

MUSEUM of ART | FORT LAUDERDALE
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

SPIRIT OF COBRA
Now on view through May 18, 2014



Anton Rooskens, *Untitled*, 1954
Gouache on paper
NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra Collection



Corneille, *Untitled*, 1948
Oil on canvas
NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale
The Golda and Meyer Marks Cobra Collection

(Fort Lauderdale, FL, November 20, 2013) - NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale presents *Spirit of Cobra*, a major exhibition exploring the roots and inspiration of the European avant-garde Cobra movement, now on view through May 18, 2014. *Spirit of Cobra* highlights the unique meeting of young artists who came together from several European countries in the aftermath of World War II to create a living art, based on spontaneity, experimentation, socialist politics, and exuberant optimism. The exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Cobra Museum of Modern Art in the Netherlands, and is the first of three major exhibitions that will focus specifically on this influential movement that helped inspire the development of European post-war, avant-garde art. This trio of exhibitions represents the museum's ongoing commitment to Cobra scholarship, and also highlights new Director and Chief curator Bonnie Clearwater's commitment to integrate education into exhibition

programming, as well as thorough scholarship of underexplored art historical subjects and movements.

“The Cobra movement’s legacy continues to influence artists today, such as Albert Oehlen and Rita Ackermann,” notes Clearwater. “Yet, Cobra art is under-recognized in the United States and is often misunderstood. This exhibition will shed new light on its significance.” As the largest and most comprehensive collection of Cobra art in the United States, NSU Museum of Art is strategically collaborating with the Cobra Museum of Art to ensure that the legacy of this important movement in art history is kept alive.

Spirit of Cobra features paintings, drawings, watercolors, sculpture, and mixed media works drawn from the permanent collections of the two museums along with other works lent by leading public and private collections. Highlights of the exhibition include: Karel Appel, Pierre Alechinsky, Constant, Corneille, Christian Dotremont, Egill Jacobsen, Asger Jorn, and Carl-Henning Pedersen, many of which have never been publicly displayed.

Cobra originated in Paris and its followers actively worked together in a group experiment that formally lasted between 1948 through 1951. The Cobra artists, whose collective name is an acronym of Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam, the home cities of its founders, emerged on the scene with expressionistic works rich in color and spontaneous play of line and material. The artists sought creativity outside the mainstream art world and were greatly inspired by folk and tribal art, forms of primitive art, and Scandinavian mythology. They considered geometric abstraction too inhuman and formal, surrealism too academic, and socialist realism too dogmatic. Their aim was an art for and by everyone, regardless of class, race, or education level.

Spirit of Cobra is co-organized by NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale and the Cobra Museum of Modern Art in Amstelveen, Netherlands, and is curated by Brenda Zwart and Katja Weitering.

The exhibition is supported through a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, as part of its Knight Arts Challenge with additional funding provided by Linda J. Marks and Stephen R. Marks, and Daniel and Jan Lewis, and David and Francie Horvitz Family Foundation.

About NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale

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. It contains over 25,000 square feet of exhibition space, the 250-seat Horvitz Auditorium, bookstore and café. The museum's 6,000-work permanent collection is recognized for its extensive holdings of works by the pioneering American painter William Glackens, paintings by Cobra artists, and a highly prized collection of works by Latin American artists. The museum also maintains a special focus on photography and presents year-round photography exhibitions through its *Foto Fort Lauderdale* initiative. The museum offers a comprehensive education program through the 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.

NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale is located One East Las Olas Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301. For information, please visit www.moafll.org or call 954-525-5500.

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