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HAPPY 150th BIRTHDAY CLARIBEL CONE!

Nov 5, 2014 – The Weatherspoon Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro is hosting a birthday party for Dr. Claribel Cone! Join us Friday, November 14, from 2 to 4 pm, as we celebrate Claribel’s 150th birthday. Curator of Collections Elaine D. Gustafson will talk briefly at 2:30 pm about WAM’s Cone Collection, which Claribel (1864-1929) and her sister Etta (1870-1949) made possible with their bequest. Selected works from the Cone Collection will be on view in the Atrium for this fun event and, of course, there will be birthday cake and even a special guest! All ages are welcome.

Claribel and Etta Cone were two of the thirteen children of Herman and Helen Cone, Jewish immigrants who found success in America in the grocery and textile industries. They were raised in Baltimore, where Claribel (1864-1929) earned a medical degree (an “unladylike” ambition in those days) from Woman’s Medical College.

In Paris, the Cone sisters met Pablo Picasso in 1905 and Henri Matisse in 1906. They began to collect their work when modern art was still not widely known, let alone appreciated. Their adventurous spirit in collecting over the next forty years resulted in the formation of one of the most important collections of modern art in America.
Eventually, the sisters gave about 3,000 works of art to the Baltimore Art Museum, where they may be seen today.

A second Cone collection, one less well known internationally, is treasured here in North Carolina: the Claribel and Etta Cone Collection at the Weatherspoon Art Museum. How did a part of their collection come here, to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro? As mentioned, the Cone family was successful in the textile business, and many of their mills were located in the South, particularly in Greensboro. Moses Cone, brother of Claribel and Etta, built a vacation home in North Carolina at Blowing Rock. Etta was a frequent visitor there, as were other members of the Cone family. One such member was Etta's sister-in-law, Laura Weill (Mrs. Julius) Cone. Laura Cone was a loyal alumna of UNCG. She knew that the Weatherspoon Art Gallery had been established on campus in 1942, and knew, too, that the young organization was struggling to get established. She asked her sister-in-law, Etta, if she would consider donating some of her collection to the Weatherspoon. In Etta’s will, dated May 18, 1949, she left to the Woman’s College (as it was known then) an astonishing collection of sixty-seven Matisse prints and six Matisse bronzes as well as a large number of modern prints and drawings, including works by Pablo Picasso, Félix Vallotton, Raoul Dufy, and John Graham, which she and her sister Claribel had once owned.

Image: Unknown, Claribel Cone, detail, c. 1900, photo engraving, Gift of Isabel and Sydney M. Cone, Jr. 1981.

For additional information about the museum, visit http://weatherspoon.uncg.edu.

About the Weatherspoon Art Museum

Mission
The Weatherspoon Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro acquires, preserves, exhibits, and interprets modern and contemporary art for the benefit of its multiple audiences, including university, community, regional, and beyond. Through these activities, the museum recognizes its paramount role of public service, and enriches the lives of diverse individuals by fostering an informed appreciation and understanding of the visual arts and their relationship to the world in which we live.

History
The Weatherspoon Art Museum at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro was founded by Gregory Ivy in 1941 and is the earliest of any art facilities within the UNC system. The museum was founded as a resource for the campus, community, and region and its early leadership developed an emphasis—maintained to this day—on presenting and acquiring modern and contemporary works of art. A 1950 bequest from the renowned collection of Claribel and Etta Cone, which included prints and bronzes by Henri Matisse and other works on paper by American and European modernists, helped to establish the Weatherspoon’s permanent collection. Other prescient acquisitions during Ivy’s tenure included a 1951 suspended mobile by Alexander Calder, Woman by Willem de Kooning, a pivotal work in the artist’s career that was purchased in 1954, and the first drawings by Eva Hesse and Robert Smithson to enter a museum collection.
In 1989, the museum moved into its present location in The Anne and Benjamin Cone Building designed by the architectural firm Mitchell/Giurgola. The museum has six galleries and a sculpture courtyard with over 17,000 square feet of exhibition space. The American Association of Museums accredited the Weatherspoon in 1995 and renewed its accreditation in 2005.

Collections + Exhibitions
The permanent collection of the Weatherspoon Art Museum is considered to be one of the foremost of its kind in the Southeast. It represents all major art movements from the beginning of the 20th century to the present. Of the nearly 6,000 works in the collection are pieces by such prominent figures as Sol LeWitt, Robert Mangold, Cindy Sherman, Al Held, Alex Katz, Henry Tanner, Louise Nevelson, Mark di Suvero, Deborah Butterfield, and Robert Rauschenberg. The museum regularly lends to major exhibitions nationally and internationally.

The Weatherspoon also is known for its adventurous and innovative exhibition program. Through a dynamic annual calendar of fifteen to eighteen exhibitions and a multi-disciplinary educational program for audiences of all ages, the museum provides an opportunity for audiences to consider artistic, cultural, and social issues of our time and enriches the life of our university, community, and region.

Weatherspoon Art Museum
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