



Exploring the Currier Inside Out: Andrew Witkin at the Currier Museum of Art

MANCHESTER, NH.- Most art exhibitions predictably move visitors from one object to another in a single room exclusively dedicated to that show. In *Exploring the Currier Inside Out: Andrew Witkin, Among Others*, on view at the Currier Museum of Art from January 11 through May 11, 2014, the artist has placed work strategically throughout the Museum. Witkin—who splits his time between Boston and Sanbornton, NH—uses objects from the Currier’s collection and materials from the Museum’s Library and Archives as the starting point for his installations. His mission is to help visitors reconsider museums as storehouses of culture and information that shape how we perceive history and generate knowledge.

Walking through the Currier galleries, visitors will encounter beautifully crafted plywood furniture Witkin designed in collaboration with New Hampshire Furniture Master, Tom McLaughlin. Visitors are invited to touch and sit in these chairs, and reevaluate the everyday materials from which they are made. Positioned near antique mahogany and maple furniture the Currier has collected, they create a contrast that provokes guests to reconsider how museums determine what is suitable for purchase and display.

In another installation, Witkin places two plywood wingback chairs near a fireplace that is currently boarded up. The scene is reminiscent of an original presentation at the Currier, but which has changed over time. In an early American tavern display, Witkin has positioned a contemporary plywood table where none had existed before. The dissimilar and more contemporary material used to make the table invites questions regarding why it appears in a Museum setting.

The installations placed around the Museum create a web of connections, inviting visitors to see the Museum anew, just as Witkin did in his research at the Currier. A large wall mural near the Library on the lower level contains an alphabetized list of words and phrases Witkin collected from among the Museum's historic documents during his research. It stands as a testimonial to the Currier's institutional history. Geometric shapes fill a nearby wall, complementing the text list.

"Throughout the process of exploring Witkin's exhibition, we come to view the Currier as a changeable canvas of partial histories and stories that might inspire more questions than it answers," says Nina Gara Bozicnik, assistant curator. "Witkin's art aims to open eyes and minds. It invites us to take active ownership of the information around us, to bring a more critical awareness to what we see and experience, and to reconsider the things we think we know about culture and history."

Inside Out was born from a close collaboration between Witkin, Currier staff and others outside the Museum. The phrase Among Others in the exhibition title acknowledges the partnership that has given shape to the exhibition.

An illustrated gallery guide and introductory video interview with Witkin accompany the exhibition. In both, Witkin has included a list of more than 650 "collaborators" and influences, such as American jazz singer and songwriter Billie Holiday, American philosopher and education reformer John Dewey, Currier founders Moody Currier and Hannah Slade Currier, and all current Currier staff, volunteers and trustees.