

PRESS RELEASE

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Bellevue Arts Museum presents 40-year survey of innovative sculptor Michael Cooper *Michael Cooper: A Sculptural Odyssey, 1968 - 2011* on view at BAM July 12 - October 9, 2011

Bellevue, WA – Bellevue Arts Museum, the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of art, craft and design, presents the work of one of the most innovative sculptors working today: Michael Cooper. *A Sculptural Odyssey, 1968 - 2011* traces over 40 years of the artist's poignant, often humorous, explorations into human nature and society's fascination with violence and power. From pistol-packing tricycles to curiously mobile forms of "furniture," Cooper's work investigates commonplace objects, transforming familiar icons into witty, fantastical works of art.

Over the past four decades, Cooper's artwork has become increasingly complex and multi-layered. At Bellevue Arts Museum, visitors will have an opportunity to see a selection of the artist's most thought-provoking sculptures, ranging from early explorations of functional forms to recent large-scale, mixed-media installations. The exhibition is anchored by a monumental, kinetic, computer-driven work entitled *How the West Was Won, How the West Was Lost*, a sculptural treatise on conquest, greed and lust for oil: concepts as topical today as they were when the artist began the work in 1977.

About Michael Cooper

Michael Cooper was born in Richmond, CA in 1943. He received his B.A. in Commercial Art (1966) and M.A. in Sculpture (1968) from San Jose State College, where he studied with eminent sculptor Fletcher Benton. Later, he obtained a M.F.A. in Sculpture (1969) from the University of California, Berkeley, studying with ceramicist Peter Voukos. During his extensive artistic career, he has won numerous grants and awards, most recently a Windgate Foundation Grant (2008 - 2011), and has been seen in solo and group exhibitions across the country. Cooper currently teaches at the California College of Art, San Francisco, CA as the Wornick Visiting Professor of Wood Arts.

Michael Cooper: A Sculptural Odyssey, 1968 - 2011 is organized by the Museum of Craft and Design with guest curator Harold B. Nelson, a specialist in contemporary craft and the decorative arts and Curator of American Decorative Arts, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, CA. Related programming has been made possible through funding from the Collectors of Wood Art. This exhibition has been made possible through funding from the Windgate Charitable Foundation.

RELATED PROGRAMS

Members' Only First Look: July 12, 10 - 11am

Free First Friday Lecture featuring Michael Cooper: August 5, 6:30 - 7:30pm

Get Crafty Saturdays! Kinetic Sculptures: August 6 & 13, 1 - 3pm

About Bellevue Arts Museum

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of art, craft, and design. The Museum connects people of all ages with the extraordinary works of Northwest artists while bringing national and international collections to its community. Dynamic educational programs provide unique opportunities to connect with art and artists; past or present, experimental or established. Each July, BAM hosts one of the largest and most treasured art festivals of the year, the Bellevue Arts Museum artsfair. BAM is located in the heart of downtown Bellevue, provides free parking and is wheelchair accessible. Please visit www.bellevuearts.org for details.

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