

3 Spring & Summer Stunners at the **DENVER** **ART** MUSEUM

By Gwen Gray



◀ **Nick Cave, *Soundsuit*, 2011**
Imaginative creations like this one will be on display at the museum June 9–Sept. 22, 2013.

The Denver Art Museum's 2012 exhibition calendar did some serious name dropping with the oft-sold-out *Yves Saint Laurent: The Retrospective*, the only-in-Denver blockbuster *Becoming Van Gogh* and the whimsical *Read My Pins: The Madeleine Albright Collection*. Not to be overlooked were heavy hitters Corot, Dupré and Mille, among others, whose works were featured in the late 2011–early 2012 exhibit *Changing Landscapes: Themes in 19th Century French and American Painting*.

The museum is busy ensuring 2013 outdoes 2012 with plenty of exciting exhibits, which seem to come to a head during spring and summer. Take your pick from shows covering three contemporary artistic geniuses who deliver the unexpected in three completely distinct ways. >>

NICK CAVE, SPEAK LOUDER, 2011. MIXED MEDIA. JAMES PRINZ PHOTOGRAPHY, CHICAGO. COURTESY OF NICK CAVE AND THE JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK.



Mark Rothko in the 1940s ▶
June 23–Sept. 29, 2013

The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., holds the largest collection of Mark Rothko works anywhere in the world. This summer, the Denver Art Museum will be the lucky recipient of several of the famous abstract expressionist's works — including many paintings, drawings and watercolors rarely seen before — on loan for the not-to-miss three-month exhibition.

Focusing on Rothko's growth as an artist during the 1940s, the exhibition will trace his development during a pivotal period, one during which the attention of the contemporary art world began migrating from Europe to New York. It was during the 1940s that Rothko rejected realism and created his first color field paintings, which would eventually secure his standing as one of the most celebrated abstract expressionists — and one of America's most recognizable painters.

The exhibition will also include paintings by other celebrated abstract expressionists, such as Robert Motherwell and Jackson Pollock, who shared Rothko's endeavors to achieve total abstraction.

MARK ROTHKO, SEA FANTASY, 1946. OIL PAINT ON CANVAS. GIFT OF THE MARK ROTHKO FOUNDATION, INC., NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, 1966.43.8 (C) 1998 KATE ROTHKO PRIZEL & CHRISTOPHER ROTHKO/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK. IMAGE COURTESY NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, D.C.



GEORGIA O'KEEFFE, CHAMA RIVER, GHOST RANCH, 1937. OIL ON CANVAS, 30-1/4 X 16 IN. NEW MEXICO MUSEUM OF ART, GIFT OF THE ESTATE OF GEORGIA O'KEEFFE, 1987 (1987.3121). (C) NEW MEXICO MUSEUM OF ART.

◀ Georgia O'Keeffe
in New Mexico:
Architecture,
Katsinam & the Land
Through April 28, 2013

When we hear the name O'Keeffe, familiar images of a tan, dark-haired woman draped in black clothing, toiling away on a canvas in the stark desert light flood our collective memory. Perhaps the best-known female artist of the American West, O'Keeffe's migration to the Southwest, her work as a painter and her marriage to the pioneering photographer Alfred Stieglitz are relatively well-known parts of her story.

Lesser known is O'Keeffe's keen interest in and awareness of the native cultures of northern New Mexico, as reflected in a number of drawings, watercolors and paintings she completed of *katsina tithu* — carved and painted representations of Hopi spirits. Between 1931 and 1945, Georgia O'Keeffe created several *katsina tithu* but rarely exhibited them. Fortunately she took care to preserve them, and for a brief period of time, they will be on display at the Denver Art Museum.

Along with the 15 rarely seen Hopi *katsina tithu*, there will be examples of O'Keeffe's characteristic paintings of New Mexico's architecture, cultural objects and landscapes.

Photographs of *katsin tihu* help identify the different figures, as will accompanying works by American Indian artists who also draw upon *katsina tithu* and the New Mexico landscape for artistic inspiration.



▲ **Nick Cave**
June 9–Sept. 22, 2013

Much excitement is swirling around the Denver Art Museum’s early summer installation — as seems to be the norm around acclaimed artist Nick Cave. Best known for the outrageous costumes-cum-sculptures he has dubbed Soundsuits, Cave blends performance, sculpture, fashion and design in completely original ways. While a multidisciplinary approach rarely finds high praise in the art world, Nick Cave’s works have fascinated audiences and critics, drawing in diverse viewers (and reviews) enthralled by his imaginative creations.

Cave’s cross-media approach seems a natural reflection his personal background. He holds a master’s in fine art from Cranbrook Academy of Art, trained as a dancer with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and is currently on the faculty of the fashion department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In his words, his work “opens up vistas to many cultures (including our own), explores a wide range of materials ... and looks inwardly as it examines personal and cultural identity in relation to the world.”

In appearance, Cave’s Soundsuits are vaguely humanlike, but oversized and outrageously decorated, often strewn with bright colors, wild textures and materials, such as human hair, buttons, twigs, textiles — even an abacus. Packed with allusions to African ceremonial costumes, haute couture, pop culture and whimsical fantasy, the suits have been known to sell for as much as \$45,000 at private galleries.

The Denver Art Museum’s exhibition will debut a new body of work by Cave, featuring new Soundsuits in both performance formats and as static installations.

MORE SUMMER EXHIBITS AROUND COLORADO

Clyfford Still Museum, Denver Red/Yellow/Blue/Black/White: Clyfford Still as Colorist
Through May 12 clyffordstillmuseum.org



Denver Museum of Nature & Science
Mammoths & Mastodons: Titans of the Ice Age
Through May 27 dmns.org

CU Art Museum, Boulder
Primal Seen: Selections from the CU Art Museum’s Collection of Photography
Through June 22 cuartmuseum.colorado.edu

Museum of Contemporary Art Denver
Karen Kilimnik
Through June 23 mcadenver.org

Colorado Ski & Snowboard Museum, Vail
Vail: The First 50 Years
Through Oct. skimuseum.net

Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art
New Explorations in International Design
Through Dec. 31. kirklandmuseum.org

Aspen Art Museum
Rob Pruitt
May 3–July 14 aspenartmuseum.org

Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center
50 x 50: The Herbert & Dorothy Vogel Collection
May 11–Aug. 11 csfineartscenter.org

Fort Collins Museum of Art
Syd Mead: Progressions
May 17–July 21 fcmoca.org

Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art
Cut and Paste
June 13–Sept. 15 bmoca.org

Loveland Museum/Gallery
Goya: Los Caprichos
June 14–Sept. 22 ci.loveland.co.us

Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum, Golden
Material Witnesses: Manhattan Quilters Guild
July 28–Oct. 26 rmqm.org

Sangre de Cristo Arts Center, Pueblo
Heroes & Villains
Aug. 2–Oct. 26 sdc-arts.org