

Cascone, Sarah. "Why It Took Nearly Three Years to Curate the (Short) Artist List for the 2018 Carnegie International," *artnet*, 11 April 2018.

Why It Took Nearly Three Years to Curate the (Short) Artist List for the 2018 Carnegie International

The world's second-oldest international contemporary art survey is back for its 57th edition.

Sarah Cascone, April 11, 2018



Ingrid Schaffner. Photo courtesy of Bryan Conley.

Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum of Art has named the 32 artists and collectives that are set to take part in the 57th Carnegie International, opening October 13, 2018.

The short length of the tightly curated list "was intentional," curator Ingrid Schaffner told *artnet News*. "I wanted more time and space for each participant."

Putting together the exhibition has been a long, involved process, according to the curator. "I got the call to do the International in January 2015," said Schaffner, who moved to Pittsburgh in June of that year to begin work. "All total it will be three years in the making."



The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. Photo by Tom Little.

"I spent the year of 2016 dedicated to travel," she added, noting that she put in as much time spent viewing major exhibitions and thinking about curatorial practice as she did visiting artists' studios. "I took five big trips to parts of the world I had never visited before."

Founded in 1896, the Carnegie is the world's second oldest international contemporary art exhibition, and the oldest such survey in North America—it's just

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one year younger than the Venice Biennale. It was founded by billionaire 19th-century steel baron and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie.

Now held every three to five years, the exhibition stands out among the innumerable biennials and triennials that have proliferated in recent decades, in part, because of the time it takes to bring the show together. "I think a biennial is happening at a quicker pace. It's more of a snap shot by its nature," Schaffner said. "The Carnegie International has to be more developed."

The International also has something of an unusual venue. "The Carnegie is an art museum and a natural history museum, in an immense building that also contains a hall of music and a library—it's a museum of museums," Schaffner said.

In order to make sure the artists each knew what they were signing up for, each participant was invited to visit the city before officially signing on to the event. "After we explored Pittsburgh with each artist for a few days, it was time to pop the question, 'are you in?'" Schaffner recalled. "All of the people we went on first dates with said yes!"

Most of the works will be new, many made specifically for the exhibition (although not necessarily about Pittsburgh). Lenka Clayton and Jon Rubin, for instance, drew on the International's storied history for inspiration, sifting through museum records to find the best titles from the over 10,000 submissions to the exhibition rejected between 1896 and 1931.

"The archives have these amazing note cards," Schaffner said. "The titles are incredible, like *Cactus Girl* and *Boxing Clowns*. It was an era art when nothing was untitled, and a lot of them are quite specific and evocative." By delving into this forgotten institutional history, Clayton and Rubin will give these rejected artworks new life and new value.

Schaffner is also drawing on more recent memory, by revisiting Kerry James Marshall's "Rythm Mastr" comic series, featuring black superheroes. The comic strip debuted in the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* and was accompanied by an installation at the International in 1999, where the drawings were used as wallpaper in a gallery.

"The museum recently acquired a major work of Kerry's from 2016," Schaffner said. "I thought this was a moment to return to Kerry's first touchstone at the Carnegie where he launched this major body of work."

"He said, 'funny you ask this because I am about to redraw the first part of the series to bring it in line with the language that I've developed for the rest of the comics,'" Schaffner added.

In a more subtle nod to International's past, Schaffner has placed the work of Yuji Agematsu, who made one new sculpture every day in 2017, in the same space where On Kawara's Carnegie Prize-winning "Date Paintings" were displayed in 1991. Schaffner doesn't expect people to make the connection between the two bodies of work, but she's constructed the exhibition on "this idea of building on something that's accruing and accumulating"—the notion that each International is inherently connected to those that proceeded it.

Other projects include a collaboration between filmmaker IM Heung-soon and novelist Han Kang, who Schaffner praised for her engrossing prose. "It makes sense that her work would want to come out of the page and into the visual space," she said.

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There's also a second curator involved. For "Dig Where You Stand," Koyo Kouoh is creating an exhibition within the exhibition that will explore histories of colonialism. "It's using the Carnegie collection as material research, drawing both from the art museum's collection and the natural history museum's collection," Schaffner explained. "Koyo creates places of discourse and learning and exchange." The title is a play on the dual meaning of "dig"—both to excavate and to understand.

Although October may seem a long way off, Schaffner is already in the thick of things. "The website has been a place for publication and exchange for some time now, and the public programs began well over a year ago, with artists presenting their work to the community at drawing sessions," she noted. "The International culminates in an exhibition, but it is already happening."

Here is the complete artist list for the 57th Carnegie International exhibition:

Yuji Agematsu

El Anatsui

Art Labor with Joan Jonas

Huma Bhabha

Mel Bochner

Mimi Cherono Ng'ok

Lenka Clayton and Jon Rubin

Sarah Crowner

Alex Da Corte

Tacita Dean

Jeremy Deller

Kevin Jerome Everson

Leslie Hewitt

IM Heung-soon and Han Kang

Saba Innab

Karen Kilimnik

Zoe Leonard

Kerry James Marshall

Park McArthur

Josiah McElheny with John Corbett and Jim Dempsey

Ulrike Müller

Thaddeus Mosley

The Otolith Group

Postcommodity

Jessi Reaves

Abel Rodriguez

Rachel Rose

Beverly Semmes

Dayanita Singh

Lucy Skaer

Tavares Strachan

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

and

"Dig Where You Stand," by independent exhibition maker Koyo Kouoh

The 57th Carnegie International exhibition, organized by Ingrid Schaffner, will be on view October 13, 2018–March 25, 2019.