

MUSEUM of ART | FORT LAUDERDALE
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

CAFÉ DOLLY: PICABIA, SCHNABEL, WILLUMSEN

On view October 12, 2014 – February 1, 2015
NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale



(Fort Lauderdale, FL – June 26, 2014) Bringing together the work of French artist Francis Picabia (1879–1953), American artist Julian Schnabel (b. 1951), and Danish artist Jens Ferdinand Willumsen (1863–1958) for the first time in the United States, the exhibition ***Café Dolly: Picabia, Schnabel, Willumsen*** will be on view at the NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale from October 12, 2014 - February 1, 2015. The illuminating exhibition reveals surprising connections between stylistic and painterly concerns that span generations and geography. The exhibition at the NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale will be on view during Art Basel Miami Beach, and is just a short drive from Miami.

Café Dolly is organized by the J.F. Willumsens Museum, Frederkssund, Denmark, where it was on view from September 7 through December 30, 2013. The exhibition, which will showcase additional works by Julian Schnabel and Francis Picabia in the Fort Lauderdale presentation, is curated by visual artists Claus Carstensen and Christian Vind, as well as Ann Gregersen, PhD., researcher at the University of Copenhagen and J.F. Willumsens Museum.

Featuring approximately 75 paintings, *Café Dolly* presents works dating from 1926–1951 by French artist Picabia, whose contributions to the avant-garde Dada and Surrealist movements are widely known, but whose paintings from his later figurative period remain relatively obscure in the United States. The exhibition also includes paintings from the late 1980s to the present by New York artist Julian Schnabel, including works on a collaged surface of broken plates, resin-coated figurative paintings, enormous canvases based on paintings found in thrift stores, and paintings that conflate figuration and abstraction. In addition, the exhibition includes paintings from the late 19th- to mid-20th century by visionary Danish artist J. F. Willumsen.

Each artist's work conveys an intensely painterly language with recognizable motifs, clear contours, and raw colors in bold combinations, along with a need to explore and

challenge the tradition of painting. The three artists' work with figuration, narrative, and portraiture during periods dominated by abstraction has at times made them controversial. These hybrid paintings demonstrate alternative paths of modern art and the progress of painting in the 20th century.

"Comparing and contrasting these three artists heightens our understanding of their entire body of work as each challenges conventional notions of taste, style, and categorization," notes Bonnie Clearwater, Director and Chief Curator, NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale. "Their use of figuration based on found images from the history of art, popular culture, folk art, and even thrift store painting was not a rejection of modern art at a time when abstract art was the dominant order, but was rather the result of their philosophical inquiry into the very nature of aesthetics. The exhibition is consistent with NSU Museum of Art's exploration into post-World War II European art and its connection with contemporary art."

The exhibition's title references the world's first cloned sheep, Dolly, whose birth in 1996 sparked international controversy and called into question cultural ideas about ethics and materiality. In a visual arts context, Picabia, Schnabel, and Willumsen challenge the same concepts in their unprejudiced treatment of the traditions of art history and mass media images as well as private photographs and stories.

Francis Picabia (1879–1953)

Francis Picabia was born in Paris, the son of a Cuban-born Spanish father and a French mother. Picabia was one of the leading figures of Dada and Surrealism and one of the first abstract artists of the 20th century. In 1911, he began a friendship with artist Marcel Duchamp and became part of the avant-garde artists' association, Groupe de Puteaux. From 1915 until the early 1920s, Picabia was one of the leaders of the Dada movement and a co-author of many of its manifestos. He embarked on a more figurative phase in the 1920s, and by World War II he was incorporating motifs from erotic magazines and popular culture. Deemed regressive by his fellow Dadaist artists, Picabia was ostracized from the movement. Peace was famously made on Picabia's deathbed, with a note from Marcel Duchamp that read, "A bientôt, cher Francis. – Marcel."

