January 14, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – EXHIBITION

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Pan American Modernism: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America and the United States
January 30 – May 1, 2016

Pan American Modernism Directors Preview, Gallery Talk, and Public Reception
Friday, January 29, 5-8pm

The Weatherspoon Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro is pleased to announce Pan American Modernism: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America and the United States, an exhibition featuring the work of 20th-century masters, including Wifredo Lam, Man Ray, Diego Rivera, Joaquín Torres-García, Adolph Gottlieb, Jacob Lawrence, Hans Hofmann and Lee Krasner, among others. More than 70 seminal works by over 60 artists from 13 countries across North, South and Central America and the Caribbean highlight a 60-year period of artistic exchange from 1919 to 1979. The exhibition demonstrates how cross-fertilization, rather than stylistic transmission, constructs a full understanding of Modernism as an international phenomenon across the Americas during this period.

Developed by the Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami, the exhibition includes paintings, sculpture, works on paper, photography, and mixed media works. The works of art illustrate the many forms in which Modernism took shape and reveal the
commonalities and disconnects that developed throughout the Americas. Rather than perpetuating a North American-centric hegemony, which tends to diminish and polarize works of art produced by Latin American artists, *Pan American Modernism* demonstrates that these artists were not working in isolation; rather, the global influences of Central and South American artists contributed to the experimental, innovative nature of Modernism in the U.S.

The exhibition is framed by five dynamic themes: Mexican Muralism and Its Legacy; The Female Muse: Class, Gender, Race; Abstract Expressionism: A Pan American Language; Modernist Photography: Pan American Exchanges; and, Geometric Abstraction and Its Legacy.

In *Mexican Muralism and Its Legacy*, the parameters of modern, socially minded art are explored, particularly in the development of muralism. José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, known as “the big three” painters within the Mexican mural movement, are presented alongside U.S. artists Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, and Ben Shahn, each of whom expressed his interest in muralism and admired the possibility for social reform through this form of art. However, not all artists accepted the nationalistic overtones and the social realist style of muralism. The inclusion of work by José Luis Cuevas, Rufino Tamayo, and others working in Mexico reveal the variety of modernist styles that developed in this country during the early and mid-twentieth century.

**The Female Muse: Class, Gender, Race** examines the international interest in the female form between 1919 and 1979. Objects in this section propose commonalities among disparate works via subject matter, rather than stylistic, nationalistic, or cultural constructs. Notions of race, artistic “primitivism,” and class distinction equally develop as motifs alongside the overarching theme of gender. Photographs by Lola Álvarez Bravo and Man Ray exemplify these themes alongside paintings and drawings by the Cuban Vanguardia, who explored the female body through the visual language of naturalism, surrealism, cubism, or a combination of divergent styles. The Colombian modernists Enrique Grau and Guillermo Wiedemann similarly reveal their interest in (though differing from) European representations of the female muse, offering images that convey a strong sense of aesthetic hybridity.

Rather than perpetuating a modernist narrative focused solely on the United States, *Abstract Expressionism: A Pan American Language* proposes that this style and its legacy (including Color Field painting) might instead be viewed as a Pan American language that developed through artistic dialogues among Pan American artists, or within independent schools that formed in the 1940s through the 1970s in the Americas. It is known, for example, that European Expressionism and Surrealism played a significant role in the New York School’s initial exploration of abstraction, though it is less well-known that works by the Chilean artist Matta had a profound effect on the early development of these New-based artists. Artists associated with the New York School (such as Adolph Gottlieb, Lee Krasner, Knox Martin, and Robert Motherwell) are therefore juxtaposed alongside their contemporaries from Latin America, such as Matta, the Cuban Los Once artists, and the Puerto Rican abstractionists Olga Albizu and Luis Hernández Cruz. Individuals who openly, though sometimes inconspicuously, rejected Abstract Expressionism and Color Field painting in favor of neo-figuration, such as Fernando Botero, Ernesto Deira, Sacha Tebó, and Enrique Castro-Cid, also are included as stylistic challenges to the concepts of abstraction developed by their peers.
**Modernist Photography: Pan American Exchanges** examines the manner in which Pan American artists utilized the camera to explore modernity by way of the photographic lens and via different genres, such as studio portraiture, documentary photography, or social realism. Prints by Paul Strand and Edward Weston illustrate the value and importance of travel, as each of these U.S. artists spent time in Mexico, which had a profound effect on their individual oeuvres. Weston, in turn, encouraged Manuel Álvarez Bravo to continue to pursue the medium as a fine art form in the late 1920s. Images by Lola Álvarez Bravo, Man Ray, and Arnold Newman are contrastingly included in other sections within the exhibition, as they reinforce photography’s desire and ability to confront themes explored by other mediums, such as painting, drawing, and printmaking.

