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The Yellowstone Art Museum Prepares to Open a Beautiful New Gallery

(Billings, MT, May 11, 2012) When the Charles M. Bair Family Trust offered a $2.15 million challenge grant to the Yellowstone Art Museum in June 2006, a campaign to address several important needs was launched. An art storage room full to the ceilings led to the construction of the unique Visible Vault at 505 North 26th Street, which opened for public viewing in August 2010. The YAM was then able to shift attention to that formerly overstuffed storage room, redesigning it to become a state-of-the-art exhibition gallery. These two capital projects, the Visible Vault and the new gallery projects, are part of the YAM’s continuing Expansion Campaign.

On May 24th the YAM will open the beautifully renovated space as its newest exhibition venue, to be called the Charles M. Bair Family Gallery in recognition of the Charles
M. Bair Family Trust’s extraordinary support. Project architect is Kim Olsen of O2 Architects, and the general contractor is Hardy Construction.

The Charles M. Bair Family Gallery will be a temporary exhibition space. It will connect with the existing small gallery, the Northwest Projects Gallery, which is familiar to all who walk up the YAM’s grand staircase. Exhibitions that use both galleries will now be possible, while at other times, the two galleries may be programmed independently. “With this new mid-sized gallery, we will have the flexibility to accommodate exhibitions in a greater range of sizes,” states Robyn G. Peterson, the YAM’s Executive Director. More exacting environmental controls and security in the new gallery will also expand the types of art works that the YAM will be able to bring to Billings.

In addition to the support provided through the grant from the Charles M. Bair Family Trust, support for the project has come from the Henry Luce Foundation (based in New York), the Kresge Foundation (based in Michigan), the Institute of Museum and Library Services (a federal agency), the BNSF Foundation, and CTA Architects Engineers.

On May 24th, the Charles M. Bair Family Gallery will open with a temporary exhibition drawn exclusively from the YAM’s own holdings. *Body of Work: Figural Work from the*
Permanent Collection will be on view through September 30, 2012. The exhibition will explore the range and diversity of art centered on the human figure. Body of Work includes selections from several of the YAM’s collections, from the Montana Collection, which represents local artists’ historic and continuing achievements, to the Poindexter Collection, representing work of the internationally influential Abstract Expressionist movement.

For more information, contact Drew Bennett at 406-256-6804 x224 or by email, artinfo@artmuseum.org.

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The YAM is the region’s largest contemporary art museum offering changing exhibitions, education, café, museum store, and a 7,300-piece permanent collection. The Yellowstone Art Museum hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, & Saturday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Thursday & Friday 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.; and Sunday 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Admission: Members free, $6 adults, $3 students with valid ID, $3 children 6 – 18, under 6 free, $12 family (2 adults and 3 children max.) $4 discount price (please inquire).