

**THE WEXNER CENTER REOPENS ITS GALLERIES WITH THE SUMPTUOUS,  
GROUNDBREAKING EXHIBITION *PART OBJECT PART SCULPTURE*  
From Marcel Duchamp and Louise Bourgeois to Robert Gober and Josiah  
McElheny, Exhibition Uncovers a New Genealogy of Contemporary Visual Art**

To reopen the extraordinary spaces of its restored and enhanced galleries, the Wexner Center for the Arts will present the groundbreaking exhibition ***Part Object Part Sculpture***, on view October 30, 2005 – February 26, 2006. Offering a surprising new genealogy of art since World War II, in which repetition is organic instead of solely industrial, and sculpture appeals as much to the unconscious as to the intellect, the exhibition features nearly 100 important works by renowned international figures.

Occupying all galleries of the Wexner Center, *Part Object Part Sculpture* includes major pieces on loan from public and private collections in the United States and abroad—many of them rarely seen in the U.S.—primarily spanning the 1940s to the present. Through them, the exhibition establishes a rich history of sculpture grounded in the handmade, the sensual, and the erotic, and explores the shifting boundaries between painting and sculpture, between sculpture and everyday objects.

“*Part Object Part Sculpture* is an intellectually provocative and erotically charged exhibition that will place the sculptural practice of the last half-century in an entirely new light,” says Wexner Center Director Sherri Geldin. “I believe this exhibition will aptly and exquisitely engage both the physical territory of the building and the conceptual territory of the center’s mission.

## From Duchamp to Today

*Part Object Part Sculpture* takes off from Molesworth's insights into two distinct but related bodies of work by Marcel Duchamp. The better-known pieces are Duchamp's "readymades": mass-produced items such as a coat rack, a bottle dryer, and (most notoriously) a urinal, which he exhibited around the time of World War I. When interest in Duchamp picked up in the 1960s, these readymades emerged for the first time as widely visible works—though not as the singular originals, which had long been lost, but as authorized copies, which were hand-crafted rather than mass-produced.

Although some might write off the paradox of the hand-made readymade to mere circumstance or convenience, Molesworth finds a precedent for the artful fashioning of these pseudo-industrial objects. Their forerunners, she argues, are a series of explicitly erotic, plaster-cast sculptures that Duchamp created in the 1950s: the phallic *Objet-Dard* (*Dart-Object*), *Coin de Chasteté* (*Wedge of Chastity*), and *Feuille de Vigne Femelle* (*Female Fig Leaf*). These intimate, reproducible, hand-made sculptures opened the way toward Duchamp's later, greatly influential editions of readymades. In so doing, they also established a mode of contemporary art that is concerned with the tactile and organic as much as the visual and conceptual—a kind of sculpture that grapples with, as Molesworth writes in her catalogue essay, "the knot of eroticism, repetition, and commodities" that ties together our daily lives.

*Part Object Part Sculpture* locates these key works by Duchamp within a stream of art-making that began in the 1940s, in which artists teased out relationships between the body and things, art and commodities, objects and their makers. Among the first pieces to be seen in the exhibition are examples from the 1940s through the 1960s of totemlike "personages" by Louise Bourgeois; paintings that behave like sculptures, and sculptures that look like objects, by Alberto Burri, Lucio Fontana, and Piero Manzoni; the

suggestive, painted, wall-mounted reliefs of Lee Bontecou; and Eva Hesse's playful, three-dimensional paintings in mixed media.

The exhibition's next gallery will feature intimate, tantalizingly tactile works by Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Cy Twombly, as well as Duchamp's erotic sculptures. The exhibition's third gallery is devoted to such humorous, eccentric works as Marcel Broodthaers's casseroles overflowing with mussels, Yayoi Kusama's objects swarming with clusters of stuffed fabric, Allan McCollum's monumental *Perfect Vehicles*, and Rachel Whiteread's subtle casting of everyday objects that evoke traces of the body.

The exhibition reaches the present day in the fourth and final gallery. This section of *Part Object Part Sculpture*, which includes pieces by Gabriel Orozco and Robert Gober, culminates in the installation of a new work by Josiah McElheny, a 10-foot chandelier commissioned by the Wexner Center and created during the artist's residency there. This enormous glass "light fixture," hung just 6 inches off the floor, was designed by McElheny in a year-long collaboration with such Ohio State departments as astronomy, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, and architecture, and evokes the birth of the universe in the Big Bang.

### **Major Catalogue to Accompany the Exhibition**

In conjunction with *Part Object Part Sculpture*, the Wexner Center for the Arts and Penn State University Press will co-publish a fully illustrated catalogue, with a lead essay and catalogue entries by Helen Molesworth, and essays by some of the most important figures working in modern and contemporary art today. The catalogue will offer a fresh assessment of Duchamp's readymades of the 1960s, juxtaposing these works with Duchamp's more intimate hand-made objects, such as *Female Fig Leaf*. Together with the exhibition, it will transform current scholarship on Duchamp and subsequent

artists. Contributors include: Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, chief curator of the Castello di Rivoli, on the influence of Italian artists Burri, Fontana, and Manzoni on Americans Rauschenberg, Twombly, and Bontecou; Rosalind Krauss (Columbia University) on the problem of “medium”; Rachel Haidu (University of Rochester) on Manzoni and Broodthaers; David Joselit (Yale University) on the biological model of the swarm and mold in the work; Briony Fer (University College of London) on Hesse and Orozco; and Molly Nesbit (Vassar College) on Duchamp and Orozco.

The 8x10, 224-page catalogue features 130 color and 20 black-and-white illustrations and is designed by noted graphic artist Lorraine Wild. The book is available clothbound for \$34.95. ISBN 0-271-02855-6.

### **Special Outreach Programs to Include Symposium, Lectures, Tours**

The Wexner Center will host a symposium in late 2005, featuring all contributors to the catalogue, as well as residency artists, faculty, and staff from The Ohio State University and the Wexner Center and other art historians, artists, critics, and scholars.

In addition, the Wexner Center will offer artists' lectures, public tours, and other outreach programs for its various publics throughout the run of the exhibition.

### **Exhibition Organization and Support**

*Part Object Part Sculpture* is organized by Helen Molesworth, chief curator of exhibitions, the Wexner Center for the Arts. Major support for the exhibition has been provided by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Additional support is provided by the Nimoy Foundation, The Judith Rothschild Foundation, Greater Columbus Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation. (Partial list of funders.)