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## **New Galleries of Post-War and Contemporary Art to be Unveiled at Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art**

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art will open a bold, new installation of Post-War and Contemporary Art Jan. 31, 2015, in three dedicated galleries that have been completely refurbished as part of the museum's five-year, \$33 million renovation. The installation is the first complete rehanging of the museum's Contemporary collection in nearly 20 years. Patricia Hickson, Emily Hall Tremaine Curator of Contemporary Art, organized the reinstallation.

"We are delighted to welcome our visitors back to the Wadsworth Atheneum to experience our outstanding Post-War and Contemporary Art collections," said Susan L. Talbott, Director and C.E.O. "We have been anticipating this moment for some time, and look forward to unveiling many new gifts and acquisitions that enhance our already distinguished legacy."

The installation covers artwork dating 1945 to the present, and will offer paintings, sculpture, mixed-media works and time based (video) art. More than 25% of the installation will consist of pieces that have never been shown before, or that have not been on view in over a decade. There will be 10 new acquisitions on display.

"The comprehensive reinstallation of collections gives us the opportunity to take a closer look at our holdings, and to present new scholarship surrounding major works by artists of our time," said Hickson. "We are eager to share old favorites alongside new treasures for the community to enjoy."

The museum's Huntington Gallery will include mid-century abstract painting and sculpture by artists including Ellsworth Kelly and Willem de Kooning, along with Alexander Calder, Helen Frankenthaler, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Tony Smith. The newest sculpture by Smith, titled, "New Piece," belonged to renowned Wadsworth Atheneum curator Sam Wagstaff, and was transferred to the estate of Robert Mapplethorpe upon Wagstaff's death.

It was recently given to the museum by The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation. “New Piece” will be on view to the public for the first time in an area of the gallery devoted entirely to works by Smith and a gift of other artists’ works he gave to the museum in 1967.

Both Hickson and Talbott worked to procure new pieces for the Contemporary Art collection in Susan Morse Hilles Gallery, and some of the large-scale gifts and acquisitions they gathered include important pieces by George Segal, Kiki Smith, Richard Tuttle and Kara Walker. Alongside these exciting new works will be much loved Contemporary works by Duane Hanson, Robert Rauschenberg, Cindy Sherman, Bob Thompson and Andy Warhol. A new video gallery will open with James Nares’ “STREET,” a grand tour through the streets of Manhattan.

The newly reopened mezzanine gallery of the Colt building will present a recently exposed wall drawing by international artist and Hartford native Sol LeWitt. The first of four wall drawings by LeWitt to enter the museum’s collection, it has long been off-view to visitors in staff offices, which have now been converted into galleries. The space will also include a selection of LeWitt sculptures from the collection, as well as a related geometric sculpture by artist Tara Donovan.

The year 2015 also marks the 40th anniversary of the Wadsworth’s MATRIX series of contemporary art exhibitions. In addition to featuring the history of MATRIX in the museum’s interactive Connections Gallery, the reinstallation of the museum’s Post-War and Contemporary Art will highlight works by 15 past MATRIX artists.

### **About the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art**

Founded in 1842, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is the oldest public art museum in the United States. The museum’s nearly 50,000 works of art span 5,000 years, from Greek and Roman antiquities to the first museum collection of American contemporary art. The museum’s five connected buildings—representing architectural styles from Gothic Revival to modern International Style—are located at 600 Main Street in Hartford, Connecticut. Since 2010 the museum has been undergoing a major, \$33 million renovation, and will open newly refurbished spaces in 2015. Hours: Wed – Fri: 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sat & Sun: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; First Thursdays: 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. Admission: \$5 – 10; discounts for members, students and seniors. Public phone: (860) 278-2670; website: <http://thewadsworth.org>.

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