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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUSEUM OF ART TO SHOWCASE THE WORK OF GERMAN ARTIST SIGMAR POLKE

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art announces the opening of Sigmar Polke: Editions 1966-1995. The exhibition will open with a public reception on Sunday, June 9 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. It will remain on view through September 8, 1996.

The exhibition is a chronological retrospective of Polke’s editioned work. On view will be more than 70 prints, multiples, artist’s books, catalogues, and other projects, a comprehensive archive acquired by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. The editions constitute the largest holding of Polke’s work in an American museum. In these works, a merging of sources, combined with Polke’s freshly unorthodox approach to printmaking, creates a body of graphic work rich with multiple interpretations and visual impressions.

The Artist

Born in 1941 in Oels, Silesia (what was at the time the Eastern part of Germany, and now part of Poland), Polke emigrated to West Germany in 1953 at the age of 12. One of his first jobs, at age 18, was as an apprentice for a glass painter, a job which influenced his later penchant for translucent surfaces. In 1961 Polke enrolled in the Düsseldorf art academy, where he produced his first significant paintings and drawings. While a student, he was exposed to the work of his senior German compatriot, Joseph Beuys. He also became aware of Pop art, a movement unfolding in the United States that broke many of the established “rules” of painting. Of particular influence on Polke were such Americans as Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol, who addressed issues of mass culture in their work by directly referencing the banality of mainstream consumerism.
In 1963 Sigmar Polke, along with fellow Düsseldorf art academy students Gerhard Richter and Konrad Fischer-Lueg, founded a movement that they coined “Capitalist Realism,” a rhetorical play on “Socialist Realism,” the official style of East Germany at the time. Polke's early paintings of this period, like many of the American Pop paintings, used appropriated imagery, often applied by commercial techniques such as silk-screen, photographic transfer, or stenciling.

In the 1970s Polke spent little time painting but instead traveled with his camera to Paris, New York, Brazil, Afghanistan, and Pakistan photographing the homeless and others on the margins of mainstream society. This was not a complete departure from the techniques and concerns of his earlier work in painting, but was a rich source for innovation that expanded his earlier approaches. The darkroom was a laboratory in which Polke could explore infinite mutations of imagery using countless photographic papers and chemical solutions. Polke's prolific output of photographic work over the past 30 years has been significant and immensely influential on his work in other media.

Sigmar Polke: Editions 1966-1995 was organized by Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. It is made possible by a grant from DataCard Corporation.

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The exhibition is free and open to the public. All campus parking lots are accessible to the public on weekends. For further information, to make arrangements for group tours or accommodation on the basis of disability, please call (405) 325-3272.

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We can also talk about Hopi ceramics. I'm really weak on both subject.