



Shown above: Louis Finkelstein (1923-2000), *Park Tennis*, 1961. Oil on canvas, 50 x 50 inches. Gift of the Artist, Asheville Art Museum Collection, 1998.08.21.

Additional high resolution images available upon request (see attached list).

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Asheville Art Museum Invites Members and Visitors to a “PLAY”ful Opening Reception of a new exhibition celebrating the art of PLAY **Opening Reception: Friday, May 17 (5:00 – 7:00 p.m.)**

Playing together, we discover trust. Laughing together, we discover harmony. Through play and laughter we transcend tragedy, we challenge our physical limits, we celebrate health, we create community, we transform reality. — Bernie Dekoven

ASHEVILLE, NC—The Asheville Art Museum is pleased to present *PLAY*, opening in the Museum’s East Wing on Friday, May 17 with a reception from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. (free with membership or regular Museum admission). As the name suggests, *PLAY* explores themes of leisure, play and creativity and includes many works from the Museum’s Permanent Collection. The **family-friendly opening reception will include special entertainment provided by the [Asheville Hoops Troupe](#), face painting by [Asheville Face & Body Painting](#) and interactive games by [O.P. Taylor’s](#) of Asheville.** Sweet treats and refreshments for all ages will also be provided. Children, families and visitors of all ages are welcome and encouraged to attend.

In *PLAY*, works such as Ann Pollard’s *The Recorder Player*, demonstrate the intense focus one enjoys when playing an instrument. This is akin to what noted Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls *flow*—when an individual is so fully immersed in a pleasurable activity that he or she is unaware of everything else. Artist Louis Finkelstein’s *Park Tennis* demonstrates the social and physical benefits of organized athletic play. Audrey Kirschner’s *Tea Party* celebrates the nature of friendship, camaraderie and laughter, showing that playful activity can extend throughout one’s life.

PLAY also acknowledges the role that playful activity has as a primary source of cognitive development in a child's life, through which basic social skills are learned and carried into adulthood. The act of play is also recognized for its relaxing and stimulating qualities, and as a means to make work more productive and pleasurable. As curator Cole Hendrix describes, "By giving ourselves permission to play with the joyful abandon of childhood, we can continue to reap its benefits throughout life." Audiences are invited to consider these unique qualities in *PLAY*, on view through Sunday, September 29, 2013.

PLAY is organized and curated by the Asheville Art Museum and is sponsored by Mary L. Powell.

About the Asheville Art Museum

Founded by artists in 1948 in Asheville, NC, the Asheville Art Museum annually presents an exciting, inviting and active schedule of exhibitions and public programs based on its permanent collection of 20th and 21st century American art. Any visit will also include experiences with works of significance to Western North Carolina's cultural heritage including Studio Craft, Black Mountain College and Cherokee artists. Special exhibitions feature renowned regional and national artists and explore issues of enduring interest. The Museum also offers a wide array of innovative, inspiring and entertaining educational programs for people of all ages.

Additional information for upcoming exhibitions and public programs at the Museum can be found online at www.ashevilleart.org.

Special thanks to [Bold Life](#), [Verve](#) and [Carolina Home & Garden](#) magazines for their support as a Media Sponsor of the Museum for the 2013 fiscal year. And, we thank [The Laurel of Asheville](#) for their 2013/24 Media Sponsorship. For more information about media sponsorships, please email Kathleen Glass, Communications Manager, at kglass@ashevilleart.org.

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The Asheville Art Museum is the only nonprofit visual arts museum serving the 24 counties of Western North Carolina. Incorporated by artists in 1948, the Museum collects, preserves and interprets American art of the 20th and 21st centuries with a focus on work of significance to the Southeast.

Centrally located in downtown Asheville on Pack Square, the Museum is open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. Special docent-guided tour packages are available for groups and students.

Admission to the Museum is \$8.00 for adults and \$7.00 for seniors and students (K-12 and college students with college ID). Children age five and younger are admitted free of charge. Members are admitted free of charge. The Holden Community Gallery, Museum Shop and Biltmore Gallery (all located on the first floor/street level of the Museum, are open at all times to the general public free of charge).

The Asheville Art Museum is accredited by the American Association of Museums and receives general operating support from businesses, foundations and individuals, as well as from the North Carolina Arts Council, an agency funded by the State of North Carolina, and the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art. Additional support is provided by the City of Asheville and Buncombe County.

The Asheville Art Museum asks when reprinting images, please keep all artwork at their original proportions; please do not crop them or alter them disproportionately. Provided image credit information is mandatory and images are not for resale.