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Media contacts: Karen Simonian, Communications Manager, ksimonian@wexarts.org; 614 292-9923; Shelly Casto, Educator for School and Family Programs, scasto@wexarts.org or 614 688-3986

WEXNER CENTER LAUNCHES PROGRAM FOR HIGH-SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS ON ART AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Columbus—The Wexner Center is launching an innovative and unprecedented project this fall that will offer high-school juniors and seniors from all over Columbus the opportunity to study the topic of **Art & the Environment**. Through this 18-week interdisciplinary program beginning in **early September**, students will work directly with internationally known artists who deal with environmental issues (and whose art will be on view at the Wexner Center and its downtown galleries this fall). They will also work with OSU professors in the sciences, arts, and folklore. Program participants will be chosen through an application process, and students will receive school credit for their work.

“This project is entirely new in its approach and interdisciplinary at its core,” says Shelly Casto, the Wexner Center’s educator for school and family programs, and facilitator of Art & the Environment. “Our hope is that it will foster independent inquiry among the students as they explore connections between art and science.”

Wexner Center Director Sherri Geldin adds, “Shelly has pioneered a brilliant program for engaging teens at a crucial, formative time in their lives, introducing them to the notion of museums and art centers as resources for lifelong learning and stimulation. We’re very proud of this ambitious cross-disciplinary initiative and look forward to welcoming our first class of students.”

In addition to the field trips and small-group work with artists and scientists, students will pursue self-initiated research (guided by Jodi Kushins, an OSU graduate student in art education) to create their own art projects addressing environmental issues. These final projects will be displayed at an exhibition and reception.

Participating artists and scientists include:

- Nationally known artist **Alexis Rockman**, whose large-scale murals deal with environmental disaster. Two reproductions of his paintings will be on view in the Wexner Center’s lower lobby beginning this fall.

(continued)

- Artists **Mierle Laderman Ukeles** and **Hope Ginsburg**, who are part of the exhibition *Work Ethic*, on view this fall at the Wexner Center Galleries at The Belmont Building. Ukeles's work has dealt with public sanitation, Ginsburg's with various aspects of agriculture, commodification, and recyclable consumer products.
- **William J. Mitsch**, professor of Natural Resources and Environmental Science at OSU, and director of the Olentangy River Wetland Research Park, School of Natural Resources.
- **W. Berry Lyons**, professor of Geological Sciences and director of the Byrd Polar Research Center at OSU's Byrd Polar Research Institute.
- **Elizabeth Marschall**, OSU professor of Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology
- **Patrick Mullen**, OSU professor of English, Comparative Studies, and Folklore.
- **Kristi Michels**, director of education, Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio

The course content will be documented for use in a curriculum kit on art and the environment currently under development by the Education Department at the Wexner Center.

ABOUT THE WEXNER CENTER

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.

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