GRAND RAPIDS ART MUSEUM ANNOUNCES A THREE-YEAR PARTNERSHIP WITH WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, NEW YORK

Robert Rauschenberg: Synapsis Shuffle, Real/Surreal, and Legacy: The Emily Fisher Landau Collection; exhibitions scheduled through 2014

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., February 29, 2012 – Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) announced today a partnership agreement with the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York that extends through 2014, strengthening the relationship between the two organizations and offering the community of West Michigan access to one of the world’s great collections of contemporary American art. The three-year exhibition schedule includes:

Robert Rauschenberg: Synapsis Shuffle
Currently on loan from the Whitney to complement the current Robert Rauschenberg exhibition, officially opens March 3 and remains on view through May 20, 2012.

Real/Surreal
This exhibition is a close look at the interconnection between two of the strongest currents in twentieth-century American art. The exhibition includes eighty paintings, drawings, photographs, and prints made in the years before, during, and immediately after the Second World War by such artists as Paul Cadmus, Federico Castellón, Ralston Crawford, Mabel Dwight, Jared French, Louis Guglielmi, Edward Hopper, Man Ray, Kay Sage, George Tooker, Grant Wood, and Andrew Wyeth. Organized by Whitney curator Carter Foster.

Legacy: The Emily Fisher Landau Collection
January 31 – April 27, 2014
The world-class Landau Collection, one of the most important gifts of contemporary art to the Whitney, traces many of the ideas that artists have explored since the late 1960s, with depth in Pop Art, Minimalism, conceptualism, and political and social dialogue. A wide range of media is represented, including painting, sculpture, photography, drawing, and mixed media. Featured artists include: Richard Artschwager, John Baldessari, Nan Goldin, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Jenny Holzer, Jasper Johns, Glenn Ligon, Agnes Martin, Ed Ruscha, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol and David Wojnarowicz.

For more information on each exhibition, see below.

GRAM Honorary Life Trustee, Pamella DeVos, who also serves as a Trustee on the board of the Whitney Museum of American Art, together with GRAM Director and CEO Dana Friis-Hansen and Whitney’s Alice Pratt Brown Director Adam D. Weinberg met several months ago and began a discussion that started with the Robert Rauschenberg loan and quickly developed into a longer term arrangement.
"It is an honor to collaborate with the Whitney Museum of American Art, and bring to West Michigan an array of masterpieces of American art from the early twentieth century through the beginning of the twenty-first," said Friis-Hansen. "The exhibitions will inspire discovery, enjoyment, and learning about art, creative thinking, and culture."

Adam D. Weinberg, the Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, stated: "We are delighted to be collaborating with the Grand Rapids Art Museum, a truly vibrant cultural center in West Michigan, on the presentation of three exhibitions which debuted at the Whitney: *Synapsis Shuffle, Real/Surreal, and Legacy: The Emily Fisher Landau Collection*. It's a great pleasure to share these shows with audiences of art lovers outside of New York. We are immensely grateful to Pamella DeVos and the Daniel and Pamella DeVos Foundation for their extraordinary generosity…and for their enduring support of the Whitney."

**Information about Robert Rauschenberg: Synapsis Shuffle**

*March 3 – May 20, 2012*

*Robert Rauschenberg: Synapsis Shuffle* has been exhibited in only two other cities in the world—New York and Paris—before arriving in Grand Rapids.

This exhibition consists of 52 large-scale panels, and is a monumental participatory work that incorporates chance and performance, hallmarks of Rauschenberg's art. Each of the 52 panels is a collage of images taken from photographs the artist took during his global travels. The title of the work and the number of paintings refer to a deck of cards, a clever signal of the work's installation method: each time the panels of *Synapsis Shuffle* are presented, they are meant to be "shuffled" by event participants, in displays of no more than seven and no fewer than three.

GRAM will organize a Grand Rapids event and "deal out a hand" to the event participants, where the panels will be shuffled into a unique exhibition. The event will be filmed and available for viewing after the event. The *Synapsis Shuffle* exhibition will continue through May 20, 2012.

