

50

 JORDAN SCHNITZER
MUSEUM OF ART WSU



REFLECTING FIFTY YEARS

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY'S
ART MUSEUM

EDITED BY RYAN HARDESTY



Washington State University Press
PO Box 645910
Pullman, Washington 99164-5910
Phone: 800-354-7360
Email: wsupress@wsu.edu
Website: wsupress.wsu.edu

© 2024 by the Board of Regents of Washington State University
All rights reserved
First printing 2024
Copyright for the artwork pictured herein is held by the artists, unless otherwise noted.

Printed and bound in the United States of America on pH neutral, acid-free paper. Reproduction or transmission of material contained in this publication in excess of that permitted by copyright law is prohibited without permission in writing from the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

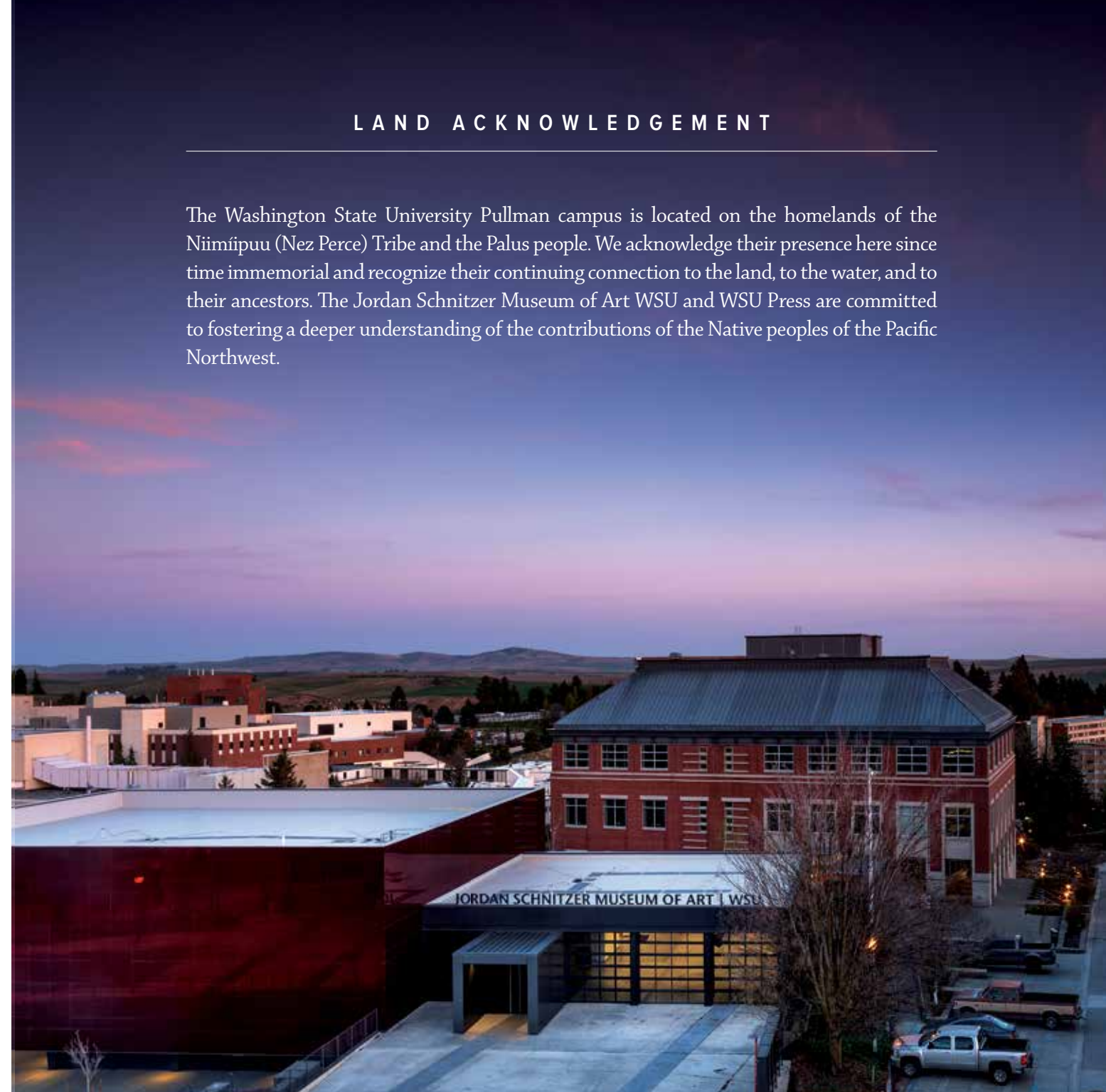
Cover design by Patrick Brommer
Graphic design by Tracy Randall
IMAGE CREDIT (previous spread) Bob Hubner, WSU Photo Services
IMAGE CREDIT (following page) @NicLehoux



Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art WSU
PO Box 647301
Pullman, Washington 99164-7301
Website: museum.wsu.edu

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Washington State University Pullman campus is located on the homelands of the Niiimípuu (Nez Perce) Tribe and the Palus people. We acknowledge their presence here since time immemorial and recognize their continuing connection to the land, to the water, and to their ancestors. The Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art WSU and WSU Press are committed to fostering a deeper understanding of the contributions of the Native peoples of the Pacific Northwest.





