The *Silver Clouds* at MOCRA

It is difficult to describe the *Silver Clouds* installation. Saying that it involves almost 70 large silver mylar pillow-shaped balloons tumbling around MOCRA's spacious gallery with its 30-foot high ceilings doesn't convey the captivating experience of walking through the *Clouds*, or lying on the floor as they float overhead, or having one nudge you as if inviting you to come play.

This interactive exhibit was described by one sixth grader as “dazzling, stunning, dancing, unreal, humble, acrobatic, joyous, amazing, complete, magical pillowy.” Yet for some people the *Clouds* also have been agents of calming and of healing, providing momentary respite from the stresses in their lives, or giving embodiment to deep, sometimes difficult emotional experiences.

MOCRA's presentation is the largest ever installation of the *Clouds*. The *Clouds* installation is a visual, auditory and tactile experience that appeals immediately to the child in everyone.
Andy Warhol and the Silver Clouds

Andy Warhol (1928–87) is among the most notable and influential of twentieth-century artists. He worked in many media, including painting, sculpture, filmmaking, and publishing. Though best known for his images of consumer culture icons like Campbell's soup cans and pop icons like Marilyn Monroe, Warhol's wide-ranging artistic legacy has been explored with a recent major retrospective show in Berlin, London, and Los Angeles. Some art historians have detected a sensitivity to religious imagery in Warhol's work, perhaps influenced by his lifelong ties to the Carpatho-Rusyn Byzantine Catholic Church. Dr. Jane Daggett Dillenberger has examined this aspect in her groundbreaking work, *The Religious Art of Andy Warhol*. It is from this vantage point that Saint Louis University's Museum of Contemporary Religious Art (MOCRA) once again presents the largest ever installation of Warhol's *Silver Clouds*.

The *Silver Clouds* debuted 40 years ago in 1966 at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York City. Warhol explored new technology and media throughout his career and engaged in a number of fruitful collaborations with people in a variety of disciplines. The *Silver Clouds* were created with the assistance of engineer Billy Klüver (1927–2004), who worked with other notable artists such as John Cage and Robert Rauschenberg. They were later incorporated into a 1968 dance piece by choreographer Merce Cunningham titled *Rainforest*. Mercurial and buoyant, these pillow-shaped silver mylar balloons roam the air currents of MOCRA's spacious nave gallery and respond to the touch of the viewer.

MOCRA introduced St. Louis audiences to the *Silver Clouds* in 2001 and reprised the exhibition in 2002. The exhibition offers a visual, auditory and tactile experience that appeals immediately to the child in everyone. As Jeff Daniel wrote in 2001 in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *Clouds* at MOCRA move beyond “time-honored and somewhat kitschy images of a cloud-filled heaven” to a “true, meditative effect,” “a spiritual quality,” and “a calming effect when one literally walks through the clouds.”

MOCRA welcomes all visitors to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the *Clouds* this fall at MOCRA.

ANDY WARHOL

SILVER CLOUDS

through 17 December 2006

MOCRA

Museum of Contemporary Religious Art

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One St. Louis sixth grader who visited the earlier *Silver Clouds* installations at MOCRA in 2002 described the Clouds as

“dazzling, stunning, dancing, unreal, humble, acrobatic, joyous, amazing, complete, magical pillowy.”