Free Museum Family Day Features Live Performances, Art Activities March 10

NORMAN, Okla. - Live music, dance performances and hands-on art activities are all part of a celebration scheduled from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, March 10, at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. Family Day, a bi-monthly series at the museum, will spotlight ongoing fundraising efforts to acquire a painting by Oklahoma-born artist Ed Ruscha for the museum’s permanent collection.

Students from the University of Oklahoma’s School of Music and the School of Dance have created an original composition and choreography inspired by Ruscha’s painting, No Man’s Land. Sunday’s live performances of each begin at 1:30 and 2:30 p.m. Hands-on art activities for all ages will include drawings, airbrush paintings and postcards inspired by Ruscha.

Admission to the FJJMA and Family Day is complimentary and open to the public. Family Days are made possible by generous support from the Kirkpatrick Family Fund.

“We are very excited to offer visitors so many ways to experience the art of Ed Ruscha and promote the importance of contemporary art in Oklahoma,” said Ghislain d’Humières, director of the museum. “We are thrilled to collaborate with the university students who have worked hard to create their own artwork inspired by No Man’s Land. Family Day will be great fun and I hope the community will join us for a cultural afternoon for the family.”

Last fall, the museum began raising funds to acquire No Man’s Land, a large work
painted by Ruscha in 1990. Ruscha, who lived in Oklahoma City during his youth, has become one of America’s foremost living artists. He has been credited by art critics and collectors as one of the most important living artists of the Pop art movement. His painting, *No Man’s Land*, recollects the artist’s youth in Oklahoma and his perceptions of the world outside of the state.

The museum on the OU Norman campus is seeking to add the painting by Ruscha to its permanent collection, which already boasts works by major French Impressionist, Native American and other modern and contemporary artists.

The work is being offered to the museum for purchase and is currently on loan and on display at the museum. If acquired, *No Man’s Land* will be the first major Ruscha work held in a public collection in Oklahoma.

In December, museum officials announced that an anonymous supporter of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art pledged to match up to $215,000 toward the purchase of the painting. This benefactor has extended the pledge to July 1.

Sunday’s celebration will feature live performances of *Over Every Open Field*, a new composition by OU School of Music graduate student Kyle Vanderburg. A trio of music students will perform the piece, including Angel Bradford on flute, Cassie Keogh on clarinet and Elizabeth Serine on piano.

Additionally, OU School of Dance professor Austin Hartel created original choreography titled *Fly Over State*, based on the song by Jason Aldean with a similar name. The dance will be performed by dance students Claire Belden, Sierra Codalata, Casey Coy, Caitlin Cullen, Kilmyn Graff, Marie Kuhns, Emily Lower, Kathleen McKenna, Emily Oliver, Hannah Olson, Chelsea Walker and Kiersten Zimbeck.

“Well, we hope families will take advantage of this great opportunity to make art of their own, learn more about Ed Ruscha, and enjoy the creativity of students and faculty from the OU Schools of Music and Dance,” said Karen McWilliams, curator of school and family programs at the museum.

Born in Omaha, Neb., in 1937, Ruscha moved to Oklahoma City in 1941. He moved to Los Angeles in 1956 with friend and aspiring musician Mason Williams, and enrolled at Chouinard Art Institute (now California Institute of the Arts). *No Man’s Land* references Ruscha’s earlier history. The white silhouetted shape, created by blocking out the gessoed underpainting of the canvas with tape, outlines the territory of Oklahoma before it became a state — when it was, in fact, a “no man’s land.”

“Well, although contemporary art is widely accepted and appreciated in other parts of
the United States, it is still a relatively new genre in the Midwest,” said d’Humières. “This iconic piece deserves to be a part of the state’s patrimony.”

Information about the fundraising campaign is available on the museum’s website or www.ou.edu/fjjma or by phone at (405) 325-4938. All gifts toward the art acquisition are tax deductible.

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is located in the OU Arts District on the corner of Elm Avenue and Boyd Street, at 555 Elm Ave., on the OU Norman campus. Admission to the museum is complimentary to all visitors, thanks to a generous gift from the OU Athletics Department. The museum is closed on Mondays. Information and accommodations on the basis of disability are available by calling (405) 325-4938 or visiting www.ou.edu/fjjma.

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**IMAGE CUTLINES**

Families are invited to Family Day at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art Sunday, March 10. The afternoon event features complimentary admission, art activities and live performances inspired by Ed Ruscha’s painting, *No Man’s Land*, shown in the background. Family Day is scheduled from 1 to 4 p.m.