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Media contacts: Karen Simonian, 614 292-9923 or ksimonian@wexarts.org; or Erik Pepple, 614 688-3261 or epepple@wexarts.org

TEA AND COFFEE TOWERS SERVED AT THE BELMONT

WEXNER CENTER PRESENTS EXHIBITION FEATURING TEA AND COFFEE SETS DESIGNED BY SOME OF THE WORLD'S LEADING ARCHITECTS

Columbus—*Tea and Coffee Towers*, an exhibition featuring tea and coffee sets designed by 20 of the world's most innovative architects, will be on view at the Wexner Center Galleries at The Belmont Building **January 31–May 2, 2004**. This marks the exhibition's first stop on a national tour.

The tea and coffee servers were commissioned by Italian design house Alessi and presented in the spring of 2003 at the Max Protetch Gallery in New York. Fabricated from a wide variety of materials, including silver, porcelain, titanium, glass, red clay, wood, and thermoplastic resin, the server designs—many of them tower-like in form—are elegant and dazzling, seductive and whimsical. The pieces address some of the most topical issues in contemporary architecture: digital design, experimental materials, and the changing nature of the way people interact with their domestic environments. Alessandro Mendini, project director and one of the architects, writes in the accompanying book that the tea and coffee set “continues to be configured as a magical field for stylistic and technological research, as a container of ancient, steaming, richly aromatic beverages and theories.”

Architects and firms in the show hail from the U.S., Europe, Japan, Hong Kong, and Australia. They are Will Alsop, Wiel Arets, Gary Chang, David Chipperfield, Denton Corker Marshall, Dezsö Ekler, Massimiliano Fuksas, Future Systems, Zaha Hadid, Toyo Ito, Tom Kovac, Greg Lynn, Alessandro Mendini, Morphosis (Thom Mayne), MVRDV, Juan Navarro Baldeweg, Jean Nouvel, Dominique Perrault, Kazuyo Sejima, UN Studio/Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos.

At The Belmont Building, the show will be on view concurrently with *Splat Boom Pow! The Influence of Cartoons in Contemporary Art*. After its Columbus run, *Tea and Coffee Towers* will travel to the Cranbrook Art Museum in Michigan.

The exhibition is organized by Max Protetch Gallery, a 31-year-old gallery in New York with a strong focus on architecture. Italian manufacturer and project commissioner Alessi, a company founded in 1921 and known for unorthodox but functional household items and tableware, conducted a project similar to *Tea and Coffee Towers* 20 years ago. Alessi is producing a limited edition of the tea and coffee sets for sale to collectors globally, ranging in price from \$5,000 to \$50,000 (available through the Max Protetch Gallery). The fully illustrated book accompanying the show will be sold at The Belmont Building, the Wexner Center Bookshop, and the Wexner Center Artshop at Easton.

RELATED LECTURE

DeeDee and Herb Glimcher Inaugural Lecture Zaha Hadid

Tuesday, March 9 / 7 pm

Wexner Center / Mershon Auditorium

Free admission / reception immediately following

Cosponsored by Ohio State's Knowlton School of Architecture

Zaha Hadid is the architect of Cincinnati's new and widely praised Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art—the first free-standing building for the city's Contemporary Arts Center—called “the most important American building to be completed since the end of the cold war” by the *New York Times*. Hadid also has a “tea and coffee tower” in the exhibition at The Belmont Building. Born in Baghdad and based in London, Hadid has become one of the most celebrated architects in the world, designing a range of structures including a housing project in Berlin and a tram station in Strasbourg. Her upcoming projects include the National Center for Contemporary Arts in Rome; a master plan for Singapore's Science Hub; a ferry terminal in Salerno, Italy; a public square and cinema complex in Barcelona; a major bridge structure in Abu Dhabi; and the Price Tower Art Center in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. She also works in painting and drawing, with pieces in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Deutsches Architektur Museum in Frankfurt.

The DeeDee and Herb Glimcher Program Fund was created through the generosity of the Glimcher family in order to provide lasting opportunities for Wexner Center patrons to further enhance their understanding of the art and architecture of our time. The fund supports an annual lecture by a distinguished speaker.

WEXNER CENTER GALLERIES AT THE BELMONT BUILDING

Wexner Center exhibitions will be held at the Wexner Center Galleries at The Belmont Building all season while the galleries at the Wexner Center's Ohio State location are undergoing renovation.

Located next to the Arena District in downtown Columbus, The Belmont Building is the former home of Belmont Casket, considered "the Cadillac of Caskets," which moved to Columbus in 1916. The building, constructed in 1885, sits near the intersection of Spring Street and Neil Avenue, with an entrance located off Cozzins Street. The four-story building, which currently houses offices in addition to the Wexner Center Galleries, is positioned in a high-growth area, just between the booming Arena District and the historically industrial River District. Caroline's Deli on the ground floor of The Belmont Building is open to the public Monday–Friday, 7:30 am–4 pm.

CALENDAR INFORMATION *TEA AND COFFEE TOWERS*

The exhibition: *Tea and Coffee Towers* features 20 tea and coffee sets designed by some of the world's top architects. Presented by the Wexner Center at The Belmont Building. Organized by the Max Protetch Gallery, New York; designs originally commissioned by Italian design company Alessi. (On view concurrently: *Splat Boom Pow!*)

Dates: January 31–May 2, 2004.

Location: Wexner Center Galleries at The Belmont Building, at Spring and Neil in the Arena District in downtown Columbus (330 W. Spring St.). One block west of Neil Avenue; entrance off Cozzins Street.

Belmont gallery hours: 11 am–6 pm Tuesday–Wednesday; 11 am–9 pm Thursday–Friday; noon–6 pm Saturday–Sunday. Closed Mondays and holidays.

Belmont gallery admission: Free.

Parking: Free lots just across Cozzins Street.

Public information: 614 292-3535 or www.wexarts.org/ex

Opening party: Saturday, January 31, 7–11 pm. Invitation-only.

Media tour: Friday, January 30 at 4 pm at The Belmont (call 614 688-3261).

Walk-In Tours: Thursdays at 6 pm & Sundays at 1 pm beginning February 5. No tours on February 29 and April 11.

Media contacts: Karen Simonian, 614-292-9923 or ksimonian@wexarts.org; Erik Pepple, 614 688-3261 or epepple@wexarts.org.

Digital images of the works, as well as bios of the architects, are available upon request.

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Tea and Coffee Towers was organized by Max Protetch Gallery. Prototypes are from the collection of the Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation for Art.

It is presented by the Wexner Center with support from the Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation.

Promotional support is provided by WBNS 10TV.

WEXNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.

Exhibitions are on view at the Wexner Center Galleries at The Belmont Building while the Wexner Center's galleries are undergoing renovation.

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