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Images available upon request.

Resplendent Dreams: Reawakening the Rococo Opens June 6 at Newfields
Exhibition displays dresses, sculptures and more inspired by the 1700s Rococo period



INDIANAPOLIS, May 27, 2025 — Gowns and sculptures of Rococo grandeur will grace the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields beginning June 6 with [*Resplendent Dreams: Reawakening the Rococo*](#) showcasing work from three contemporary queer artists: Robert Horvath, Anthony Sonnenberg and Diego Montoya. The artists draw on the Rococo period's sense of extravagance and frivolity, demonstrating how the past continues to resonate with their concerns and sensibilities today.

In the exhibition, Horvath, Sonnenberg and Montoya reimagine the playful style of 18th-century Rococo art through their own distinct practices: sculpture, video, performance, painting, installation, fashion and costuming. Their works make the era's latent queerness and sensuality boldly visible, imagining a past and future where self-expression flourishes. Alongside their vibrant and theatrical creations, including stunning textiles, the exhibition features ten 18th-century works from the IMA's collection selected by the artists. From porcelain figurines to paintings by Boucher and Fragonard, each offers a rich dialogue between past and present.

"This exhibition reclaims a devalued aesthetic of maximalist decoration as a tool of subversion, self-expression and visibility," said Michael Vetter PhD, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art. "By revisiting the Rococo period through contemporary practices, these artists challenge artistic hierarchies and reveal how beauty, identity and resistance have long been intertwined."

Learn more about the featured artists and their commissioned artworks which will be found in the exhibition display.

Anthony Sonnenberg, a multidisciplinary artist based in Arkansas, draws on Baroque and Rococo aesthetics to explore themes of desire, beauty, death and time through ceramics, performance and video. His work celebrates the rich aesthetic traditions of the decorative arts, which have long been associated with women and LGBTQ+ communities. Commissioned for this exhibition is Anthony's *Epergne with Candelabra and Vases*, a nearly four-foot-tall ceramic sculpture made of found objects including figurines, silk flowers and fringe, under layers of glaze.

Diego Montoya, a Peruvian-born, Miami-raised artist, creates extravagant, historically inspired costumes that challenge fixed ideas of gender through bold, stylized designs. Influenced by 18th-century fashion and Miami's flamboyant aesthetic, his work reimagines identity and celebrates fluid self-expression, especially within drag culture. Known for his Emmy Award-winning costume designs for hit television shows including *We're Here* and *RuPaul's Drag Race*, Diego and his studio create custom garments for drag queens and other performers that reshape the body into exaggerated and stylized silhouettes. For *Resplendent Dreams*, Newfields commissioned a dramatic gown titled "Rocaille" for Indianapolis performer Blair St. Clair, blending Rococo motifs with showgirl flair.

Robert Horvath, a Slovakian American artist who is an associate professor of painting at the Herron School of Art + Design in Indianapolis, crafted an intricate recreation of a Rococo palace interior entirely from hand and laser-cut watercolor paintings on paper, showcasing astonishing craftsmanship and vivid historical fantasy. Titled *Room for the Lost*

Paradise, this large-scale room installation reclaims a shared sensibility with 18th-century European artists who have frequently been dismissed as frivolous or feminine. The immersive installation features mirrored panels, romantic painted landscapes and extravagant painted decorations, inviting guests to explore untold stories of the Rococo period.

The exhibition will extend beyond the walls of the IMA Galleries into the lush oasis of The Garden, where guests can immerse themselves in a captivating outdoor experience. Throughout the summer season, the landscape will be brought to life with vibrant, meticulously designed plantings curated by the expert Newfields horticulture team and inspired by works of art from *Resplendent Dreams*. The garden beds create a rich tapestry of color, texture and seasonal beauty that complements and enhances the art on display.

"Newfields is honored to present the deeply engaging work of Diego Montoya, Anthony Sonnenberg and Robert Horvath," said Belinda Tate, the Melvin & Simon Director of the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields. "Each artist contributes a distinctive voice to an imaginative dialogue between past and present, drawing on creative practices that span fashion, sculpture, photography and architecture. This exhibition offers our community a bold reimagining of the Rococo era — one that centers queerness not as something hidden, but as something visible and transformative."

On Friday, June 6 at 7 p.m. in the Tobias Theater, Newfields will celebrate the opening of the exhibition with a [Panel Discussion](#) featuring exhibition curator Michael Vetter, Robert Horvath and two distinguished scholars of eighteenth-century art and culture: Ayana Smith, Chair of the Department of Musicology at IU Bloomington and Rebecca L. Spang, Distinguished Professor of History at IU Bloomington.

The museum will also celebrate the opening of *Resplendent Dreams* along with five other new exhibitions at [Artful Party: Summer](#) on Friday, June 27 from 8-10 p.m. Dress to impress in your summer best and enjoy an evening of music, mingling and curated experiences. Dance to sets by local DJs, sip on seasonal cocktails inspired by each exhibition and indulge in artfully paired hors d'oeuvres.

Resplendent Dreams is curated by Michael Vetter PhD, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art at Newfields. The exhibition will be in the Gerald and Dorit Paul Galleries opening June 6, 2025, through March 2026.

Image Credit:

Anthony Sonnenberg (American, b. 1986), *Epergne with Candelabra and Vases (for the IMA)*, 2024, porcelain over stoneware and found ceramic tchotchkes with glaze, 48 × 18 × 18 in. Commissioned by the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields. © Anthony Sonnenberg.

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About Newfields:

Newfields offers dynamic experiences with art and nature for guests of all ages. The 152-acre cultural campus features art galleries, lush gardens, a historic home, performance spaces, a nature preserve and sculpture park. From inspiring exhibitions in the IMA Galleries, to concerts in The Tobias Theater, to a stroll through The Garden with a glass of something cold, guests are invited to interact with art and nature in exciting new ways. Newfields is home to the Indianapolis Museum of Art, among the ten largest and ten oldest general art museums in the nation; the Lilly House, a National Historic Landmark; The Garden, featuring 40 acres of contemporary and historic gardens, The Madeline F. Elder Greenhouse; and The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, one of the largest art and nature parks in the country. The Newfields campus extends outside of Indianapolis with Miller House and Garden in Columbus, Ind.—one of the nation's most highly regarded examples of mid-century Modernist architecture. For more information, visit [DiscoverNewfields.org](https://discovernewfields.org).

Media Contact:

Mattie Wethington
Director of Communications
317-923-1331 ext. 265
mwethington@discovernewfields.org

Jack Wright
Public Relations Manager
317-923-1331 ext. 174
jhwright@discovernewfields.org