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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Des Moines Art Center examines art through the lens of science in *Researchers: Women Artists Inspired by Science***

**DES MOINES, IA (January 2020)** On Friday, February 14, the Des Moines Art Center will open *Researchers: Women Artists Inspired by Science*. The exhibition will be on view through May 10, 2020 in the John Brady Print Gallery. The exhibition is organized by Curator Laura Burkhalter.

This exhibition of drawings, photographs, and prints explores the work of women artists from the 17<sup>th</sup> century forward who use research into biology, physics, engineering, astronomy, and other fields as fertile ground for aesthetic inspiration. "This subject allows us to show the oldest work associated with a woman artist in the Art Center's permanent collection – the 1726 Maria Sybilla Merian engraving – with work from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century – to art made just two years ago. It shows women engaging with science across centuries rather than years or decades," Burkhalter said.

The histories of art and science are filled with women whose contributions have not been fully recognized, and this exhibition bridges nearly 400 years of their creative investigations, from Maria Sybilla Merian's biological insect studies to Mary Mattingly's poetic collages based on geology and environmentalism. Buildings and machines, both fantastical and realistic, appear in the works of Lee Bontecou, Rita McBride, Mary Miss, and others.

Anna Gaskell, whose film *Judith Loves Martha* is concurrently on view in the Pamela Bass-Bookey and Harry Bookey Gallery, presents a photograph based on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, a book that not only helped establish the science fiction genre but raised ethical questions about the limits of science that are still relevant two centuries later.

The work in *Researchers* celebrates women who bring these subjects and many more together in beautiful ways, celebrating the scientific and aesthetic inspirations made possible by the process of discovery. Artists in the exhibition include Alice Aycock, Nancy Graves, Julie Mehretu, Bridget Riley, and Kiki Smith, among others.

### **Related Program**

Film + Discussion in partnership with the #WomenKnowStuffToo exhibition at Iowa State University

Sunday, March 22 / 1:30 pm

*Chicken with Plums*, 2011

1 hour 33 minutes

Selected by Stacey Weber-Feve, Associate Professor in the Department of World Languages and Cultures, Iowa State University



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## Des Moines Art Center

Recognized by international art critics as a world-class museum in the heart of the Midwest, the Des Moines Art Center, an AAM-accredited institution, has amassed an important collection with a major emphasis on contemporary art. The collection's overriding principle is a representation of artists from the 19th century to the present, each through a seminal work. This accounts for an impressive collection that ranges from Edward Hopper's *Automat* to Jasper Johns' *Tennyson*, Henri Matisse's *Woman in White*, Georgia O'Keeffe's *From the Lake No. 1*, Francis Bacon's *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, Bill Viola's *Ascension*, and Cecily Brown's *Half-Bind*.

The Art Center's physical complex marries with the collection for a totally integrated experience. The collection is housed in three major buildings, each designed by a world-renowned architect—Eliel Saarinen, I. M. Pei, and Richard Meier. With the exception of special events, admission to the museum is free.

In September 2009, the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park opened in Des Moines' Western Gateway Park. Philanthropists John and Mary Pappajohn provided funding for and donated 31 sculptures by internationally acclaimed contemporary artists to the Des Moines Art Center. The collection of sculptures by such artists as Ai Weiwei, Louise Bourgeois, Deborah Butterfield, Willem de Kooning, Mark di Suvero, Olafur Eliasson, Keith Haring, Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly, Yayoi Kusama, Jaume Plensa, Richard Serra, and Joel Shapiro is the most significant donation of artwork to the Art Center in a single gift in the museum's history. The Pappajohn Sculpture Park is a collaboration of the Pappajohns, the City of Des Moines, the Des Moines Art Center, and numerous corporate and private donors.

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