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*ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG: SYNAPSIS SHUFFLE* EXTENDED THROUGH JUNE 3, 2012

*Unique Participatory Exhibition on Loan from the Whitney Museum of American Art Captures the Imagination of the Community, Local "Shufflers," and Visitors to the Grand Rapids Art Museum*

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., May 14, 2012** – The Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) has extended its exhibition, *Robert Rauschenberg: Synapsis Shuffle*, through June 3, 2012—an additional two weeks after its originally scheduled closing date. Summer travelers, returning college students, and others who may want to make another visit to see this extraordinary work now have an additional opportunity to do so. The exhibition and participatory "art game" features 52 panels, created by Rauschenberg, that were "shuffled" by members of the community to create entirely unique works of art. This exhibition has only visited New York and Paris before its arrival in Grand Rapids.

Each of the 52 panels in *Synapsis Shuffle* 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 *Synapsis Shuffle* panels are presented, they are meant to be chosen and arranged in groupings by guest "shufflers" during a lively selection and bartering process that ensures no two exhibitions will ever be presented in the same way.

The Grand Rapids Art Museum's mission includes building strong partnerships and collaborations, in line with the forward-looking idea of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Museum as a community convener and catalyst for creative thinking. The Grand Rapids "Shufflers" comprised a broad coalition among the creative and innovative community of West Michigan, including artists, ballerinas, brain scientists, curators, conductors, designers, and individuals selected from GRAM Family Programs and among GRAM Facebook fans. **Click here** for a list of the "Shufflers."

The popular *Synapsis Shuffle* Interpretive Gallery will continue until June 3, as well. Guests can explore the Interpretive Gallery and "shuffle" magnetic, small-scale versions of the panels to create their own works of art.

Response to the exhibition and related programming has been enthusiastic. Over 70 significant articles from regional, national, and international media have been published; over 1,200 students have attended the exhibition through docent-led tours; over 6,200 people have visited GRAM's Rauschenberg webpage since the three Rauschenberg exhibitions opened; lectures, gallery talks, presentations, and gallery talks have produced repeat visits; and family programs have incorporated hands-on art-making projects that introduce the work of Rauschenberg to a new generation.

Remaining programming includes docent-led tours of the exhibition at 2:00pm on Saturday, May 19. A film, *Robert Rauschenberg Retrospective* (1979), is scheduled at 7:00pm on Friday, May 18.

The digital media extensions of the exhibition at GRAM include a four-minute **stop-action film** available in-gallery and online, along with exclusive **interviews** with the "Shufflers," available on GRAM's website.

*Synopsis Shuffle* is the first exhibition of a three-year, three-exhibition partnership between GRAM and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, broadening GRAM's collaborative partnerships to a national level. GRAM Honorary Life Trustee Pamella DeVos also serves on the board of the Whitney and was instrumental in creating the collaborative relationship. Upcoming exhibitions from the Whitney include *Real/Surreal* and *Legacy: The Emily Fisher Landau Collection*.

"It is important for GRAM to be a champion for these ideas, and continue to thread these innovative groups together to weave a strong, forward thinking force within the community and beyond," stated Ms. DeVos. "I am thrilled to see this partnership put in place, a partnership that started with a conversation I had with the Director of the Whitney, Adam Weinberg, and later with our new Director at GRAM. It then quickly grew into a reality for the Grand Rapids Art Museum."

"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 Dana Friis-Hansen, GRAM Director and CEO. "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: *Synopsis 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."

Learn more about *Synopsis Shuffle* and other exhibitions, the interpretive gallery, and related programming at [artmuseumgr.org](http://artmuseumgr.org).

### **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.

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