictures” series with an exhibition featuring the Ho Chi Minh City–based artist collective, The Propeller Group. Centered on The Propeller Group’s powerful 2014 film The Living Need Light, The Dead Need Music, this exhibition will engage in a dialogue about funerary traditions, drawn from the themes of the film itself, as well as a display of approximately 30 objects spanning 4,000 years from Mia’s renowned collections of Asian, African, Classical, and Native American art selected by the collective. The exhibition will also feature new sculpture created specifically for this show, including the collective members’ own funerary masks, inspired by a Chinese funerary mask from the Liao dynasty (c. 916–1125), and 3D facsimiles of the museum’s renowned Asian sculptures, such as Prajñāpāramitā (Cambodia, 12th–13th century).

On view through September 10, 2017, “New Pictures: The Propeller Group, Reincarnations” is made possible by the museum’s Gale Asian Art Initiative, which provides resources for innovative programs, exhibitions, and scholarship on Asian art and culture. The exhibition melds Mia’s growing commitment in this area with a new direction for the “New Pictures” series: to highlight artists who have pushed the boundaries of photography and new media by creating work that critically engages a dialogue on current social, cultural, and political concerns, connecting historical images and objects to contemporary art on a global scope.

“Mia is thrilled to partner with The Propeller Group to present this installment of ‘New Pictures,’” said Yasufumi Nakamori, Mia’s Curator of Photography and New Media. “The Propeller Group has become a standard-bearer of creating socially, historically, and politically engaged—and often subversive—work that defies expectations and preconceived notions of Asian culture, all the while challenging our conceptions of death, violence, and the world we live in, and revealing uncanny interconnectedness among the Global...
South cultures. I look forward to seeing how these incredible artists draw inspirations from Mia’s collection in developing this exhibition and new work.”

Established in 2006 by Matt Lucero, Tuan Andrew Nguyen, and Phunam, The Propeller Group is known for creating large-scale cross-disciplinary and collaborative works that examine issues of politics, power, propaganda, and manipulation, with a focus on the cultural, political, and economic conditions of Asia. The artist collective first rose to international acclaim for Television Commercial for Communism (2011), which debuted in the New Museum’s 2012 Triennial exhibition and explored the inherent tensions and contradictions between Communist and capitalist systems. In 2014, they premiered The Living Need Light, The Dead Need Music at the Prospect New Orleans Biennial, and it has since become one of their most renowned works. Currently, the group’s first survey exhibition is touring in the United States.

“The focus of our exhibition at Mia is to invoke connections between different cultures and their spiritual relics and rituals,” said the artist collective in a statement. “This selection draws upon some of the ideas in common with our film—mainly the relationship between the living and the dead, and the spaces created by the living to honor the dead. There is a liminal quality to the rituals and spaces associated with the objects in this installation, as most of the objects are connected to death and the divine.”

Object highlights include:
-  *Model Boat and Figures*, 22nd–18th century BCE, Egypt (Mia accession number 16.496)
-  *Bodhisattva*, late 6th century, China (Mia accession number 42.4.1)
-  *Mami Wata Figure*, 1950s, Nigeria (Mia accession number 2011.29)
-  *Transformation Mask*, Richard Hunt (1951), Kwakwaka’wakw, Canada (Mia accession number 93.42)
-  *Caduceus*, 2nd century, Roman (Mia accession number 2000.64)

In addition to curating the exhibition, The Propeller Group is creating objects inspired by—or reimagined versions of—objects in Mia’s collection, including *Funerary Mask of a Young Woman* made of gilt bronze, which dates to China’s Liao dynasty (c. 916–1125).

“Through our interdisciplinary method of creating art, we are seeking to engage and create a dialogue with the objects across different cultures and times,” the collective said.

Mia has acquired this edition of *The Living Need Light, The Dead Need Music*.

In conjunction with the April 22 opening, the museum will host a conversation with The Propeller Group at 2 p.m. in Pillsbury Auditorium, during which Matt Lucero, Tuan Andrew Nguyen, and Phunam will discuss *The Living Need Light, The Dead Need Music* and other recent projects. After the talk, the group will be
joined by Yasufumi Nakamori for further discussion and a Q&A. Admission is $10, $5 for My Mia members, and free for Photography & New Media Affinity Group members and university students.

About the Asian Art Collection at Mia
Mia’s collection of Asian art is comprised of some 16,800 objects ranging from ancient pottery and bronzes to works by contemporary artists, with nearly every Asian culture represented. Areas with particular depth include the arts of China, Japan, and Korea.

Specific subsets and highlights of these collections rival the holdings of museums across the globe. For its stylistic diversity and condition, Mia’s collection of ancient Chinese bronze is typically considered one of the nation’s top collections of its kind. Important examples include a famous vessel in the form of an owl, superb silver inlaid works, and many other outstanding vessels from the Shang and Zhou dynasties (c. 18th–3rd century BCE). Mia’s Japanese collection has outstanding concentrations of Buddhist sculpture, woodblock prints, paintings, lacquer, works of bamboo, and ceramics, and is particularly rich in works from the Edo period (1610–1868).

The museum’s commitment to Asian art is also evident in the sheer volume of space devoted to its display. At present, Asian art occupies an impressive 20 percent (32,200 sq. ft.) of the total display space (161,000 sq. ft.) for art at Mia. The permanent display space for Japanese art is the largest in the Western world, with 15 galleries spanning more than 10,000 square feet.

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About The Minneapolis Institute Of Art

Home to more than 89,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest wide-ranging art collections in the country—Rembrandt to van Gogh, Monet to Matisse, Asian to African—Mia links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration.

General admission to Mia is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee.

Museum Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday  10am–5pm
Thursday, Friday  10am–9pm
Sunday  11am–5pm
Monday  Closed
For more information, call + 1 612 870 3000 or visit artsmia.org