Throughout the course of the exhibitions, guests can enhance their experience by attending diverse weekly programming focusing on Rauschenberg. From lectures, films, drop-in Docent-led tours, gallery talks, and a special Merce Cunningham-inspired dance performance, there are a variety of ways to engage with Rauschenberg's works and learn more about this innovative American artist.

*Robert Rauschenberg: Synapsis Shuffle*. This exhibition was organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. The Grand Rapids presentation has been made possible by Presenting Sponsor Daniel & Pamella DeVos Foundation.

**Information about future exhibitions (excerpts from Whitney press releases)**

*Real/Surreal*

The permeable boundary between the real and the imagined is the subject of *Real/Surreal*. A close look at the interconnection between two of the strongest currents in twentieth-century American art, the exhibition includes eighty paintings, drawings, photographs, and prints made in the years before, during, and immediately after the Second World War by such artists as Paul Cadmus, Federico Castellón, Ralston Crawford, Mabel Dwight, Jared French, Louis Guglielmi, Edward Hopper, Man Ray, Kay Sage, George Tooker, Grant Wood, and Andrew Wyeth. Whitney curator Carter Foster organized the exhibition.

An international movement in art and literature, Surrealism originated in Europe in the 1920s. Its practitioners tapped the subconscious mind to create fantastic, non-rational worlds. While some explored abstraction and used the subconscious to directly influence the formal structure of their work, others developed imagery with strong roots in traditional painting. This vein of Surrealism
flourished most famously in the work of Salvador Dalí and René Magritte, and influenced a host of artists in the United States. As the movement spread internationally and some of the major figures moved to this country in the upheavals of the War, its ideas became more diffuse and permeated both art and popular culture.

This exhibition, the second in a series of shows reexamining the Museum’s collection chronologically from its earliest days to the present, focuses on the tension and overlap between realism and Surrealism. Although the term “realism” has many facets, a basic connection to the observable world underlies all of them; the subversion of reality through the imagination and the subconscious lies at the heart of Surrealism. Surrealism was a liberating force which allowed for all manner of fantastic, unreal imagery, but it also greatly influenced how artists perceived and represented reality. Those who absorbed its ideas learned to invest objects and spaces with symbolic power, making them representative of psychic states, moods, and subconscious impulses. They favored narrative ambiguity over explicitness, intentionally allowing viewers to project their own subjectivity onto the work, so that the viewer’s imagination, and the artist’s, could intertwine.

Yet there are convergences in these different and even oppositional approaches to experience, and they encourage new ways of looking at the art of the twenties, thirties, and forties in America. For example, Edward Hopper, the artist most closely identified with the Whitney, is a painter whose own subjectivity and imagination are integral to his work. Many artists who developed imagery based on new and very specific, concrete conditions of industrial America were essentially interested in artificial worlds and presented these as distillations of reality. Even totally abstract painters such as Yves Tanguy depended on techniques developed from traditional realist art to render other worlds. By willfully distorting such techniques, Helen Lundeberg and Mabel Dwight could quietly undercut our sense of stability, while showing us recognizable and even mundane objects and settings.

Most of the artists on view were academically trained and had a full command of traditional painting and drawing techniques. Those directly connected to European Surrealism or strongly influenced by it used these techniques to subvert and alter the observable world. Harder to categorize are those whose work has certain qualities in common with Surrealism but who tinkered subtly with reality rather than dramatically changing it to expressive ends. Like the Surrealists, their strategies make the familiar unfamiliar, unsettling, or uncanny, and often involve manipulating the tools of representational art. Some, for example, distort spatial perspective by compressing or exaggerating it. They may crop or fragment what they depict, create strange juxtapositions of objects, or unusual shifts in scale; they may distill or accentuate normal qualities in their surroundings—light, shadow, materials, textures—so that these appear abnormal or weird.

Sigmund Freud, whose theories were seminal for Surrealism, described how the uncanny happens when “the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced,” a fitting description of much of the work in this exhibition.

