Lure of the Object
Art from the June and Rob Heller Collection
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February 8-April 21, 2019
Lure of the Object celebrates the uncommon aesthetic vision and philanthropic impulse of June and Rob Heller, who are among Knoxville’s most active, adventurous, and generous art collectors. The selection of more than 50 sculptures and paintings attests to the couple’s journey as collectors over four decades. It features a broad range of key works, many of which are on public display for the first time. Some of the featured objects have been donated to the KMA, while others are promised gifts. International contemporary glass and modern and contemporary painting are particular areas of focus.

Before settling in Knoxville in 1993, the Hellers moved frequently as dictated by career assignments in London, Geneva, Singapore, and other major cities around the world. In each location, they made a practice of exploring galleries, art fairs, museums, and auctions with a sense of openness and adventure. Increasingly, they discovered works of art they could not live without. They were not bound by any set medium, period, or theme, but rather acquired works that provoked a strong visceral response.

Soon after moving to Knoxville, they became deeply involved in the city’s art scene. They patronized area artists, adding works to their collection to complement those by well-known international figures. They became staunch supporters of the Knoxville Museum of Art, contributing in a variety of ways including making lead gifts toward the development of the North Garden (now named in their honor), funding KMA art purchases, and donating significant works of art from their extensive collection. In particular, they became passionate advocates for the KMA’s efforts to build a collection of contemporary sculptural works in which glass is a primary material. Thanks in large part to the couple’s support, this collection has grown to a point at which it now fills a space on the museum’s lower level as the ongoing exhibition Facets of Modern and Contemporary Glass.

Among the works featured in Lure of the Object are major works by Oben Abright, Jennifer Bartlett, Stephen Rolfe Powell, and Ethan Stern. Socially-conscious glass sculptor Oben Abright uses cast glass to create figures such as Qrah Series, which stems from a series dedicated to portraying homeless and other marginalized populations. After his cast glass has cooled, the artist wipes a thin layer of oil paint across the surfaces of his figures to enhance surface details. Jennifer Bartlett is best known for constructing large paintings such as House Dark Plaid in which familiar subjects are presented in a style made up of both representational and abstract elements. Her bold, geometric forms are structured in such a way as to suggest profound meaning while calling attention to her studio process. Stephen Rolfe Powell is known for his bulbous oversized glass vessels with attenuated spouts. A more recent series of wall-mounted blown glass discs, here represented by Funneling Salacious Mania, reflects his growing interest in installation art and open circular forms marked by rotational energy and expressive bands of color. As in Lunar Light Long, Ethan Stern uses abstraction, color, texture and light in an effort to open up new expressive possibilities for his vessel forms. The artist employs carving and engraving in order to endow his surfaces with dramatic textures and sculptural depth.

Among recent gifts to the KMA featured in the exhibition are major works by Jim Dine, Richard Jolley, and Frank Stella. Dine is internationally known for his paintings and works on paper in which he enlarges a single image from his familiar environment—boots, tools, clothing—and, as in Green Picture in My Meadow, a stylized human heart. He chose to mix straw with his paint in order to give the painting a sculptural surface, and to make reference to the southern Vermont landscape that inspired him. Richard Jolley’s glass totem Perception versus Reality features a dynamic vertical grouping of hot-blown figurative elements sculpted in the artist’s distinctive color palette. Frank Stella’s Shards II stems from the artist’s Circuits series of the 1980s, in which he assembled and painted salvaged metal scraps left over from earlier art projects to create a groundbreaking synthesis of painting and sculpture. Stella is an avid auto racing enthusiast, and the curving strips in Circuits-series works such as Shards II are inspired by the shape of Formula One and NASCAR race tracks.

The Hellers’ gifts to the KMA collection are among the most significant in the museum’s history, and Lure of the Object is designed as a fitting and heartfelt tribute to the couple’s extraordinary support of the KMA and its collection, and their distinguished role as art patrons whose philanthropic spirit promises to inspire a new generation of museum supporters.

