

## Crossroads: The Paintings of John Mellencamp



John Mellencamp

**Melvis II, 2020**

House paint, oil, and charcoal on Masonite  
20 ½ x 16 ½ in.

Collection of John and Michelle Vickery

**Bloomington, IN, August 9, 2024**—The Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art at Indiana University is pleased to announce an exhibition of artwork by award-winning musician and accomplished artist John Mellencamp.

*Crossroads: The Paintings of John Mellencamp*, which opens on September 5, 2024, is the first exhibition at Indiana University (IU) to focus on the paintings of Indiana-born artist John Mellencamp. Since the 1970s, when he arrived in New York City to pursue a career in music and art, Mellencamp has created works of art that express a conflicted view of America, especially the plight of Americans living in the Midwest who have felt abandoned and overlooked. European Expressionism and American Regionalism serve as inspirations for Mellencamp's artistic practice, providing a means of articulating social criticism in visual terms. Influences include German Expressionist Max Beckmann, Austrian Secessionist Egon Schiele, Walt Kuhn, Jack Levine, Robert Rauschenberg, and Jean-Michel Basquiat. The exhibition explores common themes in Mellencamp's work, including relationships, politics, self-portraits, outsiders, and life in small towns in the nation's heartland.

"I am thrilled to present this exhibition of work by Hoosier artist John Mellencamp. IU students and our Bloomington community will have a unique opportunity to see a thought-provoking

body of work that connects them with a sense of place, specifically the Midwest. My heartfelt thanks to Mr. Mellencamp for his generosity in sharing his art with IU,” commented David A. Brenneman, Wilma E. Kelley Director, Eskenazi Museum of Art.

The exhibition was organized in part by IU students who participated in the spring 2024 class Public Art and Collaboration: Curating the Heartland: Developing an Exhibition of John Mellencamp’s Painting, which was taught by David A. Brenneman, Wilma E. Kelley Director of the Eskenazi Museum of Art, and Caleb Weintraub, Associate Professor of Painting at the Eskenazi School of Art, Architecture + Design.

### **About John Mellencamp**

John Mellencamp is a member of the Rock and Roll and Songwriters Halls of Fame, a recipient of the John Steinbeck Award, ASCAP Foundation’s Champion Award, The Woody Guthrie Award, the Americana Music Association’s Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Founders Award, the top honor assigned by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers.

### **About the IU Eskenazi Museum of Art**

Since its establishment in 1941, the Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Museum of Art has grown from a small university teaching collection into one of the most significant university art collections in the United States. A preeminent teaching museum on the Indiana University campus, its internationally acclaimed collection includes more than 45,000 objects representing nearly every art-producing culture throughout history from around the world.

The Eskenazi Museum of Art recently completed a \$30 million renovation of its acclaimed I. M. Pei–designed building. The newly renovated museum is an enhanced teaching resource for Indiana University and southern Indiana. The museum is dedicated to engaging students, faculty, artists, scholars, alumni, and the wider public through the cultivation of innovative ideas and scholarship.

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