

Fine Art Museum
Western Carolina University

FACT SHEET

History:

WCU was founded in 1889 and the former Belk Gallery, from which the Fine Art Museum has emerged, was established in 1970. The Fine Art Museum, which officially opened its doors in 2005, continues the strong academic and contemporary art exhibition program of the Belk Gallery. The missions of the Fine Art Museum serves as a cultural catalyst to celebrate and preserve the artistic legacy of the western North Carolina region with a developing focus to collect interpret and showcase innovation in contemporary art of high artistic merit.

About the Architecture:

Award-Winning Architects

The design for the 122,000-square-foot facility was a result of Gund Partnership's (Cambridge, MA) bold interpretation of the grandeur of the Great Smoky Mountains. Partnership staff visited the Joyce Kilmer National Forest and were inspired by the spiritual and cultural home of the Cherokee. The architect's profound experience of Western North Carolina's regional history, diverse mountain culture and vernacular local architecture led to Gund's FAPAC design.

Cherokee Influence

Situated in the lush and temperate Cullowhee Valley, the site of several early Cherokee settlements, the Fine and Performing Arts Center features numerous Cherokee-inspired design elements. In the main atrium, the tile floor design of a seven-pointed star represents the seven Cherokee clans. Bilingual signage throughout the facility uses English and the Cherokee syllabary, developed in 1809 by Sequoyah to give his people their first written language.

Programs:

Exhibits & Guest Speakers

Past guest artists and critics include Nicholas Africano, Vito Acconci, Rudy Burkhardt, Harry Callahan, Fielding Dawson, Leon Golub, Lucy Lippard, John Perrault, Peter Schjeldahl, and many other noted artists, writers, and critics. Exhibitions over the years have maintained a strong commitment to contemporary ideas and issues, social, political, religious/spiritual, gender, cross cultural diaspora, media innovation, critical thinking, collaboration and engagement with the university and the regional community.

Collection

The *WORLDVIEWS* exhibit is an ongoing selection from the permanent collection. Although the central theme of the *WORLDVIEWS* program is to do just that, include artistic global viewpoints, specific exhibition goals change to address current and ongoing curatorial research of the Museum's collection. Works in the collection include New York School artists, major work by Kenneth Noland and new acquisitions by local, regional, national and international artists. (Please see Attachment 2, section d for more information about artists in the collection).

Public Art on Campus

After nearly twenty years of hosting Outdoor Sculpture Competitions, Western Carolina University is now taking the next step in its commitment to the research of contemporary public art. Western Carolina University is implementing an exciting Public Art Master Plan in conjunction with the current Campus Master Plan which will continue to support outdoor sculpture competitions and integrate public art in future campus development. The current outdoor sculpture collection hosts nine works throughout campus.

Contact:

Fine Art Museum

Western Carolina University

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