pop

Treasure trove

Pieces from Eugene B. Adkins collection on display at Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art

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Other pieces from collection to be on display at Tulsa museum

By Juliana Parker and Adam Scott
Transcript Staff Writers

An art collection too big for one museum to hold is opening in separate exhibits this weekend at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, 500 W. Boyd St., and Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa.

It's not normal to split a collection like this, said Clifton d'Humières, director of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. However, the two museums are working well together, he said. The exhibits at each one will have different focuses.

Philbrook's collection will be smaller — only about 40-50 items because they will open their permanent collection at an earlier date than the Fred Jones museum, d'Humières said.

"In the beginning, when Mr. Adkins died, a little more than two years ago, the collection was held by the Adkins Foundation," Judy Ward, communications manager for Philbrook Museum of Art, said in an interview March 5. "The foundation asked for museums around the nation to submit proposals for how they'd like to display and promote the collection. Several museums, including the Denver Art Museum and the Fred Jones Museum in Arizona, made proposals. In the end, the decision was to combine the Fred Jones proposal and the Philbrook proposal into the Oklahoma proposal."

There are about 250 items in the Fred Jones museum exhibit, with some ranging from painting to pottery.

This has been a very quick preparation for the Fred Jones museum, d'Humières said. Normally, he said, exhibits are planned out in advance.

One was planned in only about four months. Usually museums plan exhibits about three years in advance.

Native American jewelry and silverwork from the Adkins collection are on display at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, 555 Elm Ave.

"It's been a challenge, but the exhibition will be ready to open officially today," d'Humières said in an interview Feb. 13. "It will be perfectly on time and on budget, and it will be a great deal," he said.

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d'Humières said.

"I like to organize things so it was a great time for me because it was a great challenge," he said.

Ward said the exhibit at Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa will include "about 45 pieces from the collection" at any given time, which will be rotated out from time to time.

The University of Oklahoma found out they would share the exhibit with Philbrook in July. D'Humières came to his position at the museum in September from his job as director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

"It's been five months and I've had a blast — worked nonstop, but I've got it," d'Humières said.

On his first meeting with OU President David Boren Oct. 1, Boren asked d'Humières to put on the exhibit.

In the long-term, d'Humières said the museum would build an entirely new wing for the Adkins collection to be displayed permanently. Construction on that wing won't begin before late 2010, though. So Boren wanted to celebrate receiving the collection, by quickly showing part of it before then, d'Humières said.

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This one even has a few more complications because there is no complete inventory of the Adkins collection. As a result, the items in the collection are being assessed, too. An outside curator was called in to determine if the items are stable enough to show in public.

Two experts from Dallas were brought in to report on the condition of the art and make any repairs and restorations needed.

This collection is also more complicated to exhibit because there are lots of different mediums of art: Pottery, textiles, paintings on canvas, paintings on paper, et cetera.

"There's a total of approximately 3,500 pieces total in the collection. There's a lot of jewelry, paintings and pots, just a breathtaking collection," Ward said.

A great deal of forethought must go into displaying each piece, d'Humières said. For example, mountings must be made for each piece of jewelry, he said.

D'Humières planned the layout using a computer program to map out exactly where each piece of art should be displayed. Then workers followed the printouts as they hung the paintings and placed the other items on display.

This is the first time the museum has used the software, but it's been helpful, d'Humières said.

Lighting is the final step in preparation. Each piece of art must be lit correctly to perfecting the lighting usually takes the last two full days of preparation.

"Eugene B. Adkins collected lots of art in the New Mexico area but he never had another home so he brought it back with him to Oklahoma, to Tulsa," Ward said.

"That's what makes it special to have these pieces a native son collected here in Oklahoma," it is a great honor that OU was chosen to house part of the collection, d'Humières said. The collection is vast and has never been seen in public before, he said.

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art was chosen partly because it would be used in an educational component and also because the museum planned to build a new wing to house it.

"We warranted to give a good display, a beautiful display," d'Humières said.

The museum will promote the exhibit in the local, statewide and international scale, he said. Museum staff will also organize a traveling exhibition of the works, which will visit places in the state and the rest of the country.

"The reason we got it is because we committed to really keep the legacy of Adkins and the legacy of Oklahoma together," d'Humières said.

GALLERIES

Blue Apples Gallery, 800 W. Rock Creek Road, Suite 117 — Portraits and Narratives, featuring paintings by Norman artist Tom Detheims, continues. Showings by artists known area wide in ceramic, sculpture, jewelry, painting, mixed media and drawing. Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday and Wednesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. Call 329-6555.

Dreamer Concepts Studio and Foundation, 426 E. Main St. — Dreamer? Heartburn featuring works by Sheila Alkham, Debbie Astbury, Debbie Curtis, d.g. s Yuanling, Michael Wilson. Klint Schor and Jesse Martin continue. Guest curator is Stephanie Jung. Open noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Membership Drive continues. Call 701-0049 or visit www.dreamerconcepts.org for more information.

Galleries are available Monday through Friday. Call 329-9523 or visit www.normanrehouse.com.

PLANNED EVENTS:

In the Basement Studio and Gallery, Paseo District, OKC — Opening tonight exhibition of works by Jack Hill. Call 525-2161.

Istvan Gallery, 1218 N. Western Ave., OKC — Exhibition of works by Annalisa Campbell, Shannon Oder continues. Call 831-2874.


MainStreet: Contemporary Art, 122 E. Main St. — Through March 25, exhibit of works by J. Michelle Martin-Coyne and Jeff Dudd. Call 222-8055 or visit www.mainstreetart.com/exhibitdocument.html


Oklahoma Indian Art Gallery, 2331 SW 44th St., OKC — Call 655-1625.


Standing Buffalo Art Gallery, 150 E. Main St., Suite 403, Oklahoma City — From March 30, "Highlights from the Adkins Collection," no admission charge today through Sunday. No charge for admission Tuesdays. Tuesday, guitar concert by Larry Harnett Studios. For more information, call 222-3572 or visit www.ou.edu/mfa.

Moore-Lindsay House, 508 N. Peters Ave. — Open for tour Wed-Sat 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sun 1-4 p.m. Call 222-0102 or visit www.norman-artistshouse.org.


MUSEUMS


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