

NEWS RELEASE

University of Maine
Museum of Art

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Digital images available

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ART EXHIBITION April 14 - July 1, 2006

University of Maine Museum of Art presents the work of renowned contemporary photographer Kenro Izu and a portrait exhibition drawn from the museum's permanent collection.

Bangor, Maine - The University of Maine Museum of Art presents the first comprehensive museum exhibition of the work of internationally acclaimed photographer Kenro Izu in America. This exhibition was organized and is circulated by the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.

Kenro Izu: Sacred Places

Kenro Izu: Sacred Places showcases a magnificent ensemble of more than 50 of Izu's photographs of spiritual landmarks in Asia, the Pacific Islands, Egypt, and Europe, many of which have never before been exhibited. Clark Worswick, curator of photography for the Peabody Essex Museum, has long been a supporter and advocate of Izu's art. He says the Japanese-born photographer works in the tradition of both the great 19th century landscape photographers and early 20th century pictorialists. As such, his work is right at home at the Peabody Essex, which holds the largest collection of 19th century photographs of Asia.



"With Izu you have a photographer who is working against the grain in contemporary photography in a classical form. I think he is one of the greatest photographers working in the world today," says Worswick.

Among Izu's most renowned images are those of the ancient Angkor temples in Cambodia. The photographs capture the stunningly beautiful Khmer architectural monuments and the natural landscape surrounding—and in some case destroying—them. These select photographs were first shown to the public in 1998 in a special exhibition at the Kiyosato Museum of Photographic Arts, *Kenro Izu: Light over*

Ancient Angkor. Izu's photography of Angkor also brought him close to the suffering of Cambodian children whose limbs had been shattered by land mines. He helped establish a free-care hospital for those children, and has supported it with proceeds from the sale of his photographs through an organization he set up called *Friends without a Border*.

Kenro Izu was born in Osaka in 1949 and attended the Nihon University College of Art before moving to New York City in the early 1970s. After discovering Francis Frith's mammoth plate photographs of Egypt, he traveled there in 1979 to photograph the pyramids and other ancient monuments, and the Egyptian landscape. He later photographed holy sites in Syria, Jordan, England, Scotland, Mexico, and Easter Island. A practicing Buddhist, Izu has most recently focused his energies on Buddhist and Hindu sites in India, Cambodia, Burma, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Besides those of Angkor, *Kenro Izu: Sacred Places* will include sumptuous photographs of hallowed monuments in Borobodur, Indonesia;



Agra and Varanasi in India; and Mandalay, Burma.

Many of these sites face destruction, either through neglect or overexposure to human contact. The importance of documenting the beauty of such sites was reinforced recently with the destruction of ancient Buddhist sculptures in Afghanistan. But Izu's photography is not a staid documentation of endangered architecture. "The important thing is the spirituality of these monuments," he once told an interviewer. "It's not just a photograph of a building. The building has to be

there to photograph but the atmosphere is what I'm interested in. The building is a representation of that spiritual side."

Izu succeeds in capturing that spiritual essence of the places he photographs through his exacting approach to his craft, says Worswick. The camera he uses is enormous, producing 14 x 20 inch negatives. Izu meticulously pores over every image and takes out visual elements he believes are unnecessary. During a three-day period Izu prints his negatives into positive images on fine watercolor paper hand-coated with a platinum emulsion. The resulting palladium/platinum prints "are among the most finely crafted prints ever made in the history of the photographic medium," adds Worswick.

All photographs are lent by The Lane Collection, courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum.



81 Heads

The exhibition *81 Heads* draws from the Museum's extensive permanent collection of 6000+ objects. Intended as a slightly overwhelming survey of the artist's constant interpretation and revision of portraiture, this exhibition explores works by artists as diverse as German Expressionist Max Beckmann to Fluxus master George Maciunas. The exhibition includes a variety of media such as photography, drawing, and print-making, while concentrating on the unique variations possible within the idiom of identity through the artist's interpretation of the sitter or one's self.

Portraits have long been the focus of artists, either as a means of learning to render from real life or as a commentary through expression and attitude. While photography is often identified closely with portraiture, as is evident in Todd Webb's revealing portrait of the writer Bertolt Brecht, equally compelling is the loving charcoal



portrait of Waldo Pierce's mother. In many instances the medium the artist selects has a direct influence on the emotional and visual outcome of the work; David Hockney's *Self Portrait* reveals not only his affinity with Cubism but employs the new technology of 1986 - via a three color office copier - in a humorous send up of color etching.

81 Heads includes works by Berenice Abbott, Bernard Buffet, Chuck Close, Mimmo Paladino, Rockwell Kent, Henri Matisse, Ben Shahn, Käthe Kollwitz, Alex Katz, Pablo Picasso and Andy Warhol. The title in this instance provides the viewer with the number of heads in the exhibit, not necessarily the number of works.

Image Information/Credits

1.
KENRO IZU (Japanese b. 1948)
Angkor Wat, 1993
Palladium/platinum print
22^{5/16} x 28^{5/16}"
©Kenro Izu. Courtesy of the Howard Greenberg Gallery.
2.
KENRO IZU (Japanese b. 1948)
Pagan, Burma, 1994
Palladium/platinum print
22^{5/16} x 28^{5/16}"
©Kenro Izu. Courtesy of the Howard Greenberg Gallery.
3.
KUNISADA (Japanese, 1786–1864)
Ichikawa Kabuki Dancer, c. 1850
Woodblock
13^{5/8} x 9"
98.4.4
Gift of Dwight Holmes, Class of 1952
4.
CHUCK CLOSE (American, b. 1940)
Leslie, 1986
Color woodcut on Echezen Kozo paper
24^{1/2} x 21^{1/4}"
2004.9.44
Bequest of Robert Venn Carr Jr., Class of 1938

Museum of Art

Hours: Monday - Saturday 9 am - 5 pm.

Admission: \$3.00 per person.

No charge for Museum Members and UM students with Maine Card.

Directions

From the North

I-95, Exit 185 (formerly 48) - Broadway, (Bangor, Brewer.)

Turn left at light onto Broadway, Rt. 15

At the 4th light (1.2 m), turn right onto State St., Rt. 2

At the light at the bottom of the hill (.1 m), turn right on to Harlow Street (a one-way street)

Merge into left lane, turn left into parking lot of Norumbega Hall.

From the South

I-95, Exit 185 (formerly 48) - Broadway, (Bangor, Brewer)

Turn left at light on to Broadway, Rt. 15

At the 3rd light (1.1 mi), turn right onto State St., Rt. 2

At the light at the bottom of the hill (.1 mi), turn right onto Harlow Street (a one-way street)

Merge into left lane, turn left into parking lot of Norumbega Hall.