



Frost Art
Museum

For Immediate Release

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Smithsonian Curator to Speak at FIU

The Frost Art Museum Presents: Virginia Mecklenburg Curator of Modern Masters from the Smithsonian American Art Museum

Miami, (Jan. 14, 2009) Virginia Mecklenburg, senior curator for the Smithsonian American Art Museum, will speak on Friday, Jan. 23 at 8 p.m. at FIU's Wertheim Performing Arts Center as the featured lecturer for the Frost Art Museum's Steven and Dorothea Green Critics Lecture Series. Mecklenburg will talk about 20th century abstraction and the exhibition *Modern Masters from the Smithsonian American Art Museum*, on view at The Frost through March 1. The Frost is the first stop on a national tour for *Modern Masters*, which features more than 30 artists who transformed American art in the years after World War II. Mecklenburg included five pieces donated to the Smithsonian by Patricia and Phillip Frost in 1986, including works by Josef Albers and Hans Hofmann. *Modern Masters* is the debut exhibition for the new Frost Art Museum, which opened to the public Nov. 29, 2008.

Mecklenburg is a writer and lecturer who specializes in American art. She has organized exhibitions and written on Edward Hopper, George Bellows, Earl Cunningham, Robert Indiana, James Rosenquist, abstraction in the 1930s and 1940s and other 20th century artists and movements. *Metropolitan Lives: The Ashcan Artists and Their New York*, which she co-authored with Rebecca Zurier and Robert Snyder, won the Alfred H. Barr, Jr. Award in 1997.

In the important exhibition *Modern Masters* and in her lectures, Mecklenburg chronicles the emergence of postwar abstraction and Abstract Expressionism in particular, from the mid-1940s through its "triumph" in the late 1950s. She brings to life this pivotal period and the artists who helped define the movement. Richard Diebenkorn and Nathan Oliveira in California; immigrants Hans Hofmann and Louise Nevelson; New Yorkers Franz Kline and Robert Motherwell, and many more explored powerful color and the nuance of line as they sought to express what it meant to live in the mid-twentieth century.

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Some were friends who dropped by each other's studios, attended each other's openings, and then retired to bars and restaurants to talk about art. Others never met, but knew of the paintings and sculptures created by their colleagues from reports in the press.

Some of the artists, among them Seymour Lipton and Theodore Roszak, probed the dark side of man's unconscious. Sam Francis and Adolph Gottlieb explored the mysteries of space. Helen Frankenthaler and Joan Mitchell captured the color and light of the natural landscape; Romare Bearden and Larry Rivers explored meaning in family and community. Others, including Josef Albers, Ad Reinhardt and Esteban Vicente, tested the nature of human perception. They all experimented, reversed course, refined and readjusted to capture the thoughts feelings and moods of America during the Cold War.

Her lecture is the second of four Green Critics' Lectures of the season. Contemporary film maker Robert Adanto spoke Oct. 24 about his experiences creating the provocative film *The Rising Tide*. On Feb. 20, Robert Storr, dean of Yale University's School of Art, will talk about the evolution of contemporary art he has witnessed and helped to shape in his 30 years as a writer in critic. On April 3, internationally recognized visual artist Ann Hamilton will discuss her large-scale multi-media installations exploring time, space, sound and experience.

Since 1981, the Green Lecture Series has introduced an array of art world luminaries to the South Florida community including renowned artists, museum curators, scholars and critics. The Frost has hosted such distinguished figures as Philippe de Montebello, Terry Gross, Carlos Fuentes and Michael Graves.

About the Frost Art Museum – Florida International University

The Frost is an AAM accredited museum and Smithsonian affiliate. The museum is located at 10975 SW 17th St. across from the Blue garage and adjacent to the Wertheim Performing Arts Center on the University Park campus. Hours of operation are Tuesday through Saturday 10- 5.and Sunday noon-5. The Frost is closed on all legal holidays. For more information, please visit www.frostartmuseum.org or call 305-348-2890.

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