

For Immediate Release

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**Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block unveils Kasser Family Wing;
New 6,000 square-foot wing dedicated to Latin American Art
Opens to the public July 30, 2020**

Tucson, AZ – After two years of planning and construction, Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block (TMA) unveils the new Kasser Family Wing of Latin American Art. The 6,000 square-foot wing opens to the public on July 30, 2020, in coordination with the museum’s reopening after its closure on March 17. The wing is the first expansion of the museum since the building was built in 1975.

Dedicated to art of the Ancient Americas, Colonial art and Modern and Contemporary Latin American art, the building is named in honor of long-time arts supporter and Tucson business leader I. Michael Kasser and his wife Beth. In addition to a financial gift supporting the construction, works from the Kasser family’s extensive Latin American art collection, which features over 250 works of art from the Ancient Americas, are on long-term loan to the museum.

“In these unparalleled times, art and access to museums has never been more imperative. We are deeply honored to open the long-awaited Kasser Family Wing,” says Jeremy Mikolajczak, TMA’s Jon and Linda Ender Director and CEO. “The Kasser family has long believed that art plays an important role in our well-being and should be shared, especially art of the Ancient Americas. Latin American art is woven into the history of the museum. The new wing, along with its collections, will position TMA as one of largest and finest institutions dedicated to art of the Ancient Americas outside of a major urban center in the United States.”

“I came from a family that both enjoyed and respected the arts and the creative fire behind them,” remembers Michael Kasser. “When we lived in Mexico City during my grammar school years, students were exposed to the various cultural and economic centers that were part of Mexico over a 2000-year period. My curiosity was ignited so when much later I could afford to start collecting representations of those cultures, I did so. Together with my wife, Beth, we have been going to auctions, private sales, etc...for the last 35+ years. Thus our collection evolved. As we got older, we wanted to share the collection, and we could think of no better way than to open a wing dedicated to Latin American art, especially art of the Ancient Americas, at TMA.”

Designed by TMA Trustee Emeriti and noted Tucson-based architect Richard “Andy” Anderson, the Kasser Family Wing was built with the support of Advantech Facilities Design Inc., and construction by Kittle Design and Construction. The new space features an open floor plan, five natural light-filled galleries, a linkage between Margaret E. Mooney Hall and John K. Goodman Pavilion and a renovated outdoor plaza and sculpture garden. As part of a \$5.5 million museum-wide initiative, the wing completes a four-year capital investment project focused on the museum campus that includes the recently completed Alice Chaiten Baker Center for Art Education and the renovation of the main museum galleries in 2017.

“I have been blessed with the good fortune to have designed the original museum, (implementing the black box theory of no exterior light), guide it through its many renovations and expansions and now design the new Kasser Family Wing, (bringing in filtered natural light to compliment the art installations it will house),” says architect Andy Anderson. “The Kasser Family Wing links the original building with the historic properties connecting to the Goodman Pavilion. The new wing is designed to blend with the existing museum and complement its architecture in scale and space while bringing a fresh look in materials, color and the latest in museum function and technology.”

The Kasser Family Wing reinforces Tucson Museum of Art’s commitment to art of Latin America and its relationship to the American Southwest, a focus of the museum since its early collecting in the 1950s. Curated by Dr. Kristopher Driggers, Bernard and Jeanette Schmidt Curator of Latin American Art, the wing offers a new perspective on art produced by peoples and cultures of the continent from ancient civilizations to today. Three of the five galleries feature art from antiquity. They highlight Ancient American works from the museum’s permanent collection alongside long-term loans from the Kasser and Paul L. and Alice C. Baker collections. These ancient objects are organized in galleries dedicated to Mesoamerican art, art from West Mexico and the intermediate zone, and Andean art, and explore themes of writing, visual narrative, costume and portraiture.

“The Tucson Museum of Art has always been committed to Latin American art, but with the expanded footprint offered by the Kasser Family Wing, we can engage more robustly in the conversation about art of the region, shaped in partnership with our community,” says Driggers. “Above all else, the art of the Ancient Americas testifies to the interests, needs and ingenuity of the artists who created ancient traditions. It is uniquely gratifying to be able to take a fresh look at works of art made in these traditions at our institution in Southern Arizona, where our region and our communities have profound and living ties with the Mesoamerican world.”

An essential feature of the new wing is an annually rotating gallery dedicated to Modern and Contemporary Latin American art. The inaugural exhibition, co-curated by Dr. Julie Sasse, chief curator, will feature highlights from TMA’s collection and select loans, including works by artists such as Olga de Amaral, Carlos Betancourt, Fernando Botero and Tomás Saraceno. It will also include the debut of new acquisitions by Enrique Martínez Celaya, Monica Aissa Martinez, Patrick Martinez and Pedro Tagliafico. Additionally, the wing will include a gallery dedicated to Colonial art with works from Latin America and the Southwestern United States created from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries.

TMA formed a Kasser Family Wing community advisory committee, including community members and scholars of the Americas, to assist and advise the museum during this process. Led by Driggers and Dr. Marianna Pegno, curator of community engagement at TMA, members include TMA Trustee Dr. Ana Cornide, Patricia Zoi Barceló-Sanders, Dr. Guadalupe Cruikshank, Norah Dabdoub, Erica Franco, Dr. Patrisