

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Riffe Gallery Presents the Magic of American Stage Design

The Ohio Arts Council's Riffe Gallery will present an exhibition bringing the magic of the stage to the gallery February 10 – April 17, 2005. *Design for the American Stage: Treasures from The Ohio State University's Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute* spans from the late 1800s into the 21st century and includes professional American theatre design for drama and comedy, musical theatre, opera, dance, and outdoor spectacle. The exhibition, which includes 63 works by 44 artists, is curated by Nena Couch, professor of theatre at The Ohio State University.

Through their set, costume and lighting work, designers make the onstage world real for us and, at the same time, create documentation that remains as a reminder of the performance and a record of the design process. The artists represented in *Design for the American Stage* range from acknowledged masters of American stage design throughout the 20th century to contemporary designers. The master designers in the exhibition are among those who have greatly influenced the development of American stage design. Many have taught either formally or by taking apprentices.

The vast range of work in the exhibition includes renderings by the Columbus-based Armbruster Scenic Studio (1875-1958), Raoul Pène Du Bois's Tony Award-winning set designs for the 1953 *Wonderful Town* and Terry Parson's gorgeous beaded gown and feather coat for *Marlene*. Visitors also will see three-dimensional models by Broadway designer Tony Straiges, a glorious painted dance floor for the Bebe Miller Dance Company by artist Caroline Beasley-Baker and designs for productions by companies across the U.S., from Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum to Ohio's Kenley Players, Broadway and New York's Metropolitan Opera.

The Ohio State University's Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute collects, maintains and makes accessible research materials pertaining to the performing arts. The institute serves as archives for performers, playwrights, designers, producing organizations and theatre companies, among others.

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Three events will be held in conjunction with this exhibition; all are free and open to the public:

On **Thursday, February 10, 2005**, from 5 – 7 p.m., the Riffe Gallery will host a free public opening reception and everyone present will have a chance to win a pair of tickets to upcoming performances by the following organizations: BalletMet, CAPA, CATCO, The Ohio State University's Department of Theatre, The Phoenix Theatre for Children and Red Herring Theatre Company.

A free exhibition tour with curator Nena Couch will be offered on **Friday, February 11, 2005**, from noon - 1 p.m. Couch will explain the role of the designers in bringing the stage to life while discussing the importance of the collection as a historical resource.

The Riffe Gallery will offer young visitors the opportunity to make their very own shadow puppet on **Sunday, February 27, 2005**, from 2 - 4 p.m. Shadow puppet plays have been performed for hundreds of years. Children and their adult companions will explore the age-old art of shadow puppets by decorating, adorning and bringing to life their very own multi-jointed puppets from provided materials. This family day is recommended for children 6 and older. For reservations, email mary.gray@oac.state.oh.us or call 614/728-2239.

The Riffe Gallery will offer free group tours Tuesday through Friday throughout the run of the exhibition. To schedule a group tour contact Riffe Gallery Director Mary Gray at mary.gray@oac.state.oh.us or 614/728-2239.

The Riffe Gallery is supported by Ohio Building Authority. Media sponsors include Alive, CityScene, Ohio Magazine and Time Warner.

The Ohio Arts Council's Riffe Gallery showcases the work of Ohio's artists and curators, exhibitions produced by the Ohio Arts Council's International Program and the collections of the region's museums and galleries. The Riffe Gallery's Education Program seeks to increase public appreciation and understanding of those exhibitions.

The gallery is in the Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts, State and High Streets, Columbus, OH. Gallery hours are Tuesday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Saturday 12-8 p.m. and Sunday 12-4 p.m. Closed Monday and state holidays. Admission is free. For information, call the Riffe Gallery at 614/644-9624 or visit us on the web at www.riffegallery.org.

The Ohio Arts Council is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically.

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