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'LIFE AS A LEGEND'
Marilyn Monroe exhibition comes to DAI

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By Meredith Moss
Staff Writer

She'll probably feel right at home with the voluptuous 1960s and 1970s body image in the galleries above her.

Marilyn Monroe moves into the Dayton Art Institute next weekend.

In one of the largest exhibits ever at the museum, the five-gallery tribute to the sensuous starlet showcases the work of 80 prominent artists and includes nearly 250 paintings, prints and sculptures. Related attractions include a one-woman theatrical production that brings the blood bombshell to life through her own words, a video room where you'll watch clips of interviews with those who knew her and an exit shop featuring Marilyn merchandise.

"Marilyn Monroe: Life as a Legend" officially opens to the public Saturday and runs through June 24. The exhibit originates from Europe and opens throughout the United States. So, why a museum? "She's an icon," says Larry Anton, director of the Dayton Art Institute. "She was a muse for everyone." The exhibit is open to the public and includes works by Jane, Peter, Bert Stern and Tom Kelly.

Photos courtesy of Dayton Art Institute.

Below: A photograph by Bob Henriques of the actress during the filming of "The Seven Year Itch" in 1955.
shots in the "One Night With Marilyn" series.

Bert Stern's
Here's to You, a photograph of Marily
with champagne glass in hand, celebrat-
ing her entry back into Hollywood.

The famous sub-
way-grate scene with Tom Ewell in
The Seven Year Itch, as photographed by
Sam Shaw.

Ernst Haas
behind-the-scenes shots of Marilyn
on the set of The Misfits.

"She represented so many things to so
many different people," Snyder says.
"She inspired a lot of contemporary art-
ists to talk about social and political
issues, and issues that deal with celebri-
ty, certainly a hot-bot-
to issue today."

Photos in the exhib-
it range from the
pin-up days as Nor-
ma Jean Baker to
behind-the-scenes
photos on film sets
and at charity events.

Though all of the pieces in the exhibit are
inspired by Monroe, some do not show her
directly, such as Erwin
Wurm's Thinking About Marilyn.

The exhibit was
most recently at the
Boca Raton Museum of Art in Florida.

Director of Marketing Bruce Herman
reports it attracted a wide variety of
patrons and was one of the best-attend-
ed exhibits in museum history.

"You don't have to know a great deal
about art to understand and appreci-
ate the beauty of this woman and recog-
nize what a legacy she's created — the
iconization of celebrity and the pop-art
movement," says Herman, noting that
today's celebrities such as Madonna and
the late Anna Nicole Smith have emulat-
ed Monroe's look and lifestyle.

For older folks, Monroe stirs up
nostalgic memories; a younger generation
recognizes her images as the beginning of
the pop-art movement.

Though in some ways the tragedy of a
life cut short — Monroe was 36 when
she died — and an underlying vulner-
ability can be compared to Princess
Dianna on an emotional level, Snyder
says the two DA3 exhibits are dramatic-
ly different.

"This exhibit has no memorabilia, no
dresses, no jewelry, no artifacts," she
says. "It's a fine-art exhibit, and that's
what the audience can expect."

They can also expect nudity.

The paint colors being used as a
backdrop for the local exhibitions have
names appropriate to the feminine and
sexy Monroe: velvet white, candy-apple
red, soft pink and French toast. And, of
course, champagne.

Snyder says it's the diversity of the
exhibit that she finds most impressive.

"It really runs the gamut — there are
wonderful, sensuous, black-and-white
photographs, beautiful color photo-
graphs that show her dynamic, vivi-
cent personality and stunning, com-
plex, contemporary works of art that
challenge us to think about Marilyn's
personas and her celebrity."

"This exhibit allows all of us to walk
away thinking about her and contem-
porary culture in a new way," she says.
"It is 45 years later, and her beauty tran-
scends time. We really want audiences
to come and be transfixed by that."

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ing, poignant look into the life of a Hollywood icon.