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Cranbrook Art Museum's Grand Reopening Exhibition

**No Object is an Island: New Dialogues with the Cranbrook Collection Opens
November 11, 2011**

**First Exhibition in the Newly Renovated and Expanded Museum Explores
Cranbrook's Continued Influence in the World of Contemporary Art and Design**

Bloomfield Hills, Michigan – *No Object is an Island: New Dialogues with the Cranbrook Collection* is the provocative exhibition that will reopen the expanded and renovated Cranbrook Art Museum at Cranbrook Academy of Art on November 11, 2011. Inside and around the landmark building, designed by renowned Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen, the exhibition will pair the work of 50 leading contemporary artists and designers with an equal number of objects from Cranbrook's outstanding permanent collection of 20th- and 21st-century art and design. Visitors will discover a Nick Cave Soundsuit side-by-side with a tapestry by Arts and Crafts master May Morris. A conceptual partnership that Maarten Baas projects between himself and Marc Newson meets a very real early collaboration of Eero Saarinen and Charles Eames. And Whitney Biennialist Tony Mattelli's hyperrealist sculpture, *The Hunter*, faces off with one of fellow sculptor Kate Clark's ravishing taxidermy beasts with a human face.

The pairings reinstate the challenging dialogue that has characterized Cranbrook since the revolutionary graduate school and museum opened more than 80 years ago. In so doing, *No Object is an Island* is an analog for Cranbrook Art Museum itself, the renovation of which transcends common notions of museum practice. At Cranbrook, the era of museum collections hidden in remote and dusty storage lockers is over. After the museum's two-year, \$22 million upgrade, the entire collection will now be visible—and accessible—to students, scholars, and visitors. Classes will occur in view of, or actually inside, the museum's glass-walled vaults, where the art will reside in cabinetry custom-designed to display it exhibition-style at all times. Objects in the galleries will be keyed to additional collections materials readily available for study in a research center within the new 20,000 square-foot Collections Wing. The buildings and their holdings will become one integrated teaching and learning machine, an educational resource like no other.

For Director Gregory Wittkopp, who has guided the museum as its curator or director for 26 years, *No Object is an Island* is an opportunity to showcase a cross-section of the museum's permanent collection—including numerous recent "never-before-seen" acquisitions—while also demonstrating its continued relevancy to contemporary practitioners. "At a moment when most museums would simply trot out their 100

greatest hits, Cranbrook will use its collection to challenge and inspire a new generation of artists and designers and other museum visitors,” says Wittkopp. “While the 20th-century museum saw its mission as preservation, we are leading the charge of 21st-century museums to educate through objects.”

Often called the American Bauhaus, Cranbrook Academy of Art has long been hailed for its prescient embrace of interdisciplinary art and design education. *No Object* is an Island and the enhanced museum will embody and update that tradition. Nowhere is this more evident than in the exhibition’s unexpected pairings, such as that of Cranbrook’s legendary designer, Harry Bertoia and contemporary metalsmith Dorothea Pruhl. Here we find Bertoia working not at the expected scale of his iconic furniture or Sound Sculptures but as a jeweler, next to one of Europe’s most influential craftswomen. Or the dialogue between Asymptote Architecture and Eero Saarinen, both of whom have helped redefine the form of architecture and how we model it. In the case of Asymptote, visitors will see a “fly-through” projection of their award winning, 2011 YAS Hotel in Dubai next to a rare original model of Saarinen’s structurally daring Dulles International Airport. Separated by half a century of thought and technology, both buildings nevertheless share a tradition of radical form-making (and advanced technology) that are characteristic of Cranbrook’s leading role in contemporary architecture.

No Object is an Island is organized around six themes—Craft, Site, Comfort, Resistance, Process, and Fiction— each of which connotes a period of innovation at Cranbrook Academy of Art and presents a body of work that suggests common points of departure in the pursuit of creative expression and original art. While “Craft,” for example, reflects the important role that Cranbrook’s founder George Booth played in shaping the American Arts and Crafts movement (giving it physical form through the architecture and collections of Cranbrook), “Process” explores the work of contemporary artists who give physical form to the activity of making. “Comfort” suggests both the Academy’s role as the cradle of mid-century modernism, as well as the work of contemporary designers who are continuing to challenge and redefine the nature of domestic and work environments. The themes of *No Object* are by no means exhaustive; nor are they meant to be prescriptive. Instead, they offer a starting point for exploring the remarkable influence Cranbrook has had on contemporary creative culture.

