ELMHURST ART MUSEUM PRESENTS THE MIDWEST PREMIERE OF
BLOW UP: INFLATABLE CONTEMPORARY ART
September 10 – November 27, 2016

Concurrently with the World Premiere of Inflatable Opera Birth Death Breath

(June 16, 2016) Elmhurst Art Museum proudly presents the Midwest premiere of BLOW UP: Inflatable Contemporary Art, an exploration of air as a sculptural medium. The exhibition, organized by California-based Bedford Gallery, investigates the imaginative ways that artists use air as a tool for creating large-scale sculpture and opens a dialogue about pop culture and social norms. The exhibition will be on display from September 10 – November 27, 2016.

While inflatable objects are typically associated with advertising, children’s entertainment or holiday decorations, the format has been appropriated by a diverse group of artists to explore complex subjects such as identity, materialism and war. Playing with scale, color and the inherent light-heartedness of balloons, the selected artists produce a wide variety of sculptural forms from Lewis deSoto’s sleeping Buddha to Claire Ashley’s colorful abstract shapes. In addition to works by Ashley (Chicago) and deSoto (Napa), the traveling exhibition includes
major works by Lee Boroson (New York), Patrick Flibotte (New York), Joshua Allen Harris (New York), Billie Grace Lynn (Miami), Guy Overfelt (San Francisco), Momoyo Torimitsu (Tokyo/New York) and Christo and Jean-Claude.

Presented alongside Blow Up: Inflatable Contemporary Art, is the World Premiere of Birth Death Breath an opera "performed" by inflatable Christmas lawn decorations in various stages of inflation and deflation. Conceived, written and staged by Chicago artists Diane Christiansen and Jeanne Dunning, visitors are invited to move amongst the various inflatable characters as they rise from the ground and begin to sing, seeming to come back to life. In a way that is simultaneously humorous and heartfelt, the installation explores timeless existential questions about the meaning of life and the incomprehensibility of death. Birth Death Breath will be shown at Elmhurst Art Museum from September 22 to November 27, 2016.

Blow Up: Inflatable Contemporary Art was organized by Carrie Lederer, Curator of Exhibitions, Bedford Gallery, Lesher Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, CA. This exhibition was made possible by a grant from The National Endowment for the Arts.

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About Elmhurst Art Museum
Elmhurst Art Museum is located at 150 Cottage Hill Avenue in Elmhurst (IL), 25 minutes from downtown Chicago by car or public transportation (Metra). The Museum is both an international destination for Mies van der Rohe scholars and fans and a regional center where people from Chicago and the western suburbs learn to see and think differently through the study of the art, architecture and design of our time.

The Museum is open Wednesday-Sunday from 11am – 5pm (8pm on Saturdays). Admission is $8 ($7 for seniors) and free for students and children under the age of 18. Tuesday is open for tours only.

For more information, please call 630.834.0202 or visit elmhurstartmuseum.org

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PHOTO CAPTION:
MOMOYO TORIMITSU, SOMEHOW I DON’T FEEL COMFORTABLE, 2000, INFLATABLE NYLON BALLOONS, 6.5 X 6.5 X 15.8 FEET EACH, PHOTO BY KIOKUKEIZO, COURTESY OF MISA SHIN GALLERY, TOKYO, JAPAN