Stephen Wicks
Barbara W. and Bernard E. Bernstein Curator
Knoxville Museum of Art

Lure of the Object: Art from the June and Rob Heller Collection is organized by the KMA with assistance from consulting curator Mary Morris.
The picture is titled La Sacré Coeur and it is a typical Buffet, thick lines and greens, greys and blacks and it is in a wonderful frame. The beginning of a collection of paintings to come, hopefully.

June Heller, excerpt from a letter to her mother, June Friedlob, June 13, 1983
FRANK STELLA, *Shards II*, 1982, acrylic and oil stick on aluminum, 40 x 45 x 6 inches

BERNARD CATHELIN, *La Briqueterie de San Jose Malaga*, 1959, oil on canvas, 69 x 95 inches
JIM DINE, *Green Picture in My Meadow*, 1971, acrylic and straw on canvas, 72 x 84.25 inches

GEORGE RICKEY, *One Plane Vertical/Diagonal*, 1968, stainless steel, 52 x 34 x 24 inches
Lure of the Object

ROBERT LONGHURST, Ballerina, 1977, Baltic birchwood, 90 x 28 x 21 inches

RICHARD JOLLEY, Perception vs. Reality, 1999, blown and hot-formed glass, 59 x 15 x 15 inches

Knoxville Museum of Art
JENNIFER BARTLETT, *House: Dark Plaid*, 1998, oil on canvas, 50 x 50 inches

PAUL JENKINS, *Phenomena Cross Hatch the Wind*, 1970s, acrylic on canvas, 38.75 x 73 inches
CHRISTINA BOTHWELL, *A Heart That's True*, 2005, cast glass, raku fired clay, and found object, 33 x 20 x 11 inches

ANDREI NICOLOV, Female Nude, white marble, 24 x 11 x 8 inches

CLIFFORD RAINEY, Venus in Exile, 2000, cast glass and pigment, 30.5 x 12 x 12 inches
LATCHEZAR BOYADJIEV, Woman, 2000, cast glass, 27 x 19.5 x 6 inches

MARTIN BLANK, Resting Nude, 2001, hot-formed glass and copper, 21 x 24 x 17 inches
WILLIAM MORRIS, *Animal Head: Sheath with Arrows*, 1995, blown glass, 37 x 27 x 12 inches

OBEN ABRIGHT, *Qraun Series I*, 2005, molded blown glass and oil paint, 37.75 x 14.25 x 9.5 inches
DANTE MARIONI, *Ruby and Amber Standing Reticello Leaf*, 2015, blown glass, 40 x 8 x 8 inches

STEPHEN ROLFE POWELL, *Hyper Lascivious Cyclone*, 2013, blown and hot-formed glass, 27.5 x 27.5 x 8.5 inches
Art has enriched our lives, so it is an honor and a great pleasure to share a part of our collection with you. We are thrilled to see this selection as a KMA-curated exhibition and delighted that most pieces will eventually stay with the KMA. We didn’t set out to “collect” art. Art found us. Our first acquisition, the Bernard Buffet, was bought at a 1983 TV auction over the phone, the Frank Stella at a 1996 auction from a phone booth. In between and since, we have visited art galleries all over the world, attended many auctions, and purchased all types of art, each and every one equally loved by both of us. Along this wonderful journey we have met many of the artists and many like-minded collectors, often becoming friends. Art has, indeed, enriched our lives. We hope that Lure of the Object enriches yours.

June and Rob Heller, January 2019

EXHIBITION LIST

OBEN ABRIGHT (American, b. 1980)
Queen Series, 2005
Molded blown glass and oil paint
37.75 x 14.25 x 9.5 inches

HANK MURTA ADAMS (American, b. 1956)
D, 2017
Hot-formed glass and copper
21 x 14 x 13 inches

JENNIFER BARTLETT (American, b. 1941)
House: Dark Plaid, 1998
Oil on canvas
50 x 50 inches
© Jennifer Bartlett, courtesy of Jennifer Bartlett Trust

MARTIN BLANK (American, b. 1962)
Resting Nude, 2001
Hot worked glass and copper
21 x 24 x 17 inches

CHRISTINA BOTHWELL (American, b. 1960)
A Heart That’s True, 2005
Cast glass, raku fired clay, and found object
33 x 20 x 11 inches

