

Bechtler Museum of Modern Art Presents
Wrestling the Angel:
A Century of Artists Reckoning With Religion
March 23 — September 9, 2018

(CHARLOTTE, NC)—From March 23, 2018 through September 9, 2018, the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art in Charlotte, North Carolina, will present *Wrestling the Angel: A Century of Artists Reckoning With Religion*, an exhibition that examines how religion and sacred art appear in work made by seemingly secular, avant-garde artists. The examples on view critically investigate the role of religion and spirituality as both a social component and as a visual language often implicitly present in daily life, even if the image is not explicitly referencing the original religious source.

Religious practices and spiritual contemplation have been integral to object-making throughout recorded history. Many disciplines study the practice, but most stop abruptly with the modern era. Yet numerous artists over the last two centuries have acknowledged that a religious upbringing, spiritual practice or sacred art impact their work, whether overtly or obliquely. This effect can be seen in diverse ways—aesthetically, thematically and formally.

In each case, these artists address how spiritual pursuits manifest themselves in contemporary life, whether they appear in traditional or colloquial guises, and the critical presentation of *Wrestling the Angel* will encourage viewers to consider how these practices continue to define societies and their relationships to each other and the larger world.

“Religion and spirituality are both omnipresent and taboo; it’s essential to learn how to talk about them,” writes Bechtler Curator Dr. Jennifer Sudul Edwards. “Artists have been inspired by these topics for centuries—the objects in this show are filled with bravery, intelligence, and beauty. Religion still inspires battles around the world, but I hope here in Charlotte, these artworks inspire dialogue.”

Wrestling the Angel draws heavily upon works from the Bechtler collection, including Georges Rouault, Alfred Manessier, Niki de Saint Phalle, Max Hunziker, and Sam Francis. In addition, several contemporary artists from the Carolinas region are also represented, such as Romare Bearden, Linda Foad Roberts, Julio Gonzalez, Herb Jackson, Stacy Lynn Waddell, Cristina Córdova, and former McColl Center artist in residence, Tom Thoune. Of the 219 works on view, 193 are from the collection and 97 of those have never been included in a Bechtler exhibition. 26 of the works are on loan from private collections, foundations, and galleries.

SPONSORSHIP

Wrestling the Angel: A Century of Artists Reckoning With Religion, was made possible through the generous support of our sponsors, MetLife Foundation, Abundant Power, Ernst & Young, Parker Poe, as well as individual sponsors Cyndee and Robert Patterson; and Cassandra and David Wagner.

SOCIAL MEDIA

When posting about *Wrestling the Angel: A Century of Artists Reckoning With Religion* on social media, please use the official hashtag: **#WrestlingTheAngel**. Follow the Bechtler on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, **@theBechtler**.

ABOUT THE BECHTLER MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art is dedicated to the exhibition of mid-20th-century modern art. It is named after the family of Andreas Bechtler who assembled a collection created by many of the seminal figures of modernism. The museum is located at Levine Center of the Arts, 420 South Tryon Street, Charlotte, North Carolina 28202. Operating hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sunday 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.; closed Tuesdays. For museum details, visit www.bechtler.org.

ARTWORK IMAGES: Artwork images from *Wrestling the Angel: A Century of Artists Reckoning With Religion* are available upon request. Contact, Sharon Holm, Bechtler Museum of Modern Art Director of Marketing and Communications at sharon.holm@bechtler.org or office 704.353.9204 / mobile 704.975.2363.

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