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The Year of the Woman: The Ideal and the Real

Timken Museum of Art Launches First Exhibition of 2020: *Captivating Women from the Dijkstra Collection*

The Year of the Woman also marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution giving women the right to vote.

With the start of the new year, the **Timken Museum of Art**, located in San Diego's Balboa Park has designated 2020 as ***The Year of the Woman: The Ideal and the Real***. The Timken is in good company since many American institutions—including the National Gallery of Art—are also marking the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote, by celebrating women's contributions to the cultural landscape in the past 100 years.

According to **Megan Pogue**, the Timken's executive director, "Paying tribute to this landmark legislation and important moment in history, the Timken will concentrate its curatorial efforts in 2020 on women's roles as creators of and inspirations for important works of art." This thematic focus is exemplified by the museum's upcoming exhibition, ***Captivating Women from the Dijkstra Collection*** (San Diego-based collectors, **Bram and Sandra Dijkstra**), which will be on display at the Timken, February 11 - May 10, 2020.

Among the nine works that will be on display are: Wilhelm Vita (Austrian, 1846-1919), *Scheherazade*, c. 1891, oil on canvas, 74 x 114 in.; Ella Ferris Pell (American, 1846-1922), *Salomé*, 1890, oil on canvas, 52 x 34 in.; and Robert McGregor (Scottish, 1847-1922), *Till Eve Again Recalls Them Loaded Home*, c. 1891, oil on canvas, 24 x 36 in.

Women have long been a favorite subject of artists. In the late 19th century painters in both the United States and Europe could choose between academic representations and more modernist approaches of depicting the human form. The nude female body was at the center of academic training typically offered at prestigious schools like the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris or the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. However, with the rise of interest in abstraction in modern art, the preference for realistic depictions gave way to more subjective ideas of about how best to represent the human form. *Captivating Women* will include examples of both academic and more modernist representations. Women were shown

in dramatic narrative fashion or, alternatively, as subjects of quiet contemplation. The stylistic variations often reflect a shift in artistic priorities from one era to another, as well as the different sensibilities of individual artists.

Building on the 2020 theme, *The Year of the Woman: The Ideal and the Real*, the Museum's first exhibition took shape in part due to an undergraduate art history course, *Collections, Collecting, Collectors*, taught by **Derrick Cartwright, PhD**, who serves as the Timken's director of curatorial affairs as well as a professor of art history at University of San Diego. Twenty students in his course were given the opportunity to visit the Dijkstras' home and select five works that most intrigued them. Cartwright then chose several additional works that complemented the students' selections.

"It is rare for undergraduates to be given the chance to 'curate' an exhibition in a public museum like the Timken," stated Cartwright. "Demystifying museum work helps to educate the students while allowing us to learn from their fresh perspectives on the past. The Dijkstra's remarkable collection provided a rich archive for the class' selections and gave these bright young curators an opportunity to explore in depth the pivotal role of women as both subjects and makers of great art."

Bram and Sandra Dijkstra are well-known for their 19th and 20th century art collections which they have acquired over the past 40 years. Bram is a retired professor of English literature at University of California at San Diego. He is the author of seven books on literary and artistic subjects including two books relevant to the exhibition's theme and art: *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-siècle Culture* and *Evil Sisters: The Threat of Female Sexuality and the Cult of Manhood*. He also has curated art exhibitions and written catalog essays for several San Diego art museums. Sandra is a respected literary agent who covers the topics of history, politics, current affairs, business and science. She is best known for representing such authors as Maxine Hong Kingston, Amy Tan and Lisa See along with Pulitzer Prize-winning Eric Foner.

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Captivating Women from the Dijkstra Collection

February 11 – May 10, 2020

Tuesday-Saturday: 10am to 4:30pm; Sunday: Noon to 4:30pm

Closed on Monday

Admission: Always Free

Timken Museum of Art

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