LATCHEZAR BOYADJIEV (Bulgarian, b. 1959)
Woman, 2000
Cast glass
27 x 19.5 x 6 inches
© Chuck Close in association with Magnolia Editions, Oakland, courtesy Pace Gallery

CURTISS BROCK (American, b. 1961)
Geode/Fragment Series: Sliced Geode, 2005
Glass and aluminum base
5 x 21 x 12 inches

BERNARD BUFFET (French, 1928-1999)
Le Sacré Coeur de Montmartre, 1950s
Oil on canvas
28 x 22 inches
© 2019 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

DARRELL ROBERTS, Open Window, 2018, mixed media on canvas, 48 x 42 inches

DENNIS BYNG (American, b. 1927)
Pyramid, 1972
Laminated acrylic
12 x 17 x 15.5 inches

BERNARD CATHHELIN (Spanish, 1919-2004)
La Briqueterie de San Jose Malaga, 1959
Oil on canvas
69 x 95 inches

JOSE CHARDIET (Cuban, b. 1956)
Totem, 1990
Blown, cast, and painted glass
24.5 x 12 x 8.5 inches

Dale CHIHULY (American, b. 1941)
Cadmium Yellow Basket Set with Maroon Lip Wrap, 1990
Blown glass
12 x 25 x 24 inches
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CHRISTO (Bulgarian, b. 1935)
Abstract, 1958
Oil impasto on canvas
19.5 x 28.6 inches

CHUCK CLOSE (American, b. 1940)
Lyle, 2003
Color silkscreen in 149 colors, ed. of 80
65.5 x 53.8 inches
© Chuck Close in association with Magnolia Editions, Oakland, courtesy Pace Gallery

JULIE WARREN CONN (American, b. 1943)
Abstract
White marble
17 x 12 x 6 inches

JIM DINE (American, b. 1935)
Green Picture in My Meadow, 1971
Acrylic and straw on canvas
72 x 84.25 inches
© 2019 Jim Dine / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
Knoxville Museum of Art, gift of June and Rob Heller
LAURA DONEFER (American, b. 1955)
Yellow Heart Amulet Basket, 2018
Blown glass
22 x 16 x 10 inches

MICHAEL EASTMAN (American, b. 1947)
Mirror Grid, Milan, 2008/2010
Digital chromogenic print
45 x 37 inches
© Michael Eastman, St. Louis/Courtesy Edwynn Houk, New York

ROBIN GREBE (American, b. 1957)
Inner Harbor, 2001
Cast glass, copper wire, copper leaf, paint
29 x 14 x 5 inches

KIRK H. SLAUGHTER and ELISABETT GUDMANN (American, b. 1960, b. 1966)
Link Series: Arctic, 2013
Stainless steel and charred wood
76 x 26 x 22 inches

MICHAEL JANIS (American, b. 1959)
Extravagance of Species, 2014
Fused and cast glass with glass powder imagery and steel frame
35 x 22 x 5 inches

MICHAEL JANIS (American, b. 1959)
In It’s Season, 2014
Fused and cast glass with glass powder imagery and steel frame
35 x 22 x 5 inches

MICHAEL JANIS (American, b. 1959)
The Hidden Life of Flowers, 2014
Fused and cast glass with glass powder imagery and steel frame
35 x 22 x 5 inches

PAUL JENKINS (American, 1923-2012)
Phenomena Cross Hatch the Wind, 1970s
Acrylic on canvas
38.75 x 73 inches
© Estate of Paul Jenkins/2019/Licensed by ADAGP

RICHARD JOLLEY (American, b. 1952)
Mysterious, 1994
Bronze
19 x 7 x 7 inches

RICHARD JOLLEY (American, b. 1952)
Perception vs. Reality, 1999
Blown and hot-formed glass
59 x 15 x 15 inches

RICHARD JOLLEY (American, b. 1952)
Sequence of Events, 2000
Wood, glass, steel, paint and silver leaf
44 x 48 x 9.5 inches

RICHARD JOLLEY (American, b. 1952)
Suspected in Dreams #9, 2013
Blown and hot-formed glass
20 x 17 x 13 inches

ROBERT LONGHURST (American, b. 1949)
Ballenas, 1977
Baltic birchwood
90 x 28 x 21 inches

