Smith College Museum of Art has launched a new exhibition in celebration of SCMA100. While the museum remains closed to the general public this fall, visitors can experience this show online, as an expanded exhibition website.

Northampton, MA September 25, 2020: Commemorating SCMA100 -- the museum’s centennial -- which continues through 2020, the Smith College Museum of Art has launched a new exhibition whose main premise is to ask what it means to make and continually remake a museum.

SCMA is striving to be more diverse, equitable, accessible and inclusive. This exhibition invites viewers to join the museum in looking back to look forward, as SCMA continues to refine what it means to be a museum in the 21st century.

SCMA Then\Now\Next is accessible online as an exhibition website that offers viewers opportunities to engage and learn while the museum is closed due to the pandemic. Images of selected works from the collection, with explanatory text, are featured in each of the exhibition’s three sections. In addition, a video entitled “Then” uses archival photographs to take a look back at the museum’s former spaces and iterations of the building. Virtual programs accompanying SCMA Then\Now\Next will be listed and offered at a later date.

Smith College began collecting art at its founding in the 1870s, but it was not until 1920 that the collection was recognized as a museum. Through strategic purchases and generous gifts, the majority of which have come from Smith alumnae, the collection continues to grow. The development of the museum’s collection over the past century reveals the institution’s evolving vision and values.
SCMA Then\Now\Next is neither a presentation of collection “highlights,” nor a chronological survey of works of art acquired over the past 100 years. Instead, it offers viewers a series of linked installations organized around the themes of SCMA Then\Now and SCMA Now\Next. Both of these sections cover historical and contemporary art, encompass a wide range of artistic media, and engage with the global scope of the museum’s collection.

**Exhibition sections:**

SCMA Then\Now traces the museum’s history up to the present. Old favorites join lesser-known works of art, many of them displayed together for the first time. Shared themes, ideas and visual elements connect artworks in many media and from different time periods and places. The artworks are grouped to illuminate key moments, create new viewing contexts and stimulate reflection on the range of stories the collection reveals.

SCMA Now\Next features works of art that have been acquired by the museum since 2000 and that signal new directions for the institution. This growth builds on SCMA’s strong foundation, while adding important works from historically underrepresented artists and cultures. These shifts are in response to the teaching needs of the college and are driven by the interests of Smith students and members of the museum’s broader communities.

SCMA Now\Next — Asian Art showcases artworks acquired over the past five years, a collection that includes sculpture, paintings, drawings, and photographs. With the dedication of the Carol T. Christ Asian Art Gallery in 2015, the museum embarked on a new chapter of collecting and exhibiting art, toward including a wider range of time periods, media, and styles. By broadening the scope of our collection, we expand our understanding of the “global” to create a learning environment that provokes further thinking and encourages multiple perspectives.

SCMA Now\Next — Time-Based Media Art spotlights SCMA’s pioneering commitment to this key form of contemporary artistic production. SCMA began collecting time-based media, including video, film, sound and more, in 2008 and created a permanent gallery for its exhibition in 2015. To date, SCMA has acquired more than two dozen such artworks by artists from around the world, making it the largest such collection in our region.

*SCMA Then\Now\Next is supported by the SCMA Next Century Fund, the Suzannah J. Fabing Programs Fund, Museum Members, and the Tryon Associates.*

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**About the museum:** The Smith College Museum of Art (SCMA) is committed to connecting people to art, ideas and each other. SCMA is recognized as one of the leading academic museums in the United States, contributing meaningfully to the mission of Smith College: To educate women of promise for lives of distinction and purpose. SCMA’s collection of nearly 28,000 artworks spans from antiquity to the present and supports teaching and learning across the curriculum of the college. To learn more about the collection, as well as current and upcoming virtual programs and exhibitions, visit scma.smith.edu and follow the museum on Facebook and Instagram.

SCMA will remain closed to the general public through December 2020 as part of the Smith College “Culture of Care” plan for the fall 2020 academic semester. Central to the museum’s goals for the fall is the commitment to offering easy access to a broad range of free digital content, with the museum’s website as the main hub and entry point. For up-to-date information visit scma.smith.edu.

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