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FOUR NEW EXHIBITS OPENED AT THE ELLA SHARP MUSEUM OF ART AND HISTORY

Jackson, MI – The Ella Sharp Museum of Art and History opened four new exhibits on October 1 in conjunction with the grand opening of a \$2.5 million expansion project.

Michigan Furniture Artisans: Building on Tradition showcases the work of six Michigan artisans including Patrick Leet, Peter Czuk, Michelle Zorich, Katherine Martin and Omar Perez. This exhibit, on display in the Emmet Gallery, highlights the current craftsmanship of traditional, modern and contemporary design in furniture today.

“Pieces will reference those of early European settlers bringing their Old World skills to the New World, the turn-of-the-century move to straighten the line and simplify design, and the modern age of new materials and softened corners,” states Curator Gloria Badiner. “Each artist has brought Michigan’s fine furniture history into new light with fresh works and unique design.” The exhibit closes January 14, 2007.

The Museum’s Hurst Gallery will open *A New Pure Reality: Contemporary Dutch Art and Culture* featuring 41 original artworks by Dutch artists from the Grand Valley State University Print and Drawing Cabinet. The pieces represent the passionate attempt to create a “new pure reality” and common Dutch cultural vision after the political and social chaos at the end of WWII.

(more)

Rooted in Neo-Plasticism, the ideals of the new pure reality were the pursuit of inherent harmony. This passion formed the basis of much of the aesthetics of artist groups known as Cobra, Reflex, De Realisten, and the Galerie Denise Rene Group.

A New Pure Reality is sponsored by the Netherlands-America University League and runs through January 6, 2007.

As part of Ella Sharp Museum's expansion, two new galleries will also debut – the Andrews Gallery of Wildlife Art and the Jackson History Gallery.

The inaugural exhibit in the Andrews Gallery of Wildlife Art includes 62 artworks by 28 artists including world champion decoy carvers Tan Brunet, Jett Brunet and Pat Godin and paintings and prints including works by artists Terry Redlin, Claiborne Gregory, and Ron Kingswood. Also included are bronze sculptures and a number of rare taxidermy mounts including a White-Cheeked Pintail (The Bahamas) and a "Nene" (Hawaiian Goose).

Two Tiffany stained glass panels welcome visitors to the new Jackson History Gallery which will exhibit a changing collection of Jackson stories from the pre-historic jawbone of an area Mastodon and early artifacts from the Jacksonburgh settlement, through the Civil and World Wars, and into the age "the world takes what Jackson makes!" The resolution table used during the 1854 founding of the Republican Party "Under the Oaks," a restored 1916 Marion-Handley automobile, and a Michigan State Prison woven coverlet are just a few objects from the Museum's collection in the opening exhibit.

For more information or photography, call 517-787-2320, ext. 239.

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