Person(a): Portraiture from the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation, 2018

Photo: @NicLehoux

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1
Ryan Hardesty

ESSAYS AND PLATES

INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY 19
Patricia Grieve Watkinson
VERSO: THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FRAME

THE PERMANENT COLLECTION 67
Sean Elwood
A JEWEL BOX, A MIRROR, AND A TIME MACHINE

JORDAN SCHNITZER MUSEUM OF ART WSU 99
Chris Bruce
BUILDING A CAMPAIGN TO BUILD A BUILDING FOR ART

APPENDICES

JORDAN SCHNITZER MUSEUM OF ART WSU STAFF 157
LIST OF DIRECTORS 157
MANY VOICES 158
EXHIBITION LIST 159

IMAGE CREDITS 187



INTRODUCTION

REFLECTING FIFTY YEARS: CELEBRATING WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY'S ART MUSEUM

Ryan Hardesty, Executive Director

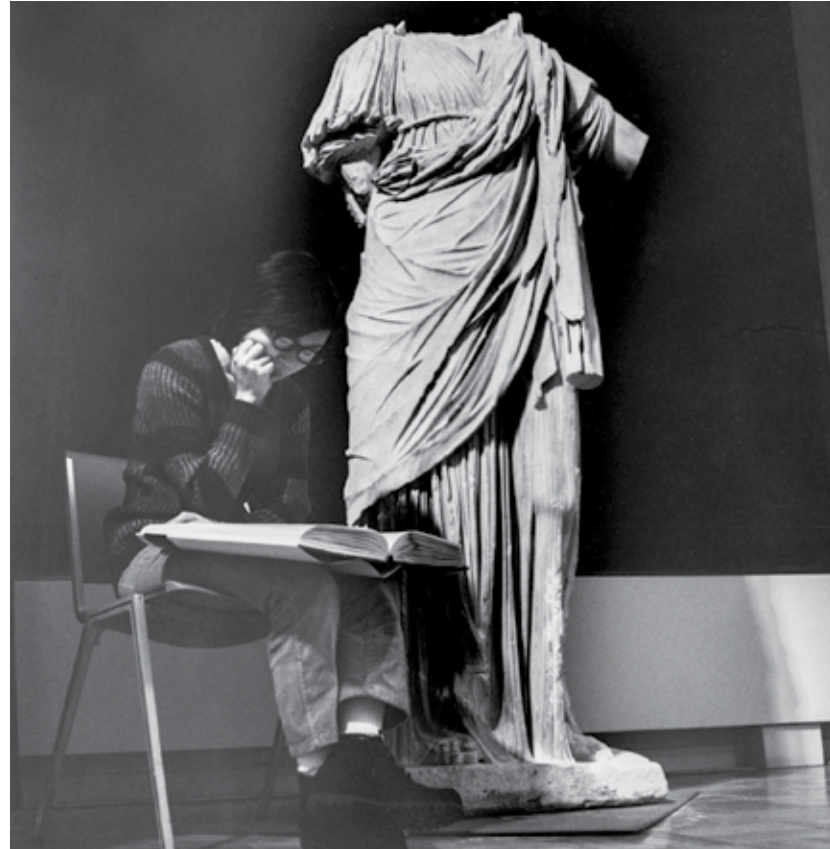
Museums are revered spaces for many. They hold both unknowable mysteries and timely reckonings, culture made visible by our most innovative and creative. Museums teach patience and curiosity and reward in inspiration and even revelation. Along the way, they encourage comfort within ambiguity—a critical ingredient that moves us toward more expansive ways of thinking and being. When we describe this museum, we often do so as an alternative classroom—a dynamic space to learn together where we view the world through the lens of art and artists.

Museums have certainly been the most valued spaces in my life and I am honored to be leading this museum with our brilliant team into its 50th year. With any project steeped in historical review, you are made more aware of those who came before, their successive eras, never-ending work, accomplishments, occasional missteps, and more than anything, efforts to build something of lasting meaning and utility.

Where would we be had inaugural director Harvey West not petitioned the university for

the establishment of the first-ever art museum on the campus of Washington State University? His proposal eventually resulted in a presidential-level committee that worked regularly, and on July 31, 1974, submitted their findings as to the merit of a campus art museum. Subsequent counsel was sought from across the spectrum of the university—central administration, deans, department chairs, and faculty. After much deliberation, President Glenn Terrell in September 1974 established the “Washington State University Museum of Art.”

