

SEARS • PEYTON • GALLERY

210 Eleventh Avenue, Suite 802 New York, NY 10001

T 212.966.7469 F 917.305.1910 E info@searspeyton.com

HOURS 10–6pm Tuesday thru Friday, 11–6pm Saturday

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MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON, ACQUIRES MONUMENTAL DRAWING BY NEW YORK ARTIST BO JOSEPH

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas, has acquired a large drawing by New York artist Bo Joseph, (*Memory Gives Us) The Illusion that Something Just Happened*, 2009. This is the first of Joseph's works to enter the MFAH collection.

Alison de Lima Greene, the Museum's Curator of Contemporary Art & Special Projects who initiated the acquisition, stated: "What strikes me most about these pieces is how Joseph balances appropriation, layering of imagery, and dialectical content. Unlike many artists of his generation who employ appropriational strategies with the clean gloss of high technology, Joseph remains committed to the hand-made... MFA Houston's collection program promotes the best emerging and mid-career artists working across six continents, and

I feel strongly that Bo Joseph deserves recognition at this level. His work addresses what it means to be an artist in this global environment, without ever losing sight of the delights and rewards of the individual imagination."



Bo Joseph, (*Memory Gives Us) the Illusion that Something Just Happened*, 2009
Oil pastel, acrylic and tempera, on joined paper, 55 5/8 x 78 1/4 inches

(*Memory Gives Us) The Illusion that Something Just Happened* is a work on paper nearly seven feet in width, in oil pastel, acrylic and tempera on an irregular patchwork of joined sheets of paper. It is from a series of works in which Joseph superimposes outline silhouettes of co-opted cultural artifacts, transcribed from sources including books, auction catalogs and his own photographs. He subjects this layered imagery to phases of scraping with razor blades and hosing-off in a large sink, in an effort to, in the artist's words, "invoke the anomalous and transient nature of material meaning and to instigate new roles for what I consider to be archetypal sources."

About this work Joseph says "I am exploring how the charge invested in symbols from disparate cultures endure contextual shifts. And at the same time, I am exploring how we assign meaning to symbols and form, challenging my own presumptions through rigorous and physically chancy methods of building the image. Similar to memories, images persist on the one hand as presumably factual statements or evidence of experience and events, and on the other hand as challenging allusions to fundamentally existential questions. Are memories self-manifest as by-products and documentation of experience, or are memories something that we each fabricate, a web of meaning and context, around which we forge identity?"

This acquisition was made possible by gracious donations from Mr. and Mrs. James R. Carnes of Mission Hills, KS, and the Ceres Collection, Norwalk, CT and Amsterdam, The Netherlands. It is the fourth museum acquisition for Bo Joseph, who also has works in the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City; the Springfield Museum of Art, OH; and the Guilin Art Museum, Guilin, China.