

Northwestern

MARY AND LEIGH

BLOCK MUSEUM OF ART



SEPTEMBER 23, 2017–MARCH 11, 2018

William Blake and the Age of Aquarius

blockmuseum.northwestern.edu

but also large scale sculpture.” And that’s something that plays to Brantley’s strengths as a diverse multi-media creator.

Bringing his iconic figures to life on a full scale is something he has been doing since his 2014 collection, *The Watch*. The large scale, brightly colored sculptures inspired by the Tuskegee Airmen and featuring his iconic Fly Boys and Girls were installed in Chicago’s Pioneer Court in 2014, garnering massive attention for by Chicago’s art community.

For Brantley, it’s just another step in his journey to bring a real message that gets us thinking, adding thrust to a style of art that has long merited more weight and forging a path that marries message and mode, elevating both and illuminating us all in the process.♦

Forced Field will be on view at

Elmhurst Art Museum September 9 through November 16. Several ancillary events will accompany the exhibition, including an opportunity to meet the artist during the exhibit’s opening on September 9; a panel discussion including Mr. Brantley on the power of public art (in conjunction with the Year of Public Art celebration in Chicago); and a mural tour of Chicago that includes the iconic Wabash Corridor downtown. Visit elmhurstartmuseum.org to learn more.



From Top: Hebru Brantley in his private studio; **Bottom:** Figurines of Brantley’s iconic Fly Boy characters.



with an eye toward the modern city displaying works from our past, present and future and organized chronologically by theme. From the history of ornament and Pop to contemporary ideas in urbanism, as well as speculative design, this insightful exhibition examines the impact of technology, global

dynamics and even the influence of our evolving health in a grand speculation of the evolution of design today (Ongoing exhibition opens September 12, 2017).

Now in its sixth year as a top multi-national art fair, **EXPO Chicago** (expochicago.org), hosts more than 135 leading international exhibitors presented alongside one of the highest quality platforms for global contemporary art and culture.



Presented by Art Expositions, LLC at Chicago's Navy Pier, Expo Chicago draws upon the city's rich history as a vibrant international cultural destination, while highlighting the region's contemporary arts community and inspiring its avid collector base. Offering diverse programming including its popular /Dialogues series and the Curatorial Forum, the expo will align with the **Chicago Architecture Biennial** this year, establishing the city as a preeminent destination for global contemporary art and architecture, intersecting across a wide variety of programs, including panels, international residencies, exhibitions and citywide events (September 13-17, 2017).

The Museum of Contemporary Art

Chicago (mcachicago.org) celebrates its 50th anniversary this fall with an exciting series of exhibitions, programs, and events, along with the unveiling of the building's new redesign. The centerpiece of the 50th anniversary is **We Are Here**, a major three-part exhibition.

From Top: Stanley Tigerman. *The Titanic*, 1978. The Art Institute of Chicago. Gift of Stanley Tigerman. copyright 1978 Stanley Tigerman; Aerial view of Expo Chicago 2016 at Navy Pier (photo courtesy of Expo Chicago); Jeff Koons, *Rabbit*, stainless steel 41 x 19 x 12 inches (photo courtesy of The Museum of Contemporary Art); Artist Hebru Brantley. (photo courtesy of Elmhurst Art Museum).



By ISAAC JACOBS

Art abounds in the Windy City in a wide spectrum of shapes and flavors, and this new season of art exhibits sparkles with dazzling new work, architectural brilliance, thought provoking catalogs of respected masters and even a burgeoning art phenom that, dare I say it, just may make mainstream stardom if he's not too careful.

Be it the mode or the message behind it, this season of art explodes with something for everyone, and that's saying something in Chicago.

Inspired by his 1980s Bronzeville upbringing, artist Hebru Brantley's 2014 solo show at the Chicago Cultural Center, *Parade Day Rain*, explored celebration and disappointment through paintings and sculptures that drew inspiration from graffiti, pop art, hip-hop and youth artists in 1980s Chicago. Today, the artist's popularity skyrocketing, Brantley is showcasing his iconic figures from that first solo show, Flyboy and LilMama, in a new exhibition called *Forced Field* that examines the barriers (figurative and literal) that form in the lives inner city Chicago and areas like it throughout the nation. The show will mark the artist's debut at the west suburban **Elmhurst Art Museum** (elmhurstartmuseum.org) this fall (September 9 - November 26).

