



NEWS RELEASE

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***The Path to Paradise: Judith Schaechter's Stained-Glass Art* will open October 2020**

Toledo Museum of Art welcomes the first survey of a groundbreaking artist's 37-year career

TOLEDO, Ohio – Stained glass is a centuries-old tradition, most often associated with medieval architecture and stories of Christianity, illuminating its subjects through dynamic color and light. Artist Judith Schaechter (b.1961) has turned the medium on its head, developing new techniques and choosing non-traditional – often female – subjects and unusual backgrounds.

The Path to Paradise: Judith Schaechter's Stained-Glass Art, featuring more than 40 of Schaechter's stained-glass panels along with a selection of related drawings and process materials, will be on view Oct. 3, 2020, to Jan. 3, 2021, in Toledo Museum of Art's Levis Gallery. The objects on view are drawn from both private and institutional collections.

“Judith Schaechter has redefined the limits of stained glass throughout her career with her highly decorative yet provocative approach to the material,” explained Diane Wright, TMA's interim director of curatorial affairs and senior curator of glass and decorative arts. “By fusing this historic medium with subversive thought and pure dedication to the exploration of the craft, Schaechter has altered the landscape of contemporary American art.”

Schaechter grew up in suburban Massachusetts, regularly visiting museums with her family, but it wasn't until she took a stained-glass class at the Rhode Island School of Design that she discovered the medium. Always slightly uncomfortable with the speed and fleeting nature of painting, Schaechter found that the deliberate, painstaking nature of working with glass allowed her to focus on process while giving her imagination free reign. Working from her home studio in Philadelphia, Schaechter has honed her craft based on a technique born in the 1880s – stacking layers of glass to create figures and composite images with complex shading and coloring. She creates multiple sketches and drawings of her works in advance and uses computer programs to develop composites and seek unexpected pairings

between her subjects and backgrounds. She has also created new by-hand techniques – such as scratching off a colored layer of glass with a diamond file – and uses a sandblaster to add texture to her work.

Schaechter’s work underlines her extraordinary confidence in the ability of stained glass to communicate with and illuminate an audience. Whether exploring themes of feminism, climate change or treatment of animals, Schaechter says she strives to awaken empathy and compassion through her work. The deeply personal narratives tap into what she believes to be a collective consciousness and universal human experience.

Schaechter also embraces the inherent contradictions of her work, gleefully melding the opposing currents of high and low, beauty and gore, sacred and profane, and transcendence and defeat. Dark narratives feature her favorite subjects: “sex and death, with romance and violence the obvious runners up.”

“When we despair,” Schaechter said, “it is beauty that saves us, not reasoning and logical argument. The capacity for beauty in the human brain as it interfaces with nature is a marvelous and life-affirming thing.”

The Path to Paradise is the first survey and major scholarly assessment of this groundbreaking artist’s 37-year career. Organized by the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, the exhibition opened in Rochester, New York. After Toledo, the show will end its run in Iowa at the Des Moines Art Center.

The Path to Paradise: Judith Schaechter’s Stained-Glass Art is sponsored by 2020 Exhibition Program Sponsors Taylor Cadillac and ProMedica with additional support from the Ohio Arts Council, the TMA Ambassadors, the Art Alliance for Contemporary Glass and Arthur Vining Foundation. Admission to the exhibition is free.

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The Toledo Museum of Art is a nonprofit arts institution funded through individual donations, foundation grants, corporate sponsorships and investments. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund programs at the Toledo Museum of Art through a sustainability grant program that encourages economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. Glass Pavilion® and Toledo Museum of Art Glass Pavilion® are registered service marks.

Admission to the Museum is free as always, but visitors are required to reserve a museum pass in advance through tickets.toledomuseum.org or by calling 419-255-8000 ext. 7448. The Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from noon to 4 p.m., with special hours for 10 a.m. to noon reserved for at-risk populations; and is closed Monday and major holidays.

The Museum is located at 2445 Monroe Street at Scottwood Avenue, just west of the downtown business district and one block off I-75 with exit designations posted. For general information, visitors can call 419-255-8000 or 800-644-6862, or visit toledomuseum.org.