

For Immediate Release  
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## ***Infinite Mirror: Images of American Identity***

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### **INSPIRING CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION SHOWCASES SHARED AMERICAN CULTURE**

***The Fort Wayne Museum of Art*** in **Fort Wayne, IN** is pleased to announce *Infinite Mirror: Images of American Identity*, a rich, reflective exhibition of works by 39 artists representing the vast cultural blend of modern American society. *Infinite Mirror* is on view at **the Fort Wayne Museum of Art** from **May 17<sup>th</sup> 2012** through **July 15 2012**.

*“The images reflect the complex dynamics between people and within the minds of individuals as they participate in and contribute to a composite, inestimable culture. We, as Americans, would need an infinite mirror to see our full reflection.”*

– Blake Bradford, *Infinite Mirror* curator and director of education, Barnes Foundation

American artists of African, Arab European, Asian, Latino and Native American descent explore their heritage in this vivid and diverse exhibition using a wide variety of media. The artists examine patriotism, communication, the struggle for acceptance, what it truly means to be an American in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and more. Humor, heartache, anger, apprehension—all emotions are evoked by these works, raising questions about race, class, gender and age.

Four main themes run through *Infinite Mirror*: Self-Selection, Pride, Assimilation, and Protest, providing audiences with the opportunity to re-examine both the story and storytellers of the quintessential “American dream.” Self Selection reflects how we choose to present and project ourselves to the world. Largely based in portraiture, the variety of techniques and twists on this age-old art form convey a multitude of values, desires and anxieties. In **Ben Gest**’s *Alice Waiting*, we see an older woman in a contemporary variation on a seated portrait, alluding to our interdependence and the multitude of ways in which society shares space and time.

In *Pride*, artists explore an appreciation of one's origins, character, values and personal accomplishments. Some works convey confidence and defiance in the face of inequality or degradation, while many others warmly exude joy, love and strength. These artists celebrate their lives as U.S. citizens while acknowledging the histories and traditions of their familial roots. **Leamon Green Jr.** renders this balance in his mixed media work *Big Man Advisor*, depicting a seated man flanked with a Benin sculpture to his left and a Roman or Greek statue to his right, paying tribute to both his African and European heritage.

Many artists in *Infinite Mirror* weigh in on the two-way transaction of Assimilation, the third theme, by investigating the degree to which new cultural contributions are accepted, mined, or rejected by society. Conversely, several of the artists examine the degree to which they have retained their original cultures and the ways in which they have evolved and emerged in their changing environments. The tension that exists between these two ideas is the point of creative take-off for artists such as **Tomie Arai**, whose *Peach Boy* etching shows a young boy donning the trappings of a cowboy on the frontier, hinting at the actual experience of Asian immigrants working on the railroad and the myth of the American West.

Protest, the final theme, explores the American tradition of questioning the ideals of U.S. politics and social culture. In **Richard Ray Whitman's** *Do Indians Go to Santa Fe When They Die?* and **Edgar Heap of Birds'** *Telling Many Magpies, Telling Black Wolf, Telling Hachivi*, the artists use their work to question the treatment of Native Americans in the past and present. The diverse group assembled for *Infinite Mirror* illuminates some of America's shadowy corners while remaining in the spirit of idealism.

Since 2009, *Infinite Mirror* curator Blake Bradford has been director of education at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, where he oversees the Foundation's longstanding adult classes, its K-12 outreach and other public programming. Previous projects exhibitions have included *Disinhibition: Black Art and Blue Humor* and *Material Science*, which explored the sensory qualities of artistic media. Co-curators are Benito Huerta, associate professor of painting and director and curator of The Gallery at the University of Texas at Arlington and Robert Lee, executive director and curator at Asian American Arts Centre in New York.

A softbound catalogue accompanies the exhibition, containing essays by the three exhibition curators and an introduction by Brandywine Workshop President Allen Edmunds. Produced by Artrain, the catalogue includes artist statements, biographies and full-color photographs.

Current scheduled tour dates for *Infinite Mirror* are: Syracuse University Galleries, NY (January 25, 2011 – March 20, 2011); Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery at Keene State College, NH (September 9, 2011 – November 10, 2011); University of Maryland University College, Adelphi, MD (January 30, 2012 – April 8, 2012); Fort Wayne Museum of Art, IN (May 17, 2012 – July 15, 2012); Newcombe Art Gallery at Tulane University, New Orleans, LA (October 24, 2012 – December 22, 2012); Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL (January 25, 2013 – March 24, 2013); James A. Michener Art Museum, Doylestown, PA (April 13, 2013 – July 7, 2013); Juniata College Museum of Art, Huntington, PA (September 2013 – October 2013). Please visit [www.artsandartists.org/exhibitions/infinitemirror.html](http://www.artsandartists.org/exhibitions/infinitemirror.html) for updated tour dates.

*Infinite Mirror* is developed by Artrain, Inc. and Brandywine Workshop, Philadelphia, PA, and is toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC. Presented with support from the Institute of Museum & Library Services and the National Endowment for the Arts.

**Artrain** is a unique mobile museum, delivering cultural exhibitions and programs to diverse audiences in U.S. cities and towns, many which are not usually reached by traditional museums programs. Established in 1975 and headquartered in Ann Arbor, MI, Artrain uses the power of the arts to transform lives, organizations and communities. Visit [www.artrainusa.org](http://www.artrainusa.org).

**Brandywine Workshop of Philadelphia, PA**, seeks to enhance the role of visual and related media artists and their impact in contemporary society through various programs in printmaking and arts education. Visit [www.brandywineworkshop.com](http://www.brandywineworkshop.com).

**International Arts & Artists** in Washington, DC, is a non-profit arts service organization dedicated to increasing cross-cultural understanding and exposure to the arts internationally through exhibitions, programs and services to artists, arts institutions and the public. Visit [www.artsandartists.org](http://www.artsandartists.org).

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