Julian Schnabel (b. 1951)

Contemporary artist Julian Schnabel is considered one of the main figures in the resurgence of painting on the international art scene since the late 1970s. His contribution and persona has created a controversy that has had a polarizing effect on camps of art. In the late 1970s and early '80s he destroyed the barrier between figurative and abstract art. Today, his contribution to late-20th-century and 21st-century art is being noted, as is his influence on what is seen as new contemporary painting today. Schnabel's work has been exhibited all over the world. His paintings, sculptures, and works on paper have been the subject of numerous retrospective exhibitions. In 1996, Schnabel wrote and directed the feature film *Basquiat* about fellow New York artist Jean-Michel Basquiat. Schnabel's second film, *Before Night Falls*, based on the life of the late exiled Cuban novelist Reinaldo Arenas, won both the Grand Jury Prize

and the Coppa Volpi for best actor for Javier Bardem at the 2000 Venice Film Festival. He won Best Director at the Cannes Film Festival in 2007 for *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* and two Golden Globes, award for Best Director and Best Foreign Language Film. *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* was also nominated for four Academy Awards. In recent years, Schnabel designed the interior public spaces of Gramercy Park Hotel and built the Palazzo Chupi on West 11th Street. Julian Schnabel was born in New York City in 1951. He currently lives and works in New York City and Montauk, Long Island.

J.F. Willumsen (1863–1958)

A controversial figure in Danish art, J.F. Wilumsen's active artistic life spanned more than 70 years. A contemporary of Picabia and a co-founder of the rebellious artists' association, Den Frie Udstilling (The Independent Exhibition) in Copenhagen in 1891, he spent the majority of his life in France. There, Willumsen developed a powerfully personal style with links both to older art and to the modern visual world that included monumental works with expressive figures. Known in his Danish homeland as a symbolist in the 1890s, his late works have long been overlooked by an international public, relegated to the realm of kitsch.

Catalogue

An illustrated, research-based catalogue titled *Café Dolly: Picabia, Schnabel, Willumsen, Hybrid Painting*, published by Hatje Cantz, accompanies the exhibition and is available at the NSU Museum of Art Store. It features essays by Margrit Brehm, Claus H. Carstensen, Anne Gregersen, Annette Johansen, Roberto Ohrt, and Christian Vind.

Exhibition Funding

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NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale

One East Las Olas Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Website: <http://www.moaf.org>

Phone: (954) 525-5500.

Hours: 11 AM–5 PM; extended hours Thursdays until 8 PM; Sunday 12–5 PM; Closed Monday. Free Docent tours Thursday 2 PM and Saturday at 3:30.

Admission: Free for members, NSU students, faculty and staff and children under 12; \$10 adults; \$5 Students (13-17) and non-NSU college students.

About:

Founded in 1958, NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale is housed since 1986 in a distinguished 83,000 square-foot modernist building designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes. The museum is a premier destination for dynamic exhibitions and programs that encompass all facets of civilization's rich history, containing over 25,000 square feet of exhibition space, the 250-seat Horvitz Auditorium, museum store and café. The museum's 6,000-work permanent collection is known for its extensive holdings by the pioneering American painter William Glackens, works by the Cobra group of avant-

garde European artists; and works by Latin American artists. The museum also maintains a special focus on photography. The museum offers a comprehensive education program through its dynamic NSU AutoNation Academy for Art + Design, located in an adjacent 11,000 square-foot building. In 2008, the museum became part of Nova Southeastern University, the ninth-largest not-for-profit independent institution in the nation. In September 2013, Bonnie Clearwater became NSU Museum of Art's Director and Chief Curator.

Image credits (left to right)

Francis Picabia, *Autoportrait*, circa 1940-42, oil on cardboard, Lucien Bilinelli Collection, Brussels / Milan, © 2014 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Julian Schnabel, *Large Girl with No Eyes*, 2001, oil and wax on canvas, collection of the artist, © 2014 Julian Schnabel / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

J.F. Willumsen, *Woman Playing with a Black Cat*, 1945, oil on canvas, J.F. Willumsens Museum © 2014 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / billedkunst.dk

National & International Media Contacts:

Carla Kessler
FITZ & CO
Carla.Kessler@fitzandco.com
212-627-1455 ext. 0935

Meg Blackburn
FITZ & CO
meg@fitzandco.com
212-627-1455 ext. 7390