

MELLON FOUNDATION GRANT AWARDED TO WEXNER CENTER TO SUPPORT ART AND ARTISTS OF BRAZIL

Columbus, OH— February 7, 2011—The Wexner Center for the Arts and The Ohio State University have been awarded a **\$782,300 grant** from **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** to support a **multidisciplinary, four-year initiative focusing on the vibrant visual and media arts culture in Brazil**. The grant will support trans-institutional curatorial research and programming across exhibitions, film/video, and arts education—all in the spirit of developing in-depth and sustained creative and intellectual exchange. Over time, the center's engagement with Brazil will include artist residencies and commissions, a film project and series, a significant exhibition and catalogue, lectures, scholarly symposia, and a postdoctoral fellowship to be shared with OSU.

In the fall of 2010, the Wexner Center was among a select group of museums and art centers across the country invited by the Mellon Foundation to submit an application. The Mellon Foundation has a longstanding legacy of supporting such renowned institutions as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art, The Art Institute of Chicago, and others; this invitation to the Wex is a powerful endorsement of the center, its leadership, and its programs.

Wexner Center Director Sherri Geldin says, "This grant could not have come at a more opportune moment in the life of the Wexner Center and the University, both of which are increasingly committed to innovative academic and cultural research, substantive international engagement, and transdisciplinary thinking and learning. We are gratified that the Mellon Foundation found the center's proposal to be at once grounded in professional expertise *and* sufficiently ambitious to propel fresh inquiry and discovery surrounding the role of creative expression in our increasingly complex global society."

E. Gordon Gee, president of The Ohio State University—which has undertaken an aggressive, comprehensive effort to internationalize the curriculum—says, "The Wexner Center's Brazil project underscores the university's international focus and our vision to integrate global dimensions into every facet of the institution. The intent is to leverage Ohio State's expertise to solve pressing problems, in our neighborhoods and around the world. We are thrilled that the Wexner Center, already a leading light in the realm of cross-departmental, cross-disciplinary efforts, will again blaze a path with this initiative."

The Wexner Center's Brazil project will be shaped in large measure by establishing intensive and ongoing relationships with key Brazilian artists, cultural thinkers and practitioners, academics, critics, and institutional peers in the areas of visual arts, film/video, and arts education. Together, these efforts will result in several manifestations, among them: an ambitious **visual and media arts exhibition at the Wex in the 2014 season**, related **print and electronic documentation**, an **archival or repertory film project and series**, and **artist residencies** for film and video artists. The center will organize **scholarly convenings**, as well as more accessible **public lectures and seminars**, to encourage transnational dialogue. Throughout the evolution of the Brazil project, the center will seek to establish

new avenues for cultural exchange, critique, and commentary, and will—as appropriate—pursue broadcast-quality **dissemination of programs** via streaming video, social media outlets, and other online means. At the same time, while not under the auspices of the proposed Mellon Foundation grant, the center’s performing arts department will likewise pursue projects involving Brazilian artists, companies, and institutions producing music, theater, and dance to further enrich the center’s comprehensive engagement with Brazil.

The center will also work with Ohio State University faculty across several colleges, departments, and institutes throughout the duration of this project to fully realize the potential for curricular enhancement and academic course development, in part by engaging a **postdoctoral fellow** who would be an active member of the exhibition team and (time permitting) teach a single course in the Department of Art.

As a contemporary arts center that is also a vital part of a global university, the Wexner Center is uniquely positioned among other arts institutions to develop sustained and fruitful collaborations with artists and arts organizations around the world. Support from the Mellon Foundation provides a critical foundation for advancing these efforts.

For more on the Wexner Center for the Arts: <http://wexarts.org>

For more on The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation: <http://mellon.org>

For more information: Erik Pepple, epepple@wexarts.org or (614) 292-9840, or Jennifer Wray, jwray@wexarts.org or (614) 247-6241, or