

**REVOLUTION OF THE EYE:  
MODERN ART AND THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN TELEVISION  
ON VIEW AT NSU ART MUSEUM FORT LAUDERDALE  
OCTOBER 25, 2015 – JANUARY 10, 2016**

**First Exhibition to Explore How Cutting-Edge Art and Design Influenced the  
Look and Content of Early Network Television**



Publicity photograph for the Electrohome Courier portable television, late 1950s

Fort Lauderdale, FL – *Revolution of the Eye: Modern Art and the Birth of American Television*, the first exhibition to explore how avant-garde art influenced the look and content of network television in its formative years, will be on view at NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale from October 25, 2015 through January 10, 2016. From the late 1940s to the mid-1970s, the pioneers of American television adopted modernism as a source of inspiration. *Revolution of the Eye* looks at how the dynamic new medium of television in its risk-taking and aesthetic experimentation paralleled and embraced cutting-edge art and design.

The exhibition is organized by the Jewish Museum, New York and the Center for Art, Design, and Visual Culture, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC).

Highlighting the visual revolution ushered in by American television and modernist art and design of the 1950s and 1960s, the exhibition features over 260 fine art objects and graphic design, including works by Saul Bass, Marcel Duchamp, Roy Lichtenstein, Agnes Martin, Georgia O’Keeffe and Andy Warhol, as well as ephemera, television memorabilia and clips from historic television programs and film, including *Batman*, *The Ed Sullivan Show*, *The Ernie Kovacs Show*, *Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In*, and *The Twilight Zone* will be on view. The exhibition’s iteration at NSU Art Museum will feature additional work by Georgia O’Keeffe, Frank Stella, Robert Morris, and Bob Kane, among others.

*Revolution of the Eye* examines television’s promotion of avant-garde ideals and aesthetics exemplified by the appropriation of Dada and Surrealist ideas in the aesthetically and conceptually rich series *The Twilight Zone* and *The Ernie Kovacs Show* by such pioneers as Rod Serling and Ernie Kovacs. Their influential programs reflected the medium’s potential to alter the way Americans understood the world.

*Revolution of the Eye* illustrates how Pop Art sensibilities were appropriated on the *Batman* action series and the variety program, *Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In*; Op Art influenced commercials including promotions for Kodak and Caprolon Nylon; and how Color Field and Op Art painting and Minimalist sculpture were embraced by set designers in the mid-1960s when the networks shifted to all-color formats, such as for *The Ed Sullivan Show*. It also features the medium’s first fully interactive program – *Winky Dink and You*. This groundbreaking children’s show invited youth to send away for plastic screens and special crayons, directing them to draw on their television sets to help move along the storyline.

The exhibition looks at television's facility as a promotional platform for modern artists, designers, and critics; its role as a committed patron of the work of modern artists and designers; and as a medium whose relevance in contemporary culture was validated by the Museum of Modern Art's historic Television Project (1952-55), which worked with the networks to produce programs on modern art for a broad audience and apply modernist ideals to the look of television.

The exhibition also examines the revolutionary corporate advertising and promotional campaigns and title sequences for television series created by graphic designer Saul Bass, including virtually unknown opening credits for *Playhouse 90* and *Profiles in Courage*.

Highlighted is the "New Advertising" revolution of the 1950s and 1960s, which ushered in one of the most creative periods of the medium in the United States, through Andy Warhol and Ben Shahn's advertising and promotional campaigns for CBS.

Early on, television opened its doors to appearances by avant-garde artists – from John Cage performing a musical composition on *I've Got a Secret* to Salvador Dali as the mystery guest on *What's My Line*. *Revolution of the Eye* examines the diverse ways modern artists, designers and critics used the medium as a significant vehicle for self-promotion to a broad national audience. Viewers will experience rare clips of Cage, Dali, Willem de Kooning, Marcel Duchamp, Ray Eames, Roy Lichtenstein, Ben Shahn, George Segal and other renowned artists.

Modern art and graphic design inspired television production and promotions. *Revolution of the Eye* features the progressive design campaign of the CBS Television Network as one of the most esteemed of any American corporation. CBS art directors William Golden and Lou Dorfsman created an innovative shift in shaping the company's corporate identity, moving design away from self-expression to a public communication tool that stimulated interest in the network and its programming.

*Revolution of the Eye* will vividly present the little-known story about the cultural and social context into which television was born and the direct influence of avant-garde artists on the formative years of a medium whose powerful impact on our lives remains pervasive.

"Many critics speak of present-day television as kind of a new golden age in which the medium is seen to have surpassed film as a major venue for artistic experimentation and quality," says exhibition curator Maurice Berger. "*Revolution of the Eye* reminds us that the desire for outstanding, artistically important programming was in television's DNA from the beginning."

*Revolution of the Eye: Modern Art and the Birth of American Television* is curated by Dr. Maurice Berger, Research Professor and Chief Curator, Center for Art, Design and Visual Culture, UMBC, and curator, National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting, The Jewish Museum.

**National Exhibition Tour:** The Jewish Museum, New York City (May 1 –Sept. 27, 2015); NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, FL (Oct. 25, 2015 – Jan. 10, 2016); The Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA (Apr. 9, 2016 – July 31, 2016); Center for Art, Design, and Visual Culture, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) (Oct. 20, 2016 – Jan. 8, 2017); Smart Museum of Art, the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL (Feb. 16, 2017 – June 11, 2017); and additional venues.

### **Exhibition Funding**

*Revolution of the Eye: Modern Art and the Birth of American Television* is organized by the Jewish Museum, New York, and the Center of Art, Design, and Visual Culture, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). The exhibition is made possible by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Skirball Fund for American Jewish Life Exhibitions, the Stern Family Philanthropic Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and other generous donors.

### **Funding at NSU Art Museum:**

The exhibition at NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale is presented by AutoNation.

### **Exhibition Catalogue**

Accompanying the exhibition is a 156-page hardcover catalogue published by the Jewish Museum, New York City and Center for Art Design and Visual Culture, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, by Maurice Berger with introduction by Lynn Spigel, in association with Yale University Press. The catalogue will be available at the NSU Art Museum Store.

## **NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale**

**Address:** One East Las Olas Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

**Website:** [nsuartmuseum.org](http://nsuartmuseum.org)

**Social Media:** Facebook, Twitter, Instagram @nsuartmuseum

**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 pm

**Admission:** Free for members, NSU students, faculty and staff and children under 12; \$12 adults; \$8 seniors and military; \$5 Students (13-17) and non-NSU college students.

### **About NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale**

Founded in 1958, NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale is a premier destination for exhibitions and programs encompassing all facets of civilization's visual history. Located midway between Miami and Palm Beach in downtown Fort Lauderdale's arts and entertainment district, the Art Museum's distinctive 83,000 square-foot modernist building, which opened in 1986, was designed by renowned architect Edward Larrabee Barnes and contains over 25,000 square feet of exhibition space, the 256-seat Horvitz auditorium, museum store and cafe. Studio art instruction for all ages is offered at the Art Museum's acclaimed AutoNation Academy of Art + Design. Bonnie Clearwater, who became NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale's Director and Chief Curator in 2013, directs its international exhibition program, which aims to challenge viewers' perceptions of the world around them. In 2008, the Art Museum became part of Nova Southeastern University, one of the largest private, not-for-profit research universities in the United States.

Exhibitions and programs at NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale are made possible in part by a challenge grant from the David and Francie Horvitz Family Foundation. Funding is also provided by Nova Southeastern University, the Broward County Board of County Commissioners as recommended by the Broward Cultural Council and Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

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