



**SMART MUSEUM OF ART**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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*For Immediate Release*



“One of the most important Midwestern contributions to the development of American art”

***MONSTER ROSTER: EXISTENTIALIST ART IN POSTWAR CHICAGO***  
**RECEIVES FIRST MAJOR EXHIBITION, AT UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO'S**  
**SMART MUSEUM OF ART, FEBRUARY 11 – JUNE 12, 2016**

**Related programming highlights include film screenings, monthly Family Day activities,  
and a *Monster Mash Up* expert panel discussion**

(January 11, 2016) The **Smart Museum of Art** at the University of Chicago, 5550 S. Greenwood Avenue, will mount ***Monster Roster: Existentialist Art in Postwar Chicago***, the first-ever major exhibition to examine the history and impact of the Monster Roster, a group of postwar artists that established the first unique Chicago style, **February 11–June 12, 2016**. The exhibition is curated by John Corbett and Jim Dempsey, independent curators and gallery owners; Jessica Moss, Smart Museum Curator of Contemporary Art; and Richard A. Born, Smart Museum Senior Curator. ***Monster Roster* officially opens with a free public reception, Wednesday, February 10, 7–9pm** featuring an in-gallery performance by the Josh Berman Trio.

The Monster Roster was a fiercely independent group of mid-century artists, spearheaded by **Leon Golub** (1922–2004), which created deeply psychological works drawing on classical mythology, ancient art, and a shared persistence in depicting the figure during a period in which abstraction held sway in international art circles.

“The Monster Roster represents the first group of artists in Chicago to assert its own style and approach—one not derived from anywhere else—and is one of the most important Midwestern contributions to the development of American art,” said co-curator John Corbett. “Their work was gnarly, nasty, and out of step with prevailing trends. Working at a remove from the country’s contemporary art discourse, they synthesized many disparate influences into a distinctive and powerful vision of humanity at mid-century.”

The exhibition examines not only the complex aesthetics and personal styles of Golub and his compatriots but also uncovers the Monster Roster’s relationships with preceding generations of Chicago artists and differences from the well-known Chicago Imagists who followed. *Monster Roster* brings together over 60 major paintings, sculpture, and works on paper from

the Smart Museum and other major collections in order to provide the definitive account of the movement, from the formation of *Exhibition Momentum* in 1948 to the group's dispersal in the mid-1960s.

Artists include **Robert Barnes, Don Baum, Fred Berger, Cosmo Campoli, George Cohen, Dominick Di Meo, Leon Golub, Theodore Halkin, June Leaf, Arthur Lerner, Irving Petlin, Seymour Rosofsky, Franz Schulze, Nancy Spero, Evelyn Statsinger, and H. C. Westermann.**

*Monster Roster* will be accompanied by a comprehensive publication—the first of its kind—that includes an introductory essay by critic and collector Dennis Adrian; an overview of the Monster Roster by Corbett; a discussion of Monster Roster prints; a personal reflection from artist Arlene Shechet; an essay on Golub; and an introduction to the historical context surrounding the group's emergence in the 1950s, and more. The publication will also contain full-color reproductions of all work on view in the exhibition, a detailed chronology, and extensive reproductions of ephemera and historical photographs. The book will be distributed by the University of Chicago Press.

Among related public programming highlights are *A Night with Filmmaker Tom Palazzolo*, a screening of works by this documentarian who honed his experimental skills studying and working with artists of the Monster Roster (March 11); monthly Family Day activities offering hands-on craft activities inspired by the work of Monster Roster artists (the first Saturday in March-June); and *Monster Mash Up*, an expert panel discussion on the context of postwar Chicago with author Thomas Dyja, plus Lynne Warren and Mark Pascale, curators at the MCA and Art Institute of Chicago, respectively, and Monster Roster co-Curator John Corbett (March 22), and a tour led by curators Corbett, Dempsey, and Moss (June 5).

**More information on *Monster Roster: Existentialist Art in Postwar Chicago* and related programming can be found at [smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/exhibitions/monster-roster-existentialist-art-in-postwar-chicago](http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/exhibitions/monster-roster-existentialist-art-in-postwar-chicago)**

### **About the Smart Museum of Art**

The Smart Museum of Art offers an intimate environment for bold encounters with art. Both fueling and expressing the creative energy of the University of Chicago, the Smart opens the world to boundary-breaking art and ideas through innovative special exhibitions, ever-changing programs, and distinctive collections.

### **Hours**

The Smart Museum is open Tuesday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m., and Thursday evenings until 8 p.m. Galleries are closed Mondays and holidays. **The Smart is open to all and admission is always free.**

### **Mission**

The Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago opens the world through art and ideas.

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### **Headline image credits (left to right)**

George M. Cohen, *Man with a Dog*, c. 1950, Oil on board. Courtesy George Cohen Estate. / Ted Halkin, *Angel*, 1953, Oil over gouache on board. Collection of the Illinois State Museum. / Seymour Rosofsky, *Patient in Dentist's Chair*, 1961, Oil on canvas. Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, Gift of the Rosofsky Estate, 2014.16.