



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

## ***The Metropol Drama***

*February 23–July 9, 2023 | Opening reception: Thursday, February 23, 5–7 pm*



**The University of Chicago’s Smart Museum of Art presents a kaleidoscopic exhibition that broadly speaks to “cosmopolitanism” and intersecting ideas about shared value, exchange, collective meaning, and interaction.**

The things we call art can, at their best, provide a way to peek a sideways glance at the emotions behind someone else’s human experience. *The Metropol Drama* proposes a way of looking at our aesthetic, economic, and emotional history that is rooted in the contradictions of interaction that produce peoples and states that are smudged and complex, hybrid and tragic. Having gone by many names, today we call this social and economic amalgam “cosmopolitanism.” The term can best be thought of as a kind of shorthand for a sensibility where the exchange of capital, ideas, and people have provided fertile ground and vulnerabilities for ways of feeling and living.

This exhibition is a case study in how the things we call art speak to and embody values. It presents a terrain comprised of traditionally-defined works of art and artifacts, as well as objects such as legal documents and currencies—forms of negotiation between peoples. The diversity of objects within the exhibition space reflects the ways in which we form the complex subjectivities of selfhood across cultures since the time of the ancients up until the present moment within ourselves.

### **Opening Reception**

The Smart Museum celebrates the opening of *The Metropol Drama* and the concurrent exhibition *not all realisms: photography, Africa, and the long 1960s* (February 23–June 4, 2023) during a free public reception on **Thursday, February 23, from 5 to 7 pm.**

### **Artists**

*The Metropol Drama* features works by: An Aztec Ceramicist, A Babylonian Metalsmith, A Bohemian Glassmaker, Jacques Callot, The City of Berlin, Chen Xiaoyun, Robert Crumb, Regina José Galindo,

A Mesopotamian Scribe, John Miller, A Photographer Working for The Associated Press, Pablo Picasso, Aleksandr Rodchenko, August Sander, A Safavid Painter, Charles Joseph Traviès De Villers, and An Unknown Photographer in Chicago.

### **Related public programs**

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Smart Museum and The Open Practice Committee in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Chicago present a **related talk by exhibiting artist John Miller** (February 27, 6 pm) as well as other programs for families and adults that engage with the exhibition material. A complete schedule of programs will be posted online at [smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/calendar](https://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/calendar).

### **About**

*The Metropol Drama* is organized by Geof Oppenheimer, Associate Professor of Practice in the Department of Visual Arts, with Berit Ness, Associate Director and Curator of Academic Engagement, for the Feitler Center for Academic Inquiry at Smart Museum of Art.

Support for *The Metropol Drama* has been provided by the Smart Museum's Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Endowment, Feitler Center for Academic Inquiry Fund, and the Museum's SmartPartners.

The exhibition is presented in the Janis Kanter and Thomas McCormick Gallery and the Edward A. and Inge Maser Gallery.

# # #

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

The Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago is a site for rigorous inquiry and exchange that encourages the examination of complex issues through the lens of art objects and artistic practice. Through strong community and scholarly partnerships, the Museum incorporates diverse ideas, identities, and experiences into its exhibitions and collections, academic initiatives, and public programming. The Smart Museum will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2024. Admission is always free.

### **Smart Museum of Art**

The University of Chicago  
5550 S. Greenwood Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60637  
[smartmuseum.uchicago.edu](https://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu)

*Press contact:*

C.J. Lind, 773.702.0176, [cjlind@uchicago.edu](mailto:cjlind@uchicago.edu)