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For Immediate Release

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Des Moines Art Center to present *The Path to Paradise: Judith Schaechter's Stained-Glass Art*

DES MOINES, IA (January 2021) – On Saturday, February 13, the Des Moines Art Center will open *The Path to Paradise: Judith Schaechter's Stained-Glass Art*. Organized by the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, the exhibition will be on view in the Anna K. Meredith Gallery through May 23, 2021. The Art Center's presentation of the exhibition is overseen by Curatorial Manager Laura Burkhalter.

The Path to Paradise: Judith Schaechter's Stained-Glass Art is the first survey and major scholarly assessment of this groundbreaking artist's 37-year career. From her start in the 1980s, Judith Schaechter (b. 1961) has stretched the medium of stained glass into an incisive art form for the twenty-first century, boldly paving her path in the diverse arena of contemporary art. With deep respect for history, a provocative rebelliousness and a feminist sensibility, Schaechter has aptly been called a "post-punk stained-glass sorceress." Her meticulous and awe-inspiring stained-glass panels are intentional seductions, alternative visions of beauty and radical statements of female experience.

"I have been an admirer of Judith's work for many years and I'm thrilled that the Art Center is part of this exhibition's tour, and the community can see this beautiful — and often surprising — art in person," Burkhalter said.

The exhibition is drawn from both private and institutional collections and will feature approximately 45 of Schaechter's stained-glass panels along with a selection of related drawings and process materials.

Schaechter's respect for the traditional medium of stained glass is matched by her drive to innovate. She is well versed in the historic techniques of stained glass, however, her panels—hung from the wall in custom-made light boxes—are contemporary art forms that stand alone. With artistic influences as wide-ranging as pulp fiction covers, neuroscience, Northern Renaissance masters, MAD magazine, ancient mythology and medieval manuscripts, Schaechter's work calls for a process that is equally diverse, incorporating online image sourcing, intensive doodling, Photoshop acrobatics and her innovative, masterful manipulation of glass. She said she thinks of her practice "as an extreme sport. I'm not messing around. I deliberately make it as hard as possible..."

Her work is represented in more than a dozen museums including the Museum of Art and Design, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum and Toledo Museum of Art, and in major exhibitions around the world. In addition, through her extensive teaching, she has furthered her influence on her peers and younger generations of artists. Her awards include two NEA Visual Artists' Fellowships, a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award, a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship Award, a USA Artists Rockefeller Fellow and an American Craft Council College of Fellows Award.

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The Art Center's presentation will be accompanied by an exhibition in the John Brady Print Gallery of works selected by Schaechter and Burkhalter. *Human/Nature: An Exhibition Inspired by the Work of Judith Schaechter* is open now through May 9. Of these works Schaechter remarked:

"The fascination with humans and animals is vast. We are interested in our own behavior and would probably gape at every chance to witness our species at its best, worst, and everything in between. We are equally fascinated by our appearance—never missing an opportunity to really examine a person's face or body. Social custom discourages this, but if we could, we would indulge. This extends to our fascination with animals and even plants—who serve as our proxies or as a reflection of our nature. We are amazed at the similarities to us, and quick to point out the differences. We are utterly amazed at how alien and strange we are to ourselves and how familiar animals can seem. Art is a safe place to stare."

Lead support for *The Path to Paradise: Judith Schaechter's Stained-Glass Art* is provided by the Henry Luce Foundation, with additional funding from the Gallery Council of the Memorial Art Gallery, the Rubens Family Foundation, Pamela Miller Ness and Paul Marc Ness, Corning Incorporated Foundation and the Art Alliance for Contemporary Glass. The exhibition is also supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Additional gifts are provided by Marion Swett Robinson, Dennis and Mary Buchan, Jim and Marguerite Quinn, the Holmes Family Foundation and an anonymous donor.

The exhibition is also made possible by the Robert L. and Mary L. Sproull Fund, the Grant Holcomb Endowment, the Margaret Davis Friedlich and Alan and Sylvia Davis Memorial Fund, the Irving and Essie Germanow Fund, the Kayser Fund and the Robert A. and Maureen S. Dobies Endowment Fund.



Visit desmoinesartcenter.org to explore exhibition-related programming, including virtual lectures and events.

For further information, interviews/quotes or exhibition images, please contact Director of External Affairs Jordan Powers at 630.470.5136 or jpowers@desmoinesartcenter.org.

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About the Des Moines Art Center + John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park

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 of art from the 19th century to the present, with a major emphasis on contemporary art. Focused on quality and global in scope, it includes major works by Henry Ossawa Tanner, Edward Hopper, Georgia O’Keeffe, Francis Bacon, Andy Goldsworthy, Henri Matisse, Wangechi Mutu, Ai Wei Wei, and Kara Walker, among hundreds of others. The collection is housed in three major buildings, each designed by a 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 Martin Puryear, Louise Bourgeois, Deborah Butterfield, Willem de Kooning, Mark di Suvero, Olafur Eliasson, Keith Haring, Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly, Yayoi Kusama, Jaume Plensa, and 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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