

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:**

Elizabeth Bazan

Elizabeth.Bazan@Illinois.gov

217-558-6696

**“Robert Middaugh: Machines Inherit the Earth” Highlights New Exhibitions Opening Sept. 2 at Illinois State Museum in Springfield**

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois State Museum in Springfield will open three new exhibitions on Sept. 2 featuring the work of Chicago artist Robert Middaugh – **“Robert Middaugh: Machines Inherit the Earth”** – along with works by a host of other artists, including many works from the Illinois State Museum Illinois Legacy Collection.

The exhibitions highlight the career of Robert Middaugh (1935-2011), who’s paintings and assemblages present strange, fantastic structures and machines inhabiting a mysterious, deserted world. Middaugh's work pulls together Surrealism, Magical Realism, and Precisionism, along with a palette of broad, flat color and precisely rendered images.

The exhibition is comprised of 20 artworks ranging in date from 1964 to 2005. Sixteen works in the exhibition are from a gift to the Museum’s collection from Burlington, Iowa artist Jerry Torn in 2016. The exhibition title comes from a 1974 *Chicago Sun-Times* review of Robert Middaugh's work: “[Middaugh] invented a mysterious land of machines that have inherited the earth, keeping smoke pouring from the factory chimneys without visible human aid. Perhaps Middaugh is saying that things run smoother, albeit more sinisterly, without the hand of man.”

In addition to **“Robert Middaugh: Machines Inherit the Earth”** are two exhibitions complementing Middaugh’s work.

**“Bricks and Metaphor: Architecture as Poetic Space”**

This exhibition includes work by artists from the Illinois State Museum's Illinois Legacy Collection who consider the built world as a poetic space. It features artwork from the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Program of the 1930s to the present day. Like Middaugh's work, all the artists in this exhibition look to buildings and interiors as a metaphor, making implied comparisons to architecture and human experience. Artist List: Berenice Abbott, Gertrude Abercrombie, Jean Crawford Adams, Harold Allen, Tony Armour, Don Baum, Fred Becker, David Bower, Patty Carroll, Fay Chong, Charles Dahlgreen, Horatio Forjohn, Irean Gordon, James Hawker, Margo Hoff, Richard Hull, Hyman Katz, Dave Klamen, Gary Kolb, Nathan Lerner, Robert McCauley, Elizabeth Olds,

Martin Puryear, Nicholas Sistler, Thomas Skomski, Daniel Smajo-Ramirez, Bob Thall, Dox Thrash, and Reynold Weidenaar.

**“Confluence: Friends and Contemporaries of Robert Middaugh”**

This companion exhibition presents artwork from the Museum’s permanent collection created by friends and contemporaries of Robert Middaugh. It helps to place Middaugh's work in context with other artistic currents of the later-half of the 20th century. Included are works by Middaugh’s life-long friend and former partner Jerry Torn, and close friends Eleanor Spiess-Ferris, Mike Ferris, Martyl, Ruth Duckworth and Barbara Aubin. Also included is a print by his teacher, Vera Berdich, and works by three contemporaries of Middaugh who share with him common interests in subject matter and approaches to representation.

The exhibitions, which open on Sat., Sept. 2, were curated/organized by Illinois State Museum Associate Curator of Art Doug Stapleton.

The Illinois State Museum is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and Sunday from 12 noon until 4:30 p.m. The Museum is located at 502 South Spring Street in Springfield. Museum admission: \$5 for adults ages 19-64; free admission for children, seniors, and veterans.