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International Arts & Artists and the American Folk Art Museum announce new partnership and three traveling exhibitions



Artists unidentified, Independent Order of Odd Fellows Heart in Hands Staffs, 1850-1900, Paint and gold leaf on wood, American Folk Art Museum, Gift of Kendra and Allen Daniel, Photo: José Andrés Ramírez.



WASHINGTON, DC.- International Arts & Artists announced a new partnership with the [American Folk Art Museum](#), New York, in celebration of the museum's upcoming 60th Anniversary year in 2021. Drawing from the museum's extensive collection, three exhibitions will be on tour throughout North America from 2021 to 2024.

"We are pleased to partner with International Arts & Artists," says Director of American Folk Art Museum, Jason T. Busch. "As we celebrate our 30th anniversary at Lincoln Square in Manhattan and approach our 60th Anniversary as a museum, we want to create opportunities for new audiences to experience the impact of self-taught art across time and place. Through this new partnership with IA&A, the American Folk Art Museum will expand awareness of the museum and our outstanding collection."

To inaugurate this new collaboration, IA&A and the American Folk Art Museum are making these incredible exhibitions available to art museums across the country:

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Mystery and Benevolence: Masonic and Odd Fellows Folk Art comprises a major gift to the museum from Kendra and Allan Daniel of almost 200 works of art used in fraternal societies from the late eighteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries. The exclusive "mystery and privilege" of such brotherhoods is transmitted through secret systems of visual signifiers, passwords, and ritualized performances whose increasingly complex meanings are revealed only as a candidate passes through the degree hierarchy. Mystical, evocative, and sometimes simply strange, the exhibition features objects rich in symbols that are familiar yet utterly at odds with the commonplace.

Handstitched Worlds: The Cartography of Quilts invites viewers to read quilts as maps, tracing the paths of individual stories and experiences that illuminate larger historic events and cultural trends. Spanning the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, the exhibition brings together 40 quilts and hand-drawn maps from the museum's collection that represent a range of materials, motifs, and techniques—from traditional early-American quilts to more contemporary sculptural assemblage.

Fables and Fairytales featuring dynamic animal characters have captured the imaginations of children and adults around the world for thousands of years. Kalila wa Dimna (Kalila and Dimna) is a collection of animal fables that centers around two jackal brothers. The stories originated in India more than two thousand years ago and have been widely circulated in the Near East. Noted scholar, author, and artist Dr. Sabiha Al Khemir has adapted and illustrated three of these lively tales of resourcefulness, jealousy, and friendship in a new volume published by the American Folk Art Museum. The exhibition presents 24 works on paper and features a companion publication.

"IA&A is delighted to be working with the American Folk Art Museum to bring these superb exhibitions to audiences throughout North America," says Lise Dubé-Scherr, Executive Director and CEO of IA&A. "We've presented over 100 exhibitions since we were founded 25 years ago and this partnership not only celebrates the American Folk Art Museum's rich holdings, but it aligns perfectly with our mission to promote cross-cultural understanding through the arts by way of each exhibition's unique narrative."

Mystery and Benevolence, The Cartography of Quilts, and Fables and Fairytales will tour from 2021 through 2024 traveling to an estimated nine venues each, reaching thousands of museum visitors and engaging them to experience new ways of seeing and thinking about art. Whether it be through enigmatic objects with charged meanings, the blending of traditional and contemporary quilting techniques, or by bringing light to lesser known fables, these exhibitions make vital connections that expand our understanding of the world and of each other.

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