



Feast your eyes

Andy Warhol's book work, a Pop art pioneer and triple-header exhibit at Union College among highlights of 2015 visual arts calendar

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Andy Warhol, Andy Warhol's Index Book, 1967 (pre-publication Mock-up designer's copy) c. 2015 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy of Williams College Museum of Art, Gift of Richard F. Holmes, Class of 1946.

Petegorsky / Gipe photo

For the area's art lovers, there's no shortage of quality exhibits on tap for the coming year. Particularly for fans of Pop art and book art, the season ahead is auspicious, but the offerings, in general, are diverse and exciting.

In a 2011 New York Times review, art critic Ken Johnson wrote that late Pop artist Nicholas Krushenick's "marvelous, underappreciated oeuvre cries out for a full-scale museum survey." The late artist finally gets his due come February when the Tang Teaching Museum opens "Nicholas Krushenick: Electric Soup," the first museum survey of his work in decades. Although not a household name like some of his contemporaries, Krushenick, who died in 1999, was well known in the New York City art scene of the '60s and '70s. His bold, brightly colored paintings bore some similarity to those of Roy Lichtenstein, yet they're non-representational. Art critic John Yau dubbed him the "father of Pop abstraction." His particular style integrated Pop, abstract expressionism, color field painting and more, and this may have led to his work being hard to categorize. That, in turn, is perhaps why his work has been largely overlooked for some time.

The show, organized by Tang Director Ian Berry, will span 30 years of the artist's career.

There was one Krushenick contemporary for whom recognition was never a problem: Andy Warhol. Famous now for a good deal longer than 15 minutes, Warhol's work has been surveyed, analyzed and celebrated. And yet, there has never been an exhibition of Warhol's book work. Opening in March, "Warhol by the Book," an exhibit at Williams College Museum of Art, explores the way Warhol used books as objects and also made books that stretched the very idea of a book. From illustrations in mass-produced publications to maquettes for projects that have never been shown, this show will feature over 400 objects and include drawings, paintings, prints, photos, even film, in addition to unpublished materials. Some of these drawings will date back to Warhol's college days.

Exhibits at MASS MoCA in North Adams, Mass., and Union College in Schenectady also will examine the intersection of artists and books. A three-part show, "Mot Juste" opens in January at Union. It will include a group exhibit, "Textual," at the college's Mandeville Gallery; "Artists' Books: Where to put the apostrophe?" in the Schaffer Library; and a multimedia event, "Distracted Wreading [From Structural Film to Digital Poetics]" on Feb. 17 at Karp Hall. "Textual" will feature artists who use text, printed or otherwise, to explore satire, politics, communication and linguistics. Artists Alex Gingrow, Michael Scoggins, Bang Geul Han, Cui Fei, Amanda Tiller, Shanti Grumbine and Sujin Lee will participate, and a piece from the permanent collection by William Powhida will also be included. "Artists' Books" looks at the handmade books of artists, including Joseph Kosuth, Dieter Roth, Edward Ruscha and Lawrence Weiner.

For "Bibliothecaphilia," also opening in January, MASS MoCA invites artists who use inspiration from libraries as part of their process. The artists investigate issues around libraries, the ways that they house and recirculate books and whether the physical space of the library can remain relevant in the digital age. Clayton Cubitt,

Jonathan Gitelson, Susan Hefuna, Meg Hitchcock, Dan Peterman and Jena Priebe all contributed work. It's no coincidence that the theme of this show is loosely tied to the Williams College Museum's Warhol show. It coincides with a yearlong cooperative initiative between Williams and MASS MoCA that is dedicated to books, libraries and information.

Coincidentally, the University at Albany's University Art Museum will be exploring the idea of the archive with seven artists' responses to archiving and how the very act of collecting and archiving builds a collective history. "The Ties That Bind: Artists and Archives" opens in mid-February. These are artists who scavenge for objects and images in all kinds of places, from basements and tag sales to the Internet. Working in multiple media, from drawing to video and installation, the participating artists are Anna Craycroft, Aurelian Froment, Elise McMahan, Michael Oatman, Katerina Seda, Shane Aslan Selzer and Bryan Zanisnik.

Connections can't be always drawn between all the various exhibits planned throughout the region, but others are noteworthy all the same. The Clark Art Institute's "Machine Age Modernism: Prints from the Daniel Cowin Collection" pays special attention to the experimental Linocut movement of the '20s and '30s. The Arts Center of the Capital Region showcases the work of the recipients of its second annual Emerging and Established Artist awards with "TOO: Melinda R. McDaniel and John McQueen." The two artists each work meticulously in sculpture and installation with very different kinds of materials.

Opening in January at the Tang is "Realms of Earth and Sky: Indian Painting from the 15th to the 19th Century," a traveling exhibit that spans a number of centuries and artistic traditions in South Asian art.

In March, the Hyde Collection will open "Click! Selections of Work from The George Stephanopoulos Collection," the first time images from the photo collection recently donated to the Glens Falls museum will be displayed there. Also that month, MASS MoCA will open a survey of the work of Jim Shaw that will include a new site-specific installation. It will be the largest East Coast exhibit ever of this prominent West Coast artist who makes large work drawing from popular culture to critique politics and religion.

Come summer, Art Omi will feature Donald Baechler, Pamela Fraser, Michael Zahn, Mary Heilman, and Robert Montgomery in "Walk this Way," which will link sculptures in the field with pieces inside the gallery.

That's the visual arts short list for the upcoming season. Whether it's painting, installation art, Pop, photography, sculpture, printmaking you're looking for this New Year, it's out there.

Amy Griffin is a frequent contributor to the Times Union.