Or without curator and director Bruce Guenther’s moxie to create an exhibition and lecture program throughout the remainder of the 1970s in Pullman, Washington, that could rival any other? He metaphorically planted a flag in the Palouse soil as a place for the cultural zeitgeist, where students and community would learn from the nation’s most relevant artists and scholars, including Robert Smithson, Judy Chicago, Robert Motherwell, and Mark Di Suvero. What an auspicious beginning for a



Rae Iwamoto reads next to a statue that is part of an exhibition from the Getty Collection, December 13, 1972. Objects from the Getty were featured at WSU for multiple exhibitions over a span of years
Photo: WSU Libraries' Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections



Museum of Art director Harvey West (left) leads a discussion with art collector Virginia Wright (center) and artist Robert Motherwell (right) in Bryan Hall on November 8, 1975, at the two-day symposium on American printmaking. The event took place during the featured exhibition *American Printmaking 1960–1975: A Major Survey Exhibition of Directions in American Printmaking*
Photo: WSU Libraries' Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections

fledgling museum emerging in the most unlikely of places. During director Patricia Watkinson's long tenure throughout the 1980s and 1990s, great care was given to cultivating—perhaps nurturing is the better term—an immense family of devoted museum friends. What we call community engagement these days was in fact something closer to an “it takes a village” approach to standing up a museum program to thrive. From this support network—community and university faculty who fell in love with the museum's charge—emerged what may be considered the museum's bedrock: a host of people, funds, and endowments that we rely upon to this day.

When Chris Bruce, a highly respected museum professional from Seattle, arrived in Pullman to assume his role as director of the museum in 2003, it sent a wave of excitement across the regional arts community—something decidedly artistic was brewing in a land more commonly associated with Cougar athletics and agricultural sciences. I certainly felt it from my museum post in Spokane. In tandem with presenting and publishing heady curatorial projects, he went about testing the waters to build a new museum facility that would make the arts unmistakably visible. The campaign that would ultimately result in the opening of the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at WSU in

April 2018 was both strategic and a nearly decade-and-a-half effort. It brought together university leadership and project managers alongside steering committees, architects, and designers, as well as hundreds of supporters, and of course, the transformational patronage of Jordan D. Schnitzer, for whom the new facility is named. Once you encounter architect Jim Olson's now iconic exterior, aka the “Crimson Cube,” there is no mistaking that this is a place for innovation and creativity. Within the interior, a sequence of perfectly-scaled galleries carry the names of those—Smith, Bruce, Floyd, Borth, Creighton, Harmon, and Wright—who made the vision a reality.

If you need more validation as to the museum's newfound visibility and integration into the academic experience, WSU men's basketball coach David Riley was recently asked why he wanted the job. He responded, “...think about it. It's Washington State. You look around [the campus], these facilities, the school. It's an amazing institution. There's a dang art museum right next to the athletic facilities. It's a university.”

My own place in all of this began with a phone call in the summer of 2013. On the other end of the line was then director Chris Bruce, making me aware of a new art museum on Washington State University's horizon. They had fought for and



Inaugural exhibitions at the JSMA WSU featuring
Hearts: Selections from the Jim Dine Print Collection in the central Smith Gallery, 2018

Photo: @NicLehoux



The exhibition
Marie Watt: Companion Species
(Underbelly) as seen in 2018
Photo: Benjamin Benschneider / OTTO



The artist installing *Juventino Aranda: Esperé Mucho Tiempo Pa Ver* on August 12, 2022

Photo: Kristin Becker

secured a site at the heart of campus; funding was coming into place. After deliberations with my family, we made the move to Pullman in the summer of 2014, and I joined the most dedicated team, ultimately led by interim director and longtime associate director Anna-Maria Shannon, who brought the new museum to fruition after Chris's retirement in 2016.

Since the new facility's inauguration, we have ridden a wave of curatorial projects balancing a long-held belief that our students, faculty, and community—whether from Washington State, Washington, DC, or the world—deserve an exhibition program that is national, even international, in scope. At the same time, we work within the context of a land-grant institution



Indie Folk: Sounds from the Northwest concert with a cappella group Bigger Boat singing sea shanties and maritime songs, April 2022

Photo: WSU Photo Services

dedicated to serving local communities and helping tell their stories.

To this end, the last six years have seen aspirational exhibitions and programs that have aimed to fundamentally express and improve the experience of our shared humanity. Significant artists from across the Pacific Northwest, such as Marie Watt, Jeffry Mitchell, and Trimpin, as well as

Juventino Aranda and Keiko Hara, have been presented alongside projects examining the works of Polly Apfelbaum, Louise Bourgeois, Sky Hopinka, Alison Saar, Wangechi Mutu, and so many others. This year, our museum organized and put forward a sweeping survey of the multi-faceted work of Jeffrey Gibson. I can't help but smile when thinking of the thousands of visitors in