This exhibition was organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

**Legacy: The Emily Fisher Landau Collection**

Legacy: The Emily Fisher Landau Collection is an exhibition of a selection of works from the historic gift of art pledged to the Museum in May 2010 by longtime trustee Emily Fisher Landau. Co-curated by Donna De Salvo, the Whitney’s Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Programs, and David Kiehl, the Museum’s curator of prints and special collections.

“Legacy: The Emily Fisher Landau Collection is the culmination of a single collector’s enduring commitment to contemporary artists and to sharing a love of art,” said Adam D. Weinberg, the Whitney’s Alice Pratt Brown Director. “The gift goes beyond showcasing the best of American art to demonstrate a sense of adventure and a willingness to challenge conventional taste and
Emily Fisher Landau’s gift to the Whitney comprises 419 works by nearly one hundred key figures in American art. It is one of the most important gifts the institution has ever received. De Salvo noted, “We are privileged to be the recipient of this exceptional gift, a testament to Mrs. Landau’s enterprising vision and longtime support of artists, often from the start of their careers. It’s a great honor to present a selection of these works to the public.”

Emily Fisher Landau began collecting art in the late 1960s and since the early 1980s she has focused on building an important collection of contemporary American art. *Legacy* traces many of the ideas that have preoccupied artists in the United States since the late 1960s. Questions about the relevance of painting in the aftermath of Minimalism, debates about representation, “culture wars,” and a revived interest in personal narratives are driving forces in the Emily Fisher Landau collection. *Legacy* allows these questions, as well as the question of what it means to collect contemporary art, to unfold in the galleries.

One section of *Legacy* focuses on Minimalism, broadly defined, with seminal works by artists such as Carl Andre and Agnes Martin as well as works by John McLaughlin, Rodney Graham, Joseph Kosuth, Martin Puryear, and Al Taylor. Another section of the exhibition signals a return by artists to representational and other subjects generally associated with painting by artists such as John Baldessari, Barbara Kruger, Mark Tansey, Peter Cain, and Susan Rothenberg, as well as paintings by Willem de Kooning and Cy Twombly.

*Legacy* highlights Landau’s support of a younger group of artists who engaged in the political and social dialogue that came to the forefront in the vibrant downtown New York scene in the 1980s, a period when Landau began in earnest exploring downtown galleries and artists’ studios. Important works by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Robert Mapplethorpe, Peter Hujar, Nan Goldin, Keith Haring, David Wojnarowicz, and Lorna Simpson deal with AIDS, issues of politics and gender, and race.

*Legacy* also shows the long-standing commitment Landau made to several artists. Here, Richard Artschwager and Ed Ruscha are each represented by works spanning their entire careers. Also, a number of works by Jasper Johns, including a painting from the *Catenary* series and a selection from the gift’s complete set of the artist’s screenprints made between 1968 and 1982, provide an in-depth look at Johns’s career and mastery of this printing process. Others include:

-- Works by Carl Andre, including seminal typewriter drawings and poems of the early 1960s and the large-scale sculpture *28 Lead Rectangle* (1968);
-- Works by Richard Artschwager, including his monumental painting *City of Man* (1981), which spans almost fifteen feet;
-- Works by John Baldessari, including *What This Painting Aims to Do* (1967), a prime example of his important early text paintings;
-- Photographs by Peter Hujar from the 1970s and 80s, including iconic portraits of Andy Warhol, Diana Vreeland, Divine, Lola Pashalinski, Susan Sontag, and David Wojnarowicz;
-- Works by Jasper Johns, including the first of the artist’s important *Catenary* paintings to enter the museum’s comprehensive holdings of his work;
-- A noteworthy 1987 painting by Willem de Kooning, *Untitled*, is the latest de Kooning canvas in the Whitney’s collection;
-- Works by Agnes Martin, including important drawings from the 1960s and an early painting *This Rain* (c. 1960);
-- Major works by Glenn Ligon, who addresses race and gender through text;
-- Works by Ed Ruscha, ranging in date from 1965 to 2002, among them two important canvases, *Give Him Anything and He'll Sign It* (1965), one of his wry bird paintings, and *Lion in Oil* (2002), from the artist’s recent series of mountain paintings.

