



Fine Arts Center
COLORADO SPRINGS

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center ushers in new era of arts with expansion, 'Extremely Grand Opening' set for August 2007

*Blockbuster exhibits, internationally-renowned art celebrities highlight
'Greatest Art Event in the History of Colorado Springs'*

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (Feb. 9, 2007) – The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (FAC) will unveil its \$28.4 million transformation during its *Extremely Grand Opening*, Aug. 2-5, 2007.

The two-story, 48,000 square-foot expansion, conceived by award-winning architect David Owen Tryba, has been designed to compliment the original 1936 John Gaw Meem building, which has housed the FAC for the past 70 years and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The expanded 132,286 square-foot facility will host major international traveling exhibitions and feature works from the Center's significant permanent collection.

In six short months, the FAC will host a series of blockbuster events to celebrate the unveiling of the new facility, including a visit from international art icon **Thomas Hoving**, the former Director of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art; artist and filmmaker **John Waters**; Broadway legend **Joel Grey** and the inaugural exhibition for the new building – *The Eclectic Eye: Pop and Illusion – Selections from the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation*.

A Center for Fine Arts

The FAC was the first facility of its kind west of the Mississippi to offer arts education, theater and museum under one roof. The new FAC was crafted to marry the old with the new and to meet the burgeoning cultural interests of the region.

"The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center has rich and intriguing roots," said Hoving. "This rebirth is monumental and sets the stage for an infinite future for the arts in the region."

The new museum, which project architect Tryba characterizes as "my finest achievement," will feature nine permanent collection galleries, two traveling exhibition galleries, and an unprecedented tactile gallery; the renovated SaGāJi Theatre with its state-of-the-art lighting and sound systems and a dedicated rehearsal studio; two museum gift shops; seven new art studios and interactive spaces at the Bemis Art School; and a unique courtyard to display outdoor sculpture and hold special events.

"This cultural asset belongs in the company of the top fine arts centers in the world," said Dr. Michael De Marsche, FAC President and CEO. "We expect visits from art and architecture enthusiasts from around the globe, and anticipate their exhilaration will only be surpassed by their appreciation for the various art forms all under one roof."

The FAC's \$2 million collection of Dale Chihuly glass will be installed in the new museum. It is one of the largest in the world and includes the historic nine-foot *Orange Hornet Chandelier*.

The FAC's permanent collection also features a wide array of American art by John Singer Sargent, Arthur Dove, Georgia O'Keeffe, Walt Kuhn, John James Audubon, Robert Motherwell, Paul Cadmus and others. The FAC is noted for having one of the largest collections of Native American and Southwestern Art in the country.

Extremely Grand Opening Exhibit Announced

The inaugural exhibition for the new building will be *The Eclectic Eye: Pop and Illusion – Selections from the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation*, on view from the grand opening celebration through Oct. 28, 2007. The visually stimulating and intellectually challenging exhibition presents a large selection of pop art collected by Weisman and his wife, Billie Milam Weisman. Artists featured include Cristo, Keith Haring, Nam June Paik, James Rosenquist and Andy Warhol, amongst others.

"The Weisman Collection is high on my list of the finest in the nation – everybody should rush to see it," said Hoving.

Extremely Grand Opening Festivities Mirror the Past

A series of blockbuster events are scheduled to celebrate the unveiling of the new facility. On Aug. 2, 2007, the *Extremely Grand Opening* will commence, featuring celebrations not dissimilar from those held at the original grand opening of the FAC in 1936 where Martha Graham danced and Frank Lloyd Wright lectured. Over 70 years later, four days of special events are planned, including appearances by international artists and art experts such as:

- **Thomas Hoving**, the former Director of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, "inventor" of the blockbuster *King Tut* exhibition and author of *Making the Mummies Dance: Inside the Metropolitan Museum of Art*; will reveal his escapades in the wild world of international art in a lecture titled, "*The Artful Tommy: Thomas Hoving, America's Culture Scamp, Reveals How He Zig-zagged His Way Through the Art World*"
- **John Waters**, an outlandish artist and independent film director of such films as *Pink Flamingoes*, *Hairspray* and *Cry Baby*, screens *Cecil B. Demented*.
- **Joel Grey** will tell of his Academy Award-winning performance in *Cabaret* and his role in the hit Broadway musical *Wicked*

Notes for Interested Media

- For ongoing updates about the *Extremely Grand Opening*, visit www.csfineartscenter.org.
- Additional images of the original 1936 building and new facility, the construction and the grand opening exhibition are available upon request.
- To schedule an interview with Dr. Michael De Marsche, David Owen Tryba, or a member of the Board of Trustees, contact Kate Faricy of PRACO by phone at 719.476.4923 or kate@praco.com.

About the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center

The FAC is a privately funded, non-profit art museum, performing arts theatre and arts education center. For more information, visit www.csfineartscenter.org

The Fine Arts Center's *Extremely Grand Opening* is sponsored by The Gazette.

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