The Art Institute of Chicago (artic.edu) has long boasted a massive collection of architectural drawings and furniture, and graphic and industrial designs spanning the 20th and 21st centuries. The artifacts comprise an ever evolving display in its laudable Modern Wing and constitutes a first-of-its-kind collection integrating architecture and design in a multi-media experience.

From Daniel H. Burnham and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe to Louis Kahn, and a host of contemporary architects and designers, contributors to the diverse landscape of design in the 20th and 21st centuries abound in this impressive collection.

Past Forward: Architecture and Designs at the Art Institute showcases this considerable compendium of architecture and design

with an eye toward the modern city displaying works from our past, present and future and organized chronologically by theme. From the history of ornament and Pop to contemporary ideas in urbanism, as well as speculative design, this insightful exhibition examines the impact of technology, global dynamics and even the influence of our evolving health in a grand speculation of the evolution of design today (Ongoing exhibition opens September 12, 2017).

Largely unrecognized in his time, British poet and artist William Blake (1757-1827) sparked something of a revolution with the expressive and philosophical works underpinned by mystical undercurrents that comprised his catalogue. The 1967 "Summer of Love" that celebrated peace, love and music finds much of its origin in Blake's work. In fact, many of the artists, poets and musicians associated with the celebrated phenomenon that drew 100,000 young bohemians to the Haight-Ashbury district back in 1967 used Blake's visionary work as a driver of their own political and personal evolutions.

William Blake and the Age of Aquarius, at the **Mary and Leigh Block Museum** (blockmuseum.northwestern.edu) on the campus of Northwestern University this fall, will explore the impact the artist and poet had on a broad range of American artists in the post-World War II period. This exhibition will be the first to consider how Blake's art and ideas were absorbed and filtered through American visual artists from the end of the war through the 1960s. Blake became for many a model of non-conformity and self-expression, and was seen as an artist who engaged in social and political resistance in his time.

William Blake and the Age of Aquarius will consider parallels between Blake's time and mid-twentieth-century America, touching on such issues as political repression, social transformation and struggles for civil rights. The exhibition will feature American artists for whom Blake was an important inspiration and will include more than 130 paintings, prints, drawings, photographs, films and posters, as well as original Blake prints and illuminated books from collections throughout the United States (September 23 - March 11, 2018).

Brazilian artist Tarsila do Amaral (1886-1937) created work that was core to the evolution of Brazil's modern art. Artists from the Latin American nation since have gleaned great influence from her work and ideas. Her paintings and drawings speak to a distinct desire to create a more cohesive approach to avant-garde art and define a new modern art movement for her country. On view at the Art Institute this fall, **Tarsila**



do Amaral: Inventing Modern Art in Brazil is the first exhibition in North America devoted to Amaral's work. It showcases her output from the 1920s, when her time was shared between São Paulo and Paris, a monumental period in her life when she participated extensively in the creative and social activities of both vibrant cities and developed her own unique aesthetic and her nation's burgeoning artistic identity (October 8, 2017-January 7, 2018).

At the **DuSable Museum of African American History** (dusablemuseum.org) this fall, **Fabiola Jean-Louis' Rewriting History: Paper Gowns and Photographs**, offers a pervasive inquiry into social change. Exploring deep-seeded issues of race and equality in America, the exhibition offers probes of ideas, like the value of Black lives in the 20th century and the concept of a society impacted over the centuries by the institution of slavery, through haunting photographic essay and paper sculptures designed to form garments worn by female European nobility between the 15th and 19th centuries—a captivating concept meant to spur thought and discussion. Part of an ongoing master series of paper gown creations, the DuSable explains this series explores "the shocking treatment of Blacks throughout history and the trauma inflicted on their bodies as juxtaposed with the abstract idea of Black freedom." Simultaneously, the works seem to speak with a vision toward a future ripe with "hope, strength, resilience, and beauty" (Ongoing exhibition opens November 4).

An activist and environmentalist, English artist **John Sabraw's** paintings, drawings and collaborative installations are produced in an eco-conscious manner, and he continually works toward a fully sustainable practice. One of his current collaborations involves creating paint and paintings from iron oxide extracted in the process of remediating polluted streams.

Sabraw's newest work will be on view this fall at the prestigious **Thomas McCormick Gallery** (thomasmccormick.com) in Chicago's bustling gallery district (November 11 - January 20, 2018).♦



From Top: William Blake (1807), oil on canvas by Thomas Phillips (The National Portrait Gallery in London); Fabiola Jean-Louis' *Madame Beauviers Painting* (image courtesy of The DuSable Museum of African American History); Tarsila do Amaral, *A Cuca* (image © Tarsila do Amaral Licenciamentos).