

# NEWS RELEASE August 27, 2008

FRED JONES JR. MUSEUM OF ART  
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA - NORMAN  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WITH PHOTO

## **International Russian Exhibition to Premiere at University of Oklahoma Art Museum**

NORMAN, OKLA. – Russian street scenes, paintings of the American West, colorful abstracts and emotive portraits are all part of an international exhibition exploring early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Russian immigrant art debuting in October at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. A free, public opening is scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 4, in the museum’s Sandy Bell Gallery.

Following its Oklahoma debut, *American Artists from the Russian Empire* will travel to the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg and the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow before returning to the United States for a final show at the San Diego Museum of Art.

“Oklahomans will have a chance to see a remarkable exhibition by Russians in America,” said OU President David L. Boren. “Only two states in the U.S. will be visited by this exhibition.”

Derrick Cartwright, executive director of the San Diego Museum of Art, acknowledged the impact of the collections lending to the exhibition.

“*American Artists from the Russian Empire* is an innovative undertaking, drawing as it does upon the unique resources of many American collections,” he said. “These collections, both public and private, represent the profound contributions of dozens of Russian-born artists.”

With a broad selection of works on loan from museums, galleries and private collections, *American Artists from the Russian Empire* will examine the

impact of American culture and art movements on Russian artists living in the United States and will highlight the influence and contributions of Russian artists in shaping American culture.

Curated by Evgenia Petrova, deputy director for science at the State Russian Museum, the exhibition is composed of more than 70 paintings and sculptures by such artists as Nicolai Fechin, Leon Gaspard, Jacques Lipchitz, Mark Rothko, Ben Shahn, Alexis Arapoff, Pavel Tchelitchew and Max Weber. *American Artists from the Russian Empire* will remain on display through Jan. 4, 2009, before traveling to Russia.

Exhibition lenders include the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, the National Gallery of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and private collections such as Kate Rothko and Mary Arapoff, daughters of artists whose works are included in the exhibition.

“The exhibition’s strength resides at once in the opportunity it provides to compare and contrast the variety of visual expressions of these men and women,” said Cartwright, “and, because of the project’s multiple venues in Russia and the United States, also to test the different responses of interpretive communities in these countries. The San Diego Museum of Art is extremely pleased to be a partner in this breakthrough project and the scholarly debate that it will undoubtedly generate.”

Special guests for the opening include Cartwright, who will lead a lecture and open discussion at 4 p.m., as well as Petrova, who will give an evening walk-through of the exhibition.

Ghislain D’Humieres, director of the University of Oklahoma’s Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, recognizes the importance of Oklahoma’s role in the exhibition.

“The influence of this exhibition on the university’s culture of learning is enormous, and we are delighted for Norman to be the opening venue and Oklahoma to be one of only two states to host the exhibition,” said D’Humieres.

“This collaboration between the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, Russia and California provides an outstanding opportunity to promote an exceptional collection of art and to open a discussion about the influence of national culture on careers and styles of individual artists. Through this exhibition, visitors

should be encouraged to consider concepts of international diversity, compassion and curiosity for foreign cultures.”

*American Artists from the Russian Empire* is jointly organized by the State Russian Museum and the Foundation for International Arts and Education. Additional programs relating to the art and politics of Russian regions are scheduled throughout the fall at the museum.

Overall, the exhibit will present the volume and diversity of the styles, genre and media used that made the Russian immigrants some of the most active and influential in America and will emphasize how one’s artistic and everyday environment affects one’s art. Whenever possible, the exhibit will juxtapose “before and after” art styles, techniques and even genres to provide a better visual understanding of cross-cultural fertilization.

Admission to the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is free to all OU students with a current student ID and all museum association members, \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, \$3 for children 6 to 17 years of age, \$2 for OU faculty /staff, and free for children 5 and under. Admission is free on Tuesdays. The museum’s Web site is [www.ou.edu/fjjma](http://www.ou.edu/fjjma). Information and accommodations on the basis of disability are available by calling (405) 325-4938.

## **PHOTO CUTLINE**

The University of Oklahoma’s Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art premieres *American Artists from the Russian Empire* with a public opening at 6 p.m. Oct. 4. More than 70 works comprise the exhibition, including “King Solomon” by Leon Gaspard (1882-1964), which is part of the Richard H. and Adeline J. Fleischaker Collection at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art.