**Geometric Abstraction and Its Legacy** examines geometric abstraction, variously called non-objective painting, Neo-plasticism, or Constructivism, as it was explored by countless modern artists in the United States and Latin America. In South America, the well-known Uruguayan Constructivist artist Joaquín Torres-García was an early proponent of geometric abstraction and was responsible for popularizing this form of abstract art in the 1930s and 1940s. In terms of geometric abstraction’s legacy, Concrete art, Minimalism, hard-edge painting, post-painterly abstraction, and Optical art (or Op art) can collectively be seen to have developed out of, or as a form of, this concept of abstraction at mid-century. A number of artists represented in this module were first shown together in William C. Seitz’s exhibition *The Responsive Eye*, held at New York’s Museum of Modern Art in 1965. These individuals include: U.S. artists Richard J. Anuszkiewicz, Gene Davis, Kenneth Noland, Julian Stanczak, and Frank Stella, and the Venezuelan artist Carlos Cruz-Diez. *Pan American Modernism* examines objects by these artists, but additionally presents works by Pierre Daura, Gordon Matta-Clark, Jesús Rafael Soto, and Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar.

A rare opportunity to have so many principal artists together in one exhibition, *Pan American Modernism* showcases the significant themes and innovations developed in a dynamic modern age. The keen and rarely seen examples chosen for the exhibition reveal the international exchanges that transpired across the Americas and validate the legacy of these profound artists, demonstrating their unique contributions to the history of modern and avant-garde art.

*The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with scholarly essays by Nathan Timpano, Assistant Professor of Art History at the University of Miami; Edward J. Sullivan, Helen Gould Sheppard Professor of the History of Art at the Institute of Fine Arts and the Department of Art History at New York University; and Heather Diack, Assistant Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at the University of Miami.*

*Pan American Modernism: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America in the United States* was developed by the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, with tour organized by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC. Scheduled U.S. tour are as follows: Art Gallery of University of Saint Joseph, West Hartford, CT (September 24, 2015 – December 20, 2015); Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Greensboro (January 30, 2016 – May 1, 2016); Tacoma Museum of Art (January 27, 2017 – May 21, 2017).
Related Education Programs:

**Director's Preview + Opening Reception**  
**Friday, January 29, 5-8pm**  
Join us for a special evening celebrating *Pan American Modernism: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America and the United States.*
- **5pm:** Director's Preview with Nancy Doll. By invitation for Contributor level WAM members and above.
- **6pm:** Members Gallery Talk
- **6:30-8pm:** Public Reception. Free and open to the public. No reservations required.

**Films @ Hemphill Branch Library**  
**Saturday, February 6, 2pm**  
In conjunction with the exhibition *Pan American Modernism,* these special film screenings will be held at the Hemphill Branch Library, 2301 W. Vandalia Rd., Greensboro, NC. Films: *Ben Shahn: Passion for Justice* (58 min.), *The Art of Romare Bearden* (30 min.), and *Man Ray: Prophet of the Avant-Garde* (60 min.)

**Loren Guillén Tango Ensemble**  
**Thursday, February 11, 6pm**  
The Lorena Guillén Tango Ensemble will present selections from tango’s standard repertoire as well as original compositions and commentary on its presence and impact around the world. Performers: Lorena Guillén, voice; Alma Coefman, flute; and Alejandro Rutty, electric-piano.

**Film: Chico and Rita**  
**Thursday, February 18, 6:30pm**  
Oscar-winning Cuban director Fernando Trueba and Spanish designer Javier Mariscal collaborated to create this story in the tradition of the Latin ballad—the bolero. This animated film for adults captures a definitive moment in the evolution of jazz with an original soundtrack by legendary Cuban composer Bebo Valdes and music by Thelonious Monk, Cole Porter, Dizzy Gillespie, and Freddy Cole, 2010 (94 min.). Followed by Latin jazz performed by UNCG students.

**Book Discussion: Isabel Allende’s The House of the Spirits**  
**Thursday, February 25, 6pm**  
Hosted by Greensboro Public Library at the Weatherspoon Art Museum. Join us for a discussion of this important Latin American novel. A limited number of books are available from Greensboro’s Central Library by emailing beth.sheffield@greensboro-nc.gov.

