

MAM

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***See It Now: Contemporary Art from the Ann and Mel Schaffer Collection* Opens at Montclair Art Museum February 7**



Nick Cave (born 1959, Fulton, Missouri)
***Soundsult*, 2011**

Handbags, potholders, bathmats, beads, shoelaces, sequins, pleather, and mannequin
98 x 38 x 33 inches



Kehinde Wiley (born 1977, Los Angeles, California)
***Alexander the Great*, 2007**

Oil and enamel on canvas
82 x 70 inches, framed

Montclair, NJ, January 27, 2026 — Montclair Art Museum announces ***See It Now: Contemporary Art from the Ann and Mel Schaffer Collection***, a landmark exhibition presenting a major selection of contemporary art from one of the most discerning private collections formed over the past four decades. The exhibition will be on view February 7–June 28, 2026.

Assembled by Ann and Mel Schaffer beginning in the 1980s, the collection reflects a sustained commitment to art that is intellectually probing and emotionally resonant. Guided by curiosity rather than convention, the Schaffers collected work that challenged them—often supporting artists at pivotal moments in their careers and engaging deeply with their ideas and processes. Across media and generations, the collection is united by a shared attention to individuality, lived experience, and the complexities of being human.

On view at Montclair Art Museum, *See It Now* features significant works by artists including Cindy Sherman, Richard Prince, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Jim Hodges, and Tony Oursler, among many others. Spanning photography, painting, sculpture, installation, and conceptual practice, the works engage themes of identity, social justice, intimacy, and psychological tension.

“The art we chose to live with was never about comfort,” said Ann Schaffer. “We were drawn to work that asked questions and carried meaning beyond what you see at first glance. Montclair Art Museum has long played an essential role in creating a space where art can challenge, connect, and spark conversation within the community. Sharing this collection here feels especially meaningful because the Museum invites people of all ages and backgrounds to engage deeply with art and with one another.”

Over time, the Schaffers’ collection evolved as a living environment rather than a static archive. Works were acquired with careful attention to how they would coexist—visually, conceptually, and emotionally—with others already in their home. Paintings, photographs, sculptures, and installations were placed in deliberate proximity, allowing unexpected conversations to emerge between artists, materials, and ideas. This sensitivity to dialogue and placement is central to *See It Now*, which reflects not only what the Schaffers collected, but how they lived with art as an ongoing, deeply personal experience.

Rather than organizing the exhibition around a single movement or medium, *See It Now* embraces contrast and conversation. Works are presented in relationship to one another, echoing the way the Schaffers have long lived with art—allowing pieces to speak across disciplines, generations, and perspectives.

“This collection is extraordinary not only for the caliber of artists it includes, but for the clarity of its vision,” said Gail Stavitsky, Head Curator at Montclair Art Museum. “The Schaffers collected with a deep sensitivity to how artworks communicate—with one another and with viewers. The result is an exhibition that is layered, challenging, and profoundly human.”

The exhibition also reflects a belief in art as an active, living force—one that thrives through engagement, dialogue, and risk.

“*See It Now* embodies the values at the heart of Montclair Art Museum,” said Todd Caissie, Interim Director. “We are deeply committed to presenting great art—especially contemporary art, which speaks most directly to the world we are living in now. It helps us understand the complexities of our time and recognize our shared humanity. This exhibition reflects that

mission with clarity and conviction, and we are honored to share the Schaffers' extraordinary collection with our audiences."

See It Now: Contemporary Art from the Ann and Mel Schaffer Collection will be on view from February 7 through June 28, 2026.

About Montclair Art Museum

Founded in 1914, Montclair Art Museum is a leading cultural institution dedicated to the exhibition, interpretation, and preservation of American and Native American art, as well as contemporary art that speaks to the present moment. Through its exhibitions, education programs, and community partnerships, the Museum fosters creative thinking, critical dialogue, and meaningful engagement with art for audiences of all ages.

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Gallery Hours: Friday, 10 a.m.—6 p.m. / Saturday, 10 a.m.—6 p.m. / Sunday, 11 a.m.—5 p.m.

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