No Object is an Island will open on 11-11-11 in conjunction with an eleven-day program of events, lectures, films and performances—during which the museum will be open 11 hours each day—and will run through March 25, 2012. This is the first of many exhibitions that will build on Cranbrook Art Museum’s mission to bridge visual art and design, scholarship and accessibility, tradition and innovation in its programs, and in so doing, document the ongoing creative achievements of the faculty and alumni of Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Curators

Gregory Wittkopp, Director of Cranbrook Art Museum, and Sarah Margolis-Pineo, the Art Museum’s Jeanne and Ralph Graham Collections Fellow, are the co-curators of *No Object* is an Island.

Publication

Cranbrook Art Museum will publish a fully illustrated catalog in conjunction with this exhibition. The catalog will include an introductory essay by Gregory Wittkopp with section essays by Emily Zilber (Craft), Jana Cephas (Site), Reed Kroloff (Comfort),

Sarah Margolis-Pineo (Resistance), Sarah Turner (Process), and Christopher Ho (Fiction).

Museum Hours and Admission

Cranbrook Art Museum will reopen to the general public on Friday, November 11 from 9pm – Midnight. During the first 11 days following the Grand Reopening—Saturday, November 12 through Monday, November 21 — the museum will be open daily from 10am - 9pm. A special 11-day membership will be available during this time that will provide unlimited admission to the exhibition and all programs for just \$11. From November 22, 2011 through March 25, 2012, regular Art Museum hours will be Wednesdays, 10am – 5pm; Thursdays and Fridays, 10am – 8pm; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10am – 5pm. Regular admission is: \$8 for Adults; \$6 for Seniors; \$4 for Full-time Students with ID; FREE for Children 12 and under. For more information, please call 248-645-3320.

About Cranbrook Art Museum

Cranbrook Art Museum is a contemporary art museum, and an integral part of Cranbrook Academy of Art, a community of Artists-in-Residence and graduate-level students of art, design and architecture. The Art Museum, which was established in 1930 and opened at its current site in 1942, is Eliel Saarinen's final masterwork at Cranbrook. Today, the Art Museum presents original exhibitions and educational programming on modern and contemporary architecture, art, and design, as well as traveling exhibitions, films, workshops, travel tours, and lectures by renowned artists, designers, artists, and critics throughout the year. For more information, please call 248-645-3320, or visit www.cranbrook.edu.

About Cranbrook Academy of Art

Cranbrook Academy of Art is the country's top ranked, graduate-only program in architecture, design, and fine art. Each year, just 75 students are invited to study and live on Cranbrook's landmark Saarinen-designed campus, which in addition to the Art Museum features private studios and state-of-the art workshops, all a short drive from the art, design, and music scene of Detroit. The focus at Cranbrook is on studio practice in one of ten disciplines including Architecture, 2D and 3D Design, Ceramics, Fiber, Metalsmithing, Painting, Photography, Print Media, and Sculpture. The program is anchored by celebrated Artists- and Designers-in-Residence, one for each discipline, all of whom live and practice on campus alongside the Academy's students. Dozens of internationally acclaimed artists, critics, curators, and gallerists visit each semester to supplement the individualized instruction, critiques, and mentoring by the Artists-in-Residence and Critical Studies Fellow. For more information, please call 248-645-3300 or visit www.cranbrookart.edu.

About Cranbrook Educational Community

Cranbrook is an internationally renowned educational community dedicated to excellence in the arts, education, and science. George and Ellen Booth founded Cranbrook in the early years of the 20th century with the hope of realizing the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement and creating a community where artists could live and work. Their ideas took concrete form when they donated a sizeable portion of their money and much of the estate they had named Cranbrook, to be used as an educational and cultural center. In 1904, the Booths commissioned Albert Kahn to design a house on the property in a style reflecting the American Arts and Crafts Movement. In 1925, Eliel Saarinen was commissioned to begin designing many of the buildings that unfolded

throughout the property, with Swedish artist Carl Milles arriving in 1931 to grace the grounds with sculptures and fountains. Over its 107-year history, Cranbrook has earned an international reputation for educational and cultural excellence. The 320-acre historic campus today comprises the Academy of Art, Art Museum, Institute of Science, Cranbrook Schools, and other affiliated cultural and educational programs. For more information, please call 248-645-3000 or visit www.cranbrook.edu.

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