
Wayne State University Art Collection and Eastern Michigan University collaborate on *Subverting Modernism: Cass Corridor Revisited 1966–1980* Wayne State University Art Collection loans 26 works to major Cass Corridor exhibition

DETROIT (January 7, 2013) – The art exhibition *Subverting Modernism: Cass Corridor Revisited 1966–1980* is a multi-year collaboration between the Wayne State University Art Collection and Eastern Michigan University. The exhibition examines the art activity of a group of artists working in the late '60s and '70s in a rundown area of Detroit near Wayne State University. Curated by Dr. Julia R. Myers, professor of art history at Eastern Michigan University, the exhibition consists of 35 works of art (paintings, sculpture, prints and photographs), 26 of which are from the Wayne State University Art Collection.

Subverting Modernism is on view at [Central Michigan University's Main and West Gallery](#), January 10 – February 9, 2013. Its opening reception, with gallery talk by exhibition curator, Dr. Julia R. Myers, is Thursday, January 10, 4–6 p.m. The exhibition then travels to the [Eastern Michigan University Gallery](#), Student Center, March 11 – April 28, 2013. The opening reception at EMU is March 20, 4–7 p.m. On March 20, at 6:30 p.m., Vince Carducci, dean of Detroit's College for Creative Studies, will deliver an address titled *Envisioning Real Utopias in Detroit* in the EMU Student Center, Rm. 310 A&B. On March 27 at 5:30 p.m., the movie "Images" from *Detroit's Cass Corridor*, created by Kathryn Brackett Luchs and Shaun Bangert, will be screened in [EMU's Halle Library Auditorium](#). This outstanding film includes original footage taken of the Cass Corridor artists in their studios during the time covered by the exhibition.

In the late 1960s, revolution was in the air in Detroit, with radical leftist activity focused in the Cass Corridor. Feeling the revolutionary spirit, local artists also broke with tradition by overthrowing Modernism, the dominant New York art critical theory of the post-WWII era, and ushering in the Post-Modernism pluralism seen throughout American art in the 1970s.

Subverting Modernism confronts the conventional wisdom held that these Cass Corridor artists, as they have come to be called, were essentially "urban expressionists," responding to the decay and danger of post-industrial Detroit, a thesis most thoroughly set forth in *Kick Out the Jams*, a 1980 exhibition at the Detroit Institute of Arts. *Subverting Modernism*, a much-needed scholarly reappraisal of this art movement, debunks this notion, positing instead that each Cass Corridor artist created his or her own individual styles and meanings, cross-fertilized at times by the work of his/her fellows.

While early pieces in the exhibition push hard at the boundaries of Modernism/Minimalism, other works break forth from these limitations to create meanings of great universality, such as our need for shelter or the persistence of the life force, both human and otherwise. Many of the works speak of Detroit, both in its industrial and post-industrial stages, but they also encompass and transcend the specifics of time and place and address issues that have significance for all humans, such as violence and vulnerability, the presence or absence of order and structure in nature and human life, and our millennial old desire to make music and dance.

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The exhibition and accompanying 100-page catalogue published by Eastern Michigan University Gallery and distributed by [Wayne State University Press](#), allows art lovers to see important Detroit art that is not usually accessible to the public. Dr. Julia R. Myers's extensive research, which included interviewing the artists, consulting hundreds of newspaper articles from the late 1960s and 1970s, and using archival materials in both Washington, D.C., and Detroit, makes for a thoroughly new look at the exciting work of these important Detroit artists. This flourishing of artistic expression in a city not historically viewed as an 'art center' should be recognized, valued and prized, as this exhibition does.

From its modest beginnings in the 1960s, the [Wayne State University Art Collection](#) has grown to include nearly 6000 works of art. The University Art Collection works collaboratively with Wayne State's College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts. Wayne State University, located in the heart of Detroit's Midtown Cultural Center, is a premier urban research institution offering 370 academic programs through 13 schools and colleges to nearly 29,000 students.

For more information about the exhibition, contact Sandra Schemske, Wayne State University Art Collection, 313-577-9264, cn8290@wayne.edu.

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