

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rockwell Museum of Western Art

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3,000 YEARS OF MEXICAN ART ON DISPLAY IN CORNING, NEW YORK

Rockwell Museum of Western Art hosts Las Artes de Mexico from the collection of the Gilcrease Museum

(Finger Lakes Wine Country, NY) October 22, 2009 – The Rockwell Museum of Western Art in Corning, NY, will be hosting *Las Artes de Mexico*, from the collection of the Gilcrease Museum, through January 3, 2010. This traveling exhibition celebrates the rich and diverse artistic traditions of Mexico. *Las Artes de Mexico* examines over 3,500 years of art and culture, from the ancient worlds of the Mayans and the Aztecs to the 20th Century works of Miguel Covarrubias and Diego Rivera.

The Rockwell Museum of Western Art boasts the finest American Western and Native American art collection this side of the Mississippi. Western and Native American art and culture are the focal points for engaging, dynamic exhibitions and educational events. The Museum renews exhibits several times each year, rotating its large permanent collection of art through galleries based on themes: Wilderness, Buffalo, Horse, Indian and Cowboy. Families can explore the Museum's collection together through a variety of daily drop-in activities. The Rockwell Museum of Western Art along with The Corning Museum of Glass offer free admission for kids and teens 19 years and under. The museums also offer adults a discounted combination ticket to both museums in Corning. For further information on the Rockwell Museum of Western Art and *Las Artes de Mexico*, please visit www.RockwellMuseum.org.

Corning, NY is located in the heart of Finger Lakes Wine Country. Finger Lakes Wine Country is continuously recognized as one of the most respected wine regions in the United States, and arguably the most affordable. Finger Lakes Wine Country is home to world-class museums such as the Rockwell Museum of Western Art and The Corning Museum of Glass, art galleries, unique shopping including specialty glass and antique shops, over 100 wineries, a wide range of dining options, and a variety of accommodations that will create an all-encompassing experience for visitors of all ages. For further information on Finger Lakes Wine Country, visit www.FingerLakesWineCountry.com.

Additional Exhibit Information

While the nation of Mexico was formally established in 1821, Mexican culture remains a mosaic of traditions founded deep in antiquity. The art of the ancient Mexican world was often centered around ritual and performance. *Las Artes de Mexico* explores these traditions with artifacts from over a dozen Precolumbian cultures. Olmec, Mayan, Vera Cruz, and Toltec sculpture reveal scenes from an often-mysterious past. They reveal a world of ceremony and celebration, of ritual warfare and the veneration of the dead. The arts of ancient Mexico demonstrate a unique view of the world, notably captured in the ceramic effigy traditions of Nayarit, Jalisco, and Colima. These often poignant, often whimsical, portrayals display an approach to life that has continued in Mexican culture for centuries.

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The exhibition includes colorful costumes and glittering fabrics that have long been a mainstay of folk celebration. These festivals and dances are also examined through a collection of colorful dance masks from the folk artists of Guerrero. While these masks were often used in important feast days and religious celebrations, they were also used as a form of political satire to protest the sometimes-violent relationship between Europeans and indigenous Mexican peoples.

Social commentary became a hallmark of Mexican art in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. *Las Artes de Mexico* examines both painting and works on paper during the development of the modern Mexican state. The exhibition includes a number of works by Diego Rivera and Jose Clemente Orozco, among the most influential of 20th Century Mexican artists. It includes works by the founders of the *Taller de Grafica Popular* (People's Print Workshop), Leopoldo Mendez, Raul Anguiano, and Alfredo Zalce. The exhibition includes the work of Carlos Merida whose *Estampas del Popol Vuh* employs images from ancient myth and Mexican history. The melding of Christian and pre-hispanic subject matter can be seen in Jose Chavez Morado's forboding *Annunciation of the Nahuatal*, while Miguel Covarrubias's moving *Tehuana* evokes emotions that transcend the bounds of culture toward a common humanity.

Las Artes de Mexico examines over three millenia of tradition and change across the broad spectrum of Mexican life. From the ancient to the contemporary, the arts of Mexico retain a unique perspective on the world. They resonate with both complexity and simplicity, with the old and the new. *Las Artes de Mexico* engages the viewer in a celebration of light and color. It is a celebration of the past and the present, a celebration of the human experience.

The showing here in Corning, NY is part of a national tour over a three and a half year period containing pottery, paintings, folk art and prints from the collection of the Gilcrease Museum. The tour was developed and managed by Smith Kramer Fine Art Services, an exhibition tour development company in Kansas City, Missouri.

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Accredited by the American Association of Museums, the Rockwell Museum of Western Art is located in the center of the Finger Lakes Wine Country of New York State and in the heart of Corning's Gaffer District. The Museum is open to the public seven days a week; hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Membership to the Museum includes yearlong free admission.

The mission of Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association is to promote economic development in Chemung, Steuben, Schuyler and Yates Counties in the State of New York, and to improve the quality of life in those counties, by supporting and improving the tourism industry.