DANTE MARIONI (American, b. 1964)
Ruby and Amber Standing Reticello Leaf, 2015
Blown glass
40 x 8 x 8 inches

MIRA MAYLOR (Israeli, b. 1970)
Makom, 2009
Cast glass, metal, and sand
16.5 x 6 x 8 inches

HENRY MOORE (British, 1898-1986)
Animal, 1975
Bronze with brown patina
5.5 x 7.75 x 4 inches
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Knoxville Museum of Art, gift of June and Rob Heller

HENRY MOORE (British, 1898-1986)
Moquette for Relief No. 1, 1959
Bronze with brown patina
8.5 x 5.25 x 4 inches
© 2019 Henry Moore/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
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WILLIAM MORRIS (American, b. 1957)
Animal Head: Sheath with Arrows, 1995
Blown glass
37 x 27 x 12 inches

WILLIAM MORRIS (American, b. 1957)
Artifact: Pouch, 1995
Blown glass
21 x 15 x 11 inches
Knoxville Museum of Art, gift of June and Rob Heller

WILLIAM MORRIS (American, b. 1957)
Enlightenments 12, 2003
Steel and glass
22 x 15.5 x 11 inches

ANDREI NICOLOV (Bulgarian, 1878-1959)
Female Nude
White marble
24 x 11 x 8 inches

ZORA PALOVÁ (Slovakian, b. 1947)
All Around M, 1998
Glass
18 x 33 x 5 inches

CHRISTINE PATTERTSON (American, b. 1961)
Perseverance, 2008
Mixed media and resin on wood
51 x 40 inches

STEPHEN ROLFE POWELL (American, b. 1951)
Volcanic Sticky Lips, 1999
Blown murrine glass
44.5 x 18.5 x 17.5 inches

STEPHEN ROLFE POWELL (American, b. 1951)
Moquette for Clear Toro, 2000
Cast glass, steel, stone, wood and paint
24 x 8 x 8 inches
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CLIFFORD RAINNEY (British, b. 1948)
Venus in Exile, 2000
Cast glass and pigment
30.5 x 12 x 12 inches

GEORGE RICKEY (American, 1907-2002)
One Plane Vertical/ Diagonal, 1968
Stainless steel
52 x 34 x 24 inches
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DARRELL ROBERTS (American, b. 1972)
Open Window, 2018
Mixed media on canvas
48 x 42 inches

THOMAS SCOON (American, b. 1961)
Seated Figure, 2007
Cut glass and stone
54 x 15 x 25 inches

THERMON STATOM (American, b. 1953)
Xerop/ Night, 1998
Plate and blown glass and mixed media
77 x 16 x 6 inches

FRANK STELLA (American, b. 1936)
Shards II, 1982
Acrylic and oil stick on aluminum
40 x 45 x 6 inches
© 2019 Frank Stella/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
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Lure of the Object

The Knoxville Museum of Art celebrates the art and artists of East Tennessee, presents new art and new ideas, educates and serves a diverse community, enhances Knoxville’s quality of life and economic development, and operates ethically, responsibly and transparently as a public trust.

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LEFT TOOTS ZYNSKY, Ghiacciaio III Mizimah (Glacier), 2004
Fused and thermo-formed colored glass threads, 10.75 x 16.5 x 10 inches

BACK COVER ETHAN STERN, Lunar Light Long, 2015
Blown and wheel cut glass, 23 x 13 x 4 inches

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JANUSZ WALENTYNOWICZ (Polish, b. 1956)
Young Woman in Blue, 2015
Cast glass
23.5 x 23.5 x 4 inches

TOOTS ZYNSKY (American, b. 1951)
Ghiacciaio III Mizimah (Glacier), 2004
Fused and thermo-formed colored glass threads
10.75 x 16.5 x 10 inches

BERTIL VALLIEN (Swedish, b. 1938)
Sleeping Janus
Cast glass
72.5 x 14 x 14 inches

ETHAN STERN (American, b. 1978)
Lunar Light Long, 2015
Blown and wheel cut glass
23 x 13 x 4 inches

JANUSZ WALENTYNOWICZ (Polish, b. 1956)
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