

MEAD ART MUSEUM

AMHERST COLLEGE

**MEAD ART MUSEUM AT AMHERST COLLEGE RECEIVES \$3 MILLION GIFT
FROM JOHN AND SUE WIELAND TO ENDOW DIRECTORSHIP AND SUPPORT
ACQUISITIONS**

**THE MEAD WILL ALSO PRESENT 60 WORKS FROM THE WIELANDS IN
HOUSE: SELECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTION OF JOHN AND SUE WIELAND
OPENING FEBRUARY 8, 2018**

Amherst, MA—January 11, 2018—The Mead Art Museum at Amherst College announced today that it has received a gift of \$3 million from John Wieland '58 and his wife Sue to endow the Mead Director and Chief Curator position and to support contemporary art acquisitions. Long-time supporters of Amherst College and the Mead, the Wielands decided to make their gift to indicate support for a larger set of initiatives at the Museum that have included, over the last two years, a comprehensive reinstallation of the collection and an increased focus on cultivating exhibitions and programs that bring new, international voices to Amherst and more actively engage campus audiences.

“We are deeply grateful to John and Sue Wieland for this generous gift to Amherst and for their commitment to ensuring that the Mead’s exhibitions, educational programming and collection-building continue to serve and delight everyone in our community and beyond,” said Amherst College President Biddy Martin. “Endowing the Mead Directorship and providing support for acquisitions ensures that the museum will remain an essential contributor to Amherst’s excellence.”

In conjunction with the gift, the Mead will present a special exhibition of works from the Wielands’ collection, featuring nearly 60 pieces by more than 30 artists, including Louise Bourgeois, Edward Burtynsky, Robert Gober, Félix González-Torres, Martha Rosler, Cindy Sherman and Ai Weiwei. *HOUSE: Selections from the Collection of John and Sue Wieland* will open at the Mead on February 8 and remain on view until July 1.

“Visits to the Mead were a formative part of my experience at Amherst, though I certainly could not have predicted at the time that I would be so fortunate as to have a collection of my own,” said John Wieland '58. “Sue and I are thrilled to be able to support the Museum with a gift that will sustain the institution over time, and give back to the College in a way that is deeply meaningful for us personally. It is also a great pleasure to be able to share our passion for art with the Amherst community through this exhibition.”

HOUSE: Selections from the Collection of John and Sue Wieland draws on the couple’s trove of more than 400 contemporary artworks by over 300 artists, all of which engage with the idea of the house as a fundamental element of people’s lives, an interest driven by Wieland’s professional life as a home-builder. In some cases—as with Olafur Eliasson’s C-prints series *The Hut* (2012), or Félix González-Torres’ *Untitled* (1988) C-print jigsaw puzzle of a small shack

in the woods—the works speak to the modest but necessary structures people may inhabit in a wide range of environments.

Other works from the collection depict the house as a home, a place of pride for Americans. Greg Stimac's series of prints of homeowners mowing their lawns, in places as far from each other as Chandler, Arizona, and Mentor, Ohio, evokes this sensibility. The ten photomontages in Martha Rosler's *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (c. 1967-1972) also address this, adding complexity to the notion of the American home during the Vietnam era.

"We are so grateful to John and Sue for their contribution to the Mead, and for sharing key works from their collection with the Amherst community," said David E. Little, Mead Director and Chief Curator. "An exhibition like *HOUSE* is perfect for a college art museum, with opportunities to engage a range of campus audiences, particularly those outside the visual arts. I have wanted to show works from the Wielands' collection for some time and am so glad they agreed. That the Wielands have come forward with endowment support for the Museum, too, reflects their generosity and commitment to us and, ultimately, to the Amherst students of the future."

As part of the exhibition opening on February 8, Wieland and Little will give a public talk about the exhibition from 5–6 p.m. in Stirn Auditorium at Amherst College. An opening reception with remarks from President Martin will follow from 6–7:30 p.m. in the Mead.

Over the last two years, the Mead has undergone a series of changes to expand its role as a centerpiece of student life and liberal arts education at Amherst College. In addition to the reinstallation of the collection, the Mead launched two ongoing contemporary art series. For the *Rotherwas Project* series, a contemporary artist takes over the Museum's beautiful, 17th Century oak-paneled Rotherwas Room to transform the space and create visually compelling juxtapositions between past and present. Participating artists include Amanda Valdez, Kota Ezawa and Saya Woolfalk. In the *Hall Walls* series, a contemporary artist is invited to transform an interstitial space at the Museum into a site-specific temporary art installation; the first participating artist was Rico Gatson, and the second is Tatiana Potts, whose work will remain on view until December 30.

In the last year, the Museum has added more than 120 works to its collection, with an emphasis on expanding its contemporary art program and working to diversify its collection. The Mead has also benefited from significant gifts from alumni to fill important gaps in historic art. Last year, Dr. K. Frank Austen '50, Amherst Life Trustee, and Jocelyn C. Austen, donated 29 drawings, etchings, and lithographs, including works by Albrecht Durer, Lucas van Leyden, Rembrandt, Jacques Chollot, William Hogarth, and Egon Schiele.

About The Wielands

Sue and John Wieland began collecting art in the mid-1980s, and ultimately decided to focus their purchases on art that features a house, a reflection of John's business as a homebuilder in the Southeast. While their early acquisitions concentrated on artists working in the United States, in 2005 they expanded to international artists. In 2010 the Wielands created the

wareHOUSE, a storage and presentation venue located in Atlanta's Westside neighborhood, where the majority of the artwork now resides.

Their collection, curated by Rebecca Dimling Cochran, includes contemporary artists who work in painting, photography, sculpture, installation and video. Highlights include pieces by Vito Acconci, Doug Aitkin, John Baldessari, Jennifer Bartlett, Robert Bechtle, Hans op de Beeck, Louise Bourgeois, Gregory Crewdson, Olafur Eliasson, Mitch Epstein, Katharina Fritsch, Robert Gober, David Goldblatt, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Alex Katz, Wolfgang Laib, Ed Ruscha, Joel Shapiro, Joel Sternfeld, Ai Weiwei, and Rachel Whiteread.

About the Mead Art Museum

Situated in the vibrant Five Colleges academic community of western Massachusetts, the Mead Art Museum serves as a laboratory for interdisciplinary research and innovative teaching involving original works of art. An accredited member of the American Alliance of Museums, the Mead participates in Museums10, a regional cultural collaboration. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. year-round, and until midnight on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday during the academic term. Admission to the museum is free and open to the public. For more information, including a searchable catalogue of the collection and a complete schedule of exhibitions and events, visit amherst.edu/mead.

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