In addition to the works mentioned above, the exhibition will include significant paintings by
Susan Rothenberg and Andy Warhol, and two stone benches by Jenny Holzer.

Emily Fisher Landau became a trustee of the Whitney in 1990. At the Whitney, she has served as co-chair of the Contemporary Committee; a member of the Library Fellows; a member of the Chairman’s Council; and has participated on several other Museum committees. In 1995, she generously established an endowment to support the Biennial, the Whitney’s signature contemporary exhibition. That same year, the fourth floor galleries at the Whitney were named in her honor. In recognition of her many years of generosity, she was honored at the Whitney’s 2006 annual fall Gala. Her daughter, Candia Fisher, has served on the Whitney’s Print Committee (1996-2000) and Photography Committee (since 2007), continuing the family’s tradition of generous support for the Whitney Museum.

Emily Fisher Landau has shared her time and generosity beyond the walls of the Whitney. In 1991, the Fisher Landau Center for Art was established in Long Island City, housed in a former parachute harness factory. The Center, designed by Max Gordon in association with Bill Katz, is devoted to art education and the exhibition and study of the Fisher Landau collection of contemporary art and stages regular exhibitions drawn from its important holdings. She has served as a trustee of SITE Santa Fe and the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, both in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and has also served on acquisition committees at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, for several decades. In 1999, she established the Fisher Landau Center for the Treatment of Learning Disabilities at Albert Einstein College of Medicine at Yeshiva University and has supported a program at Columbia University Teachers College and New York University that has helped New York City private-school students with learning disabilities. She was made a Chevalier, Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, by the government of France in 1986, received the Haym Solomon Award from the Anti-Defamation League in 2006, and was honored with the 2008 CITYArts Making a Difference through the Arts Award.

Catalogue
Legacy: The Emily Fisher Landau Collection, edited by Dana Miller, showcases some of the best art made in the United States during the past five decades. Included are essays by Donna De Salvo and Joseph Giovannini. The book is published by the Whitney Museum of American Art, in association with Yale University Press, and contains entries on each of the artists whose works are included in the Landau gift, as well as a full-color checklist.

This exhibition was organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

About the Grand Rapids Art Museum
The mission of the Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) is: to inspire discovery, enjoyment, and learning about art; to serve as a welcoming and inclusive cultural resource; to collect, conserve, and interpret works of art of the finest quality. Established in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, the new Art Museum is internationally known for its distinguished design and LEED Gold certified status. Established in 1910 as the Grand Rapids Art Association, GRAM has grown to include more than 5,000 works of art, including American and European 19th and 20th century painting and sculpture and more than 3,500 works on paper. Embracing the city’s legacy as a leading center of design and manufacturing, GRAM has a growing collection in the area of design and modern craft.

About the Whitney
The Whitney Museum of American Art is the world’s leading museum of twentieth-century and contemporary art of the United States. Focusing particularly on works by living artists, the Whitney is celebrated for presenting important exhibitions and for its renowned collection, which comprises over 19,000 works by more than 2,900 artists. With a history of exhibiting the most promising and influential artists and provoking intense debate, the Whitney Biennial, the Museum’s signature exhibition, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in the United States. In addition to its landmark exhibitions, the Museum is
known internationally for events and educational programs of exceptional significance and as a
center for research, scholarship, and conservation. Founded by sculptor and arts patron Gertrude
Vanderbilt Whitney in 1930, the Whitney was first housed on West 8th Street in Greenwich
Village. The Museum relocated in 1954 to West 54th Street and, in 1966, inaugurated its present
home, designed by Marcel Breuer, at 945 Madison Avenue on the Upper East Side. While its
vibrant program of exhibitions and events continues uptown, the Whitney is moving forward with a
new building project, designed by Renzo Piano, in downtown Manhattan. Located at the corner of
Gansevoort and Washington Streets in the Meatpacking District, at the southern entrance to the
High Line, the new building, which has generated immense momentum and support, will enable
the Whitney to vastly increase the size and scope of its exhibition and programming space.
Ground was broken on the new building in May 2011, and it is projected to open to the public in
2015.

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