Benefactor Pledges $200,000 Challenge Gift to Help OU Art Museum Raise Money for Ruscha Painting

NORMAN, Okla. – A supporter of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art has made a pledge to match up to $200,000 toward the purchase of a painting by contemporary artist Ed Ruscha, museum officials announced Tuesday. Ruscha 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.

Fundraising efforts to acquire the painting began this fall, but the pledge announced today provides major momentum for the fundraising effort. The benefactor has initially agreed to match donations made Dec. 1-31.

“We have been given the incredible opportunity to acquire this major work of art by a leading, living American artist,” said Ghislain d’Humières, director of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. “Now, thanks to a generous benefactor who appreciates the value this work would bring to our collections, we have the opportunity to raise up to $400,000 toward the purchase of this work. I hope organizations and individuals will please consider making an end-of-the-year donation to the museum to help acquire this much-needed painting by an original Oklahoma artist.”

The museum on the OU Norman campus is seeking to add the large 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.

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*, painted in 1990, 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.”

“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.”

For information about the fundraising campaign, please visit www.ou.edu/fjjma or call the museum 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 free 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**

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is raising funds to acquire this major 1990 painting, *No Man’s Land*, by contemporary American artist Ed Ruscha. A museum benefactor has issued a challenge to match up to $200,000 for any donations made to the museum toward the purchase of this painting Dec. 1-31.

Edward Ruscha (U.S., b. 1937)
*No Man’s Land*, 1990
Acrylic on canvas, 54 x 120 in.
Rusch 1990.0016
Loan courtesy of the artist.