

Press Release

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Then & Now
Contemporary Artists Revisit the Past
May 16-August 5, 2009
The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie

(Canajoharie, NY) The exhibition *Then & Now: Contemporary Artists Revisit the Past* contrasts the work of contemporary artists with 19th and early 20th century painters who may have influenced inspired or led them in an opposite direction. Contemporary artists in this exhibition include April Gornik, Stephen Hannock, Stanley Lewis, Jane Lund, Dennis Pinette and Devorah Sperber. The 19th century paintings in *Then & Now* were created by notable artists such as George Inness, Ralph Blakelock and Thomas Eakins.



April Gornik, *Sunset at the Equator*, 1997, oil on linen, Collection of the Artist

Museum visitors will have the unique opportunity to compare the subjects, themes, materials, and painting techniques found in works by American artists of today to earlier masters of landscape and portrait painting.

Diane Forsberg, Arkell Museum Chief Curator, notes that *Each of the contemporary artists in this exhibition has been inspired by artists from the past, yet they have very different responses to this inspiration.*

Martha Hoppin, guest curator, states that *Stephen Hannock is the most forthright about his debt to nineteenth century American painting.* He names the two leading Hudson River School painters in the title of one of his paintings, "After Church, after Cole, Flooded 1979-1994." Cole's painting of *The Oxbow* (owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art) was the obvious inspiration

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for Hannock's painting of the same subject, though Hannock has interpreted the view differently from Cole. April Gornik and Hannock are both motivated by works created by George Inness and tonalist artists. They are also drawn to Blaklock's paintings of dusk and dawn. In contrast to Gornik's and Hannock's choice of medium and motivations from earlier artists—Devorah Sperber uses hundreds, sometimes thousands, of thread spools as her medium and bases her works on the most recognizable images from the past, icons of art such as Grant Wood's *American Gothic* and Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. The exhibition also includes portrait and still-life pastels by Jane Lund, and contemporary cityscapes by Stanley Lewis and Dennis Pinette. These last three artists have less directly stated links to 19th century works but all have admired and been influenced by American artists of past centuries.

Martha Hoppin, guest curator for *Then & Now*, is the curator of the current exhibition, *Love Story*, from the New Britain Museum of Art which will be on display at the Arkell Museum through May 3, 2009. Hoppin is also one of the authors for the new monograph on Stephen Hannock that will be published by Hudson Hills Press, May 2009.

Then & Now: Contemporary Artists Revisit the Past will open with a Pre-View Party on May 15, 2009 at 6:30 pm (\$30 in advance \$40 at the door) followed by a Members Reception (free to museum members and everyone attending the Pre-View party) until 10:00 PM. The exhibition will be open to visitors to the Arkell Museum at Canajoharie from May 16-August 5, 2009.

The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie completed a major addition in September 2007 which included new galleries, classroom and program spaces. Permanent exhibitions include paintings by Winslow Homer, American Impressionists, and The Eight. Mohawk Valley history and Beech-Nut Packaging Company advertising are also featured in exhibitions. The museum presents concerts, films, family activities, and school programs. The Arkell Museum is open Monday-Friday 10:00 am-5:00 pm, Saturday –Sunday 12:30 -5:00 pm. The Arkell Museum is located half way between Albany and Utica — just three blocks from exit 29 on the New York State Thruway (I-90). For information call 518-673-2314 or visit www.arkellmuseum.org .

Digital images of the paintings in this exhibition are available to the media. Please contact Diane Forsberg dforsberg@sals.edu for a complete list of available images.