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May 15, 2014

Dual Shows at Indiana State Museum, Herron School of Art and Design, re-create an Indianapolis art scene of the 80s and 90s

The Indiana State Museum and Herron School of Art and Design have collaborated to present a window into the Indianapolis art scene of the early 1980s and 1990s. The iconic institutions will exhibit 431 Gallery: Art and Impact and Ed Sanders/Life and Art, respectively.

A June 27 opening reception featuring passed hors d’oeuvres, beverages and live music will begin at the museum from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., and continue at Herron from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Ticket information is available at the Indiana State Museum ticket counter, 317-232-1637.

431 Gallery: Art and Impact will feature a partial re-creation of the gallery, where visitors can view two- and three-dimensional works by former Herron students from the original cooperative. The exhibition is funded in part by the Buckingham Foundation, the Arts Council of Indianapolis and the City of Indianapolis and is free with museum admission after the opening reception.

“The 431 Gallery was one of the original galleries operating on Massachusetts Avenue from 1984 to 1993,” said Mark Ruschman, the museum’s curator of fine art. “The area is considered Indianapolis’ first arts district and was integral in driving the downtown renaissance. The exhibition will connect many people to a time in Indianapolis (more)
(continued) when there were few venues for artists to showcase cutting-edge, contemporary works." Featured artists include Bill Adkins, Anita Giddings, Larry Kline, Carla Knopp, Steve Paddock and Ed Sanders. 431 Gallery: Art and Impact will continue through September 14.

Ed Sanders/Life and Art is a posthumous, solo exhibition of paintings and drawings. Critics and fellow artists recognized the Herron graduate as a major figure in the Indianapolis art scene of the time. He died in 2006 at the age of 59.

Bret Waller, director emeritus of the Indianapolis Museum of Art, organized the exhibition and authored the companion, illustrated catalog. He said Sanders supported himself by architectural work during the day, painting in his studio until late at night, producing a remarkable body of work. One observer wrote, “[I]t often seemed that Ed was trying to tackle bigger game than most artists attempted, here or anywhere else. Ed’s paintings seemed like a no-holds-barred wrestling match with existence ... he painted as if painting really mattered, as if truth itself depended on it.”

Ed Sanders/Life and Art, in the Berkshire, Reese and Paul galleries of Herron’s Eskenazi Hall, will bring together important works spanning Sanders’ quarter-century career. The free exhibition will continue through July 24.

On Saturday, June 28, there will be two panel discussions related to the exhibitions, funded by the Efroymson Family Fund, a CICF Fund, and moderated by Steve Mannheimer, a professor in the School of Informatics at IUPUI who, as a professor of painting at Herron, challenged his students to create the 431 Gallery and David Hoppe, contributing editor at NUVO. Panelists will include Bill Adkins, David Andrichik, Dave Lawrence, Richard Emery Nickolson, Mark Ruschman, Constance Scopelitis, Joyce Sommers and Jim Walker.

431 Gallery, a conversation about the gallery’s role and impact on the Central Indiana art scene, will take place from 10:00 a.m. to noon in the museum’s Dean and Barbara White Auditorium. Our Journey: 30 Years of Art, a look at what’s next for the larger art scene in Indiana, will take place from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Herron School of Art and Design’s Basile Auditorium. Both exhibitions will be open. The discussions are free and open to the public, but due to limited seating, reservations are required. R.S.V.P. by calling the museum at 317-232-1637. The deadline is June 22.

“This is the first time Herron and the Indiana State Museum have partnered on a major program, and we’re excited about it,” said Ruschman. “Since the 431 Gallery was founded by former Herron students, and Ed Sanders was a founding member, the collaboration on the exhibitions and panel discussions makes perfect sense.” For more details, Ruschman can be reached at 317-232-1633 or by email at mruschman@indianamuseum.org, or visit the museum website at www.indianamuseum.org. -30-