

For Immediate Release

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Introducing Tony Conrad: A Retrospective at the Albright-Knox and University at Buffalo

Buffalo, NY – The Albright-Knox Art Gallery and University at Buffalo Art Galleries are pleased to co-present the special exhibition *Introducing Tony Conrad: A Retrospective*. The exhibition, which includes major artworks by Conrad installed at both institutions, opened at the UB Art Gallery (UBAG) Center for the Arts on February 8 and runs through May 26, and opens at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery March 3 and runs through May 27.

Throughout his six-decade career, Tony Conrad (American, 1940–2016) forged his own path through numerous artistic movements, from Fluxus to the Pictures Generation and beyond. Although he was best known for his pioneering contributions to both minimal music and structural film in the 1960s, his work helped define a vast range of culture; as he once declared in an interview, “You don’t know who I am, but somehow, indirectly, you’ve been affected by things I did.” This exhibition, the first large-scale museum survey devoted to artworks Conrad presented in museum and gallery settings, is part of an ongoing reappraisal of his creative achievements. Indeed, because of the extraordinary scope of Conrad’s contributions to art and culture, this retrospective may be seen as only an “introduction.”

An opening celebration at the Albright-Knox will take place on March 2 from 5 to 9 pm, featuring a public conversation between artist Tony Oursler and art historian Branden W. Joseph at 7:15 pm in the museum’s Auditorium. UBAG will host a second reception on March 3 from 11 am to 2 pm, in coordination with the March 2 Albright-Knox opening. Both receptions are free and open to the public. Visitors to Buffalo wishing to see the exhibition in both locations should plan their trips between the evening of March 2 and May 26, 2018.

“As an artist, musician, community activist, trenchant critic of the media status quo, and UB professor for 40 years, Tony Conrad made an enormous impact. This exhibition honors both the Albright-Knox and UB’s long relationship with Conrad, which in both cases dates to his arrival in Buffalo in 1976,” said Cathleen Chaffee, Chief Curator of the Albright-Knox. Rachel Adams, Senior Curator of Exhibitions at the UB Art Galleries observed, “It was only towards the end of his life that Tony Conrad’s visual art was embraced by museums and galleries with the same enthusiasm that had met his films and music. We are proud to collaborate with the

Albright-Knox to realize this first large-scale museum survey that honors his work as an artist.”

Conrad’s first film, *The Flicker*, 1966—a stroboscopic experiment famous for its attack on both the filmic medium and its audience’s senses—soon led to projects in which he treated film as a sculptural and performative material. In *Sukiyaki Film*, 1973, for instance, Conrad rapidly stir-fried film and hurled it at the screen, and in his *Yellow Movies*, 1972–73, he coated paper surfaces with cheap paint and presented them as slowly changing “films.” He invented musical instruments out of materials as humble as a Band-Aid tin and presented these acoustical tools as sculptures themselves. In the 1980s, his ambitious films about power relations in the army and in prisons critiqued what he perceived as an emerging culture of surveillance, control, and containment. His collaborative programs for public access television in 1990s made him an influential voice within the community. Each of these bodies of work will be highlighted through different examples on view at both the Albright-Knox and UBAG.

A deep-rooted contributor to the cultural life of Buffalo, Conrad was a SUNY Distinguished professor in the Department of Media Study at UB from 1976 until his death. He was a founder of Squeaky Wheel Film and Media Art Center and a frequent collaborator with Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center and the Burchfield Penney Art Center. These community partners have all planned associated installations, screenings, performances, and more from January through May 2018. For more information on programs organized in association with *Introducing Tony Conrad: A Retrospective* please visit: <http://www.albrightknox.org/introducing-tony-conrad-retrospective-related-events>

The accompanying catalogue, to be published in the spring of 2018 by the Albright-Knox in association with Walther König Verlag, is edited by Cathleen Chaffee, with contributions by Chaffee, Rachel Adams, Vera Alemani, Constance DeJong, Diedrich Diederichsen, Anthony Elms, David Grubbs, Henriette Huldish, Branden W. Joseph, Andrew Lampert, Christopher Müller, Annie Ochmanek, Tony Oursler, Tina Rivers Ryan, Jay Sanders, Paige Sarlin, and Christopher Williams.

The exhibition will travel for a co-presentation at MIT’s List Visual Arts Center and the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University from October 2018 to January 2019, and to the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania in February 2019.

Conrad’s work is in the collection of Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo.

Introducing Tony Conrad: A Retrospective is organized by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery with the support of the University at Buffalo Art Galleries. Its presentation in Buffalo is organized by Cathleen Chaffee, Chief Curator, Albright-Knox Art Gallery,

and Rachel Adams, Senior Curator, University at Buffalo Art Galleries, with Tina Rivers Ryan, Assistant Curator, Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

This exhibition has been made possible through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Banta; Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne; and Greene Naftali, New York. Equipment and technical support provided by Advantage TI. The Albright-Knox Art Gallery's exhibition program is generously supported by The Seymour H. Knox Foundation, Inc.

About the UB Art Galleries:

The University at Buffalo is privileged to have two art galleries dedicated to the university's mission for academic excellence and service to the community. Each gallery presents a year-round series of exhibitions, providing students and the broader community easy access to thought-provoking art, visiting artists, and stimulating educational programs. In addition, the UB Art Galleries provide professional training for graduate and undergraduate students through internships and curatorial opportunities, and support faculty and student research.

The UB Art Galleries are supported by the UB College of Arts and Sciences, the Visual Arts Building Fund, the Anderson Gallery Fund and the Seymour H. Knox Foundation Fine Arts Fund. Hotel support is provided by the Doubletree Club by Hilton Buffalo Downtown.

UB Art Gallery, CFA: Tuesday–Friday 11 am–5 pm and Saturday 1–5 pm.
ADMISSION IS FREE.

The Albright-Knox Art Gallery is recognized as home to one of the world's leading collections of contemporary and modern art. With more than 7,000 objects in its collection and a dynamic series of exhibitions and public programs, the Albright-Knox continues to grow and to fulfill its mission to acquire, exhibit, and preserve contemporary and modern art in an enriching, dynamic, and vibrant environment.

MUSEUM HOURS: Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm. M&T FIRST FRIDAYS @ THE GALLERY takes place on the first Friday of every month from 10 am to 10 pm. Closed Mondays and Independence, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Days. Admission is \$12 for adults; \$8 for seniors and students; \$6 for youth ages 6 to 18; FREE for Albright-Knox Members and children 5 and under. Additional fees may apply for certain special exhibitions. For additional information, please visit www.albrightknox.org.

The Albright-Knox Art Gallery's annual operations are supported, in part, by public funds from the County of Erie and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and by the generosity of our Members. M&T FIRST FRIDAYS @ THE GALLERY is made possible by a generous grant from M&T Bank; media sponsorship is provided by Kiss 98.5. The Art'scool program is presented by BlueCross Blue Shield of Western New York with additional support provided by an anonymous donor, the Robert J. & Martha B. Fierle Foundation, and Lawley. Access AK is made possible through the generous support of the James H. Cummings Foundation, Inc. Endowment; National Fuel; and an anonymous donor. AK Teens is presented by KeyBank. The AK Innovation Lab was founded with leadership support from The John R. Oishei Foundation, The Seymour H. Knox Foundation, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. The Public Art Initiative was established and is supported by leadership funding from the County of Erie and the City of Buffalo.

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