Films @ Hemphill Branch Library
Saturday, February 27, 2pm
In conjunction with the exhibition *Pan American Modernism: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America and the United States*, this special film screening will be held at the Hemphill Branch Library, 2301 W. Vandalia Rd., Greensboro, NC. Film: *The House of the Spirits* (140 min., rated R)

**Casa Azul Night @ WAM**
**Thursday, March 3, 6pm**

**Workshop for Educators**
**Saturday, March 5, 10am** (registration required)
WAM welcomes Brooke Kesterson from the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh for a special day focusing on teaching with art as documents while discovering *Pan American Modernism*. Earn 0.5 CEU. Lunch is provided. For more information email t_dowell@uncg.edu.

** Noon @ the 'Spoon Public Tour**
**Tuesday, March 8, 12pm**
Our 20-minute Noon @ the 'Spoon tour is a fun way to explore a new exhibition during your lunch break. Offered the second Tuesday of the month. Free. This month: *Pan American Modernism: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America and the United States*.

**Films @ Hemphill Branch Library**
**Saturday, March 12, 12:30pm**
In conjunction with the exhibition *Pan American Modernism: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America and the United States*, these special film screenings will be held at the Hemphill Branch Library, 2301 W. Vandalia Rd., Greensboro, NC. Films: *Latin American Women Artists 1915-1995* (27 min.), *Diego Rivera: Art and Revolution* (12 min.), and *Art and Revolution in Mexico* (60 min.).

**Family Film: Alamar**
**Sunday, March 20, 2pm**
On the border between reality and fiction, *Alamar (To the Sea)* focuses on the exquisite bond between Jorge and Natan, his five year-old son. This is a story with mythic overtones and gorgeous cinematography. Dir. Pedro González-Rubio, 2009 (73 min.).

**Pablo Neruda Celebration at the Greensboro Public Library**
**Monday, April 4, 7pm**
Greensboro Central Library, 219 N. Church Street, Greensboro, NC. Community members will read works by Nobel Prize-winning Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, one of the greatest and most influential poets of the 20th century.

**Guest Lecture: Nathan J. Timpano**
**Thursday, April 14, 6pm**
Nathan Timpano, PhD, curator of *Pan American Modernism*, is Assistant Professor of Art History at the University of Miami, where he researches and teaches classes on modern artistic movements in Europe and Latin America.
Films @ Hemphill Branch Library  
Saturday, April 30, 1pm  
In conjunction with the exhibition *Pan American Modernism: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America and the United States*, these special film screenings will be held at the Hemphill Branch Library, 2301 W. Vandalia Rd., Greensboro, NC. Films: *Pollock* (123 min., rated R), and *Frida* (123 min., rated R).

For a complete, updated list of related programs and public tours, visit: [http://weatherspoon.uncg.edu](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 Giurgula. 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.

### About the Curator of *Pan American Modernism*
Nathan Timpano is Assistant Professor of Art History at the University of Miami, where he conducts research and teaches classes on modern artistic movements in Europe and Latin America, respectively. Before joining the faculty at UM, Dr. Timpano held positions at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, the Kreeger Museum, and the Harvard Art Museums. He has been awarded national and international awards, including a DAAD research grant, a Fulbright fellowship, a curatorial fellowship from Harvard University, and a faculty research fellowship at the Center for the Humanities at the University of Miami. In addition to writing the exhibition catalogue for *Pan American Modernism*, Dr. Timpano has published widely on topics in his field, including scholarly essays on the Afro-Chinese Cuban artist Wifredo Lam; the Cuban Los Once/Los Cinco expressionist artists; the use of political satire at Harvard’s Germanic Museum; and the nature of visual culture in fin-de-siècle Vienna.

**About the Lowe Art Museum and the University of Miami**

The Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami has since opening to the public in 1952, served as South Florida’s first and most comprehensive art museum. Today, the museum houses a global collection of over 18,500 works of art, one of the most important in the southeast, with strengths in the arts of the Americas, Europe, the Native and Ancient Americas, Africa, and Asia. Rooted in its mission as a teaching and research museum, the Lowe serves the University of Miami and greater south Florida communities, as well as national and international visitors, through a vibrant array of exhibitions, publications, and public programs that serve to extend and enrich a multicultural understanding of the history of art, culture and society.

**About International Arts & Artists**

International Arts & Artists in Washington, DC, is a non-profit arts service organization dedicated to increasing cross-cultural understanding and exposure to the arts internationally, through exhibitions, programs and services to artists, arts institutions and the public. Visit [www.artsandartists.org](http://www.artsandartists.org)

**Weatherspoon Art Museum**

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