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Milan Exhibition Sheds Light on Josef and Anni Albers's Ethnographic Collection

Lorena Muñoz-Alonso, Wednesday, October 21, 2015

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Josef and Anni Albers at Black Mountain College in 1949.
Photo: Theodore Dreier via The Josef & Anni Albers
Foundation

On October 28, MUDEC, Milan's new ethnographic museum, will launch the exhibition "A Beautiful Confluence: Anni and Josef Albers and the Latin American World," which will reveal a lesser-known facet of the legendary Modernist couple Josef and Anni Albers: their deep interest in Latin American cultures.

The exhibition gathers a selection of artworks by the two artists—including paintings, textiles, drawings and lithographs—alongside the 150 extraordinary pre-Columbian artifacts they had collected over three decades.



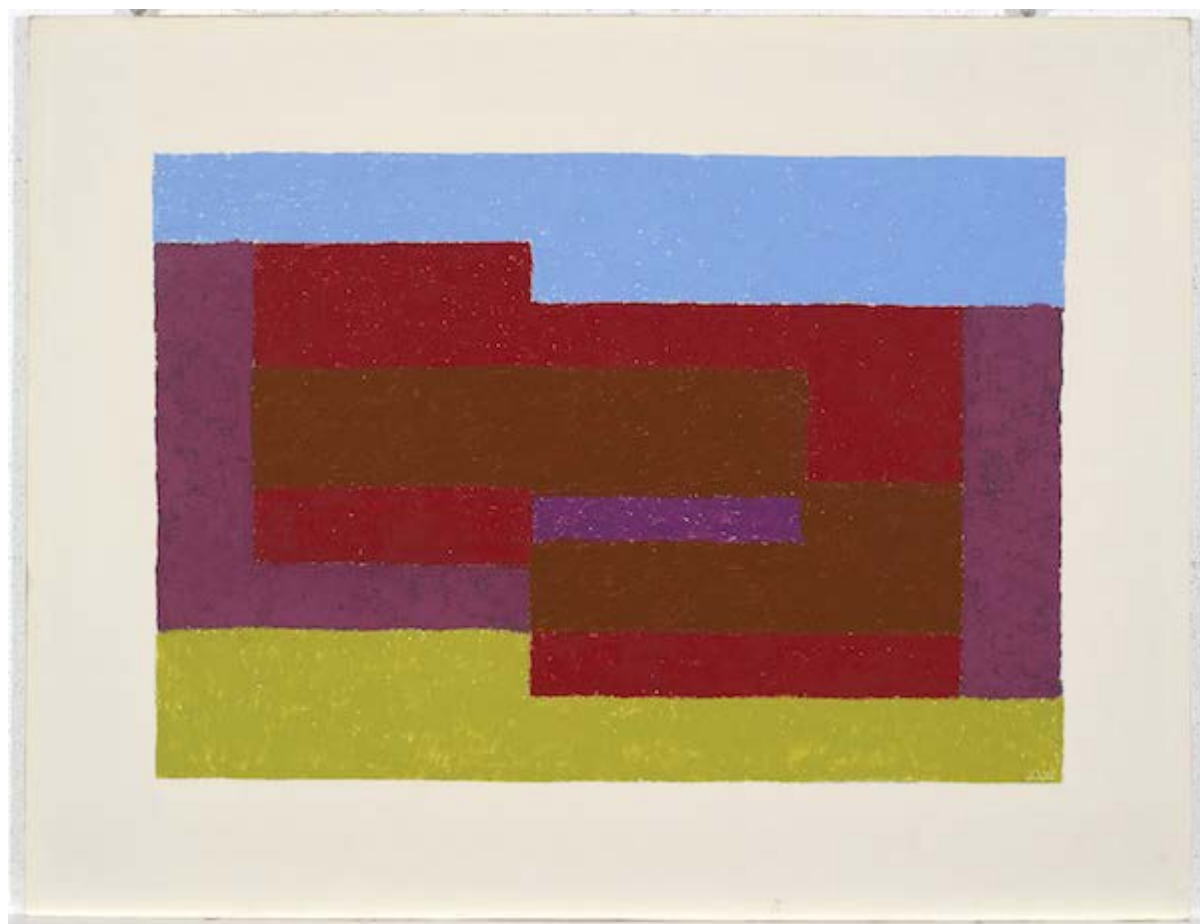
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Photo: © The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation

A black rectangular advertisement for Sotheby's Financial Services. At the top, the text 'Sotheby's FINANCIAL SERVICES' is written in a serif font, with 'THE EXPERTS IN ART FINANCING' in a smaller, all-caps sans-serif font below it. The main headline reads 'TREASURE THE ART. UNLOCK THE VALUE.' in large, bold, all-caps sans-serif letters. Below this, it says 'OFFERING BESPOKE FINANCING SOLUTIONS FOR ART COLLECTORS.' in a smaller, all-caps sans-serif font. At the bottom center, there is a white rectangular button with the text 'CONTACT US' in all-caps sans-serif font. At the very bottom of the ad, in small white text, it reads 'SOTHEBY'S, INC. LICENSE NO.1216058. ©SOTHEBY'S, INC. 2015'.

Shortly after the Alberses, fleeing the Nazis, emigrated from Germany to the United States in 1933, they began traveling to Central and South America to explore the cultures that had so fascinated them from afar. Between 1934 and 1967, they visited Cuba, Mexico, Peru and Chile, completing up to 14 trips in the southern continent.

The Alberses had a strong affinity to the simple geometrical forms and functionality of the objects produced in pre-Columbian cultures—principles that also underpinned the ethos of the progressive arts and craft school, Bauhaus, where Josef taught—and amassed a superb collection of artifacts and figurines during their travels.



Josef Albers, To Mitla (1940)

Photo: © The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation

The exhibition, which will coincide with the unveiling of MUDEC's permanent collection, will also feature previously unseen photographs and photo-collages by Josef Albers.

The MUDEC, which is part of the ambitious Città delle Culture art complex in Milan, opened in March surrounded by controversy. The \$66 million complex was designed by British star architect David Chipperfield, who after a long-winged and fraught involvement, disowned the project, following a row over the flooring material used.



David Chipperfield's Città delle Culture in Milan

Photo via: Milano City Council

"A Beautiful Confluence: Anni and Josef Albers and the Latin American World" will run at MUDEC, Milan, from October 28, 2015-March 13, 2016.

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