

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 28, 2016



FOR MORE INFORMATION
Contact: Kimberly Rogers
901.678.4164
krogers@memphis.edu

AMUM Celebrates 35 Years With a Special Birthday Surprise

The Art Museum of the University of Memphis is turning 35 this year, and as a special treat will present “This May Surprise You,” an exhibition featuring the hidden gems in its collections. The exhibition will open Friday, Oct. 14, with a reception from 5 to 7:30 p.m. and run through Dec. 17.

To commemorate its milestone, AMUM will take a new look at the collection that has been built over three-and-a-half decades. The display will feature work that has rarely or never been seen and include items they have had for years as well as newly acquired pieces.

Among the items to be included are: a 200-year-old Japanese book made of rice paper, which will be displayed with one of two full-Japanese armor suits AMUM has in its possession; newly acquired works by Josef Albers, an abstract artist who was instrumental in bringing the tenets of European modernism to America; a royal chair with human figures made of brass; a 16th-century illustrated book about Aztec culture; a fifth-sixth century Egyptian textile with dancers; indigo wrap for a wealthy African woman; and a newly revealed Egyptian snake mummy.

When AMUM opened on Oct. 18, 1981, as Memphis State University Gallery in the newly built Communication and Fine Arts Building, the Department of Art was poised to deposit Egyptian antiquities purchased from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, an assortment of prints and objects acquired for teaching purposes and a loaned collection of African art.

During its first years the gallery accepted, without plan or policy, many other gifts, including ancient Roman vessels and statuettes, Native American textiles, pre-Columbian miniature ceramics, masks and textiles produced by several world cultures and illustrated woodblock and engraved publications, as well as assorted paintings, drawings and prints. Designed for temporary contemporary art exhibits, not collections, the gallery struggled to

3720 Alumni Avenue | Memphis, TN 38152

A Tennessee Board of Regents
Institution
An Equal Opportunity · Affirmative Action
University

accommodate both, and aside from permanent displays of Egyptian and African art, the objects in its care were seldom shown or used. By 1990, with ad hoc storage exhausted, collecting was radically curtailed.

Nine years later, after gradually converting offices and a gallery to more adequate collection storage, AMUM resumed strategic acquisitions in 2009 with Martha and Robert Fogelman's African collection gift, followed by Patricia Cloar Milsted's 2012 donation of Carroll Cloar's drawings and the 2013 gift of the William S. Huff collection of Samuel Hester Crone's drawings. Most recently, AMUM has acquired a significant group of works by the 20th-century master Joseph Albers.

For more information about AMUM, call 901.678.2224 or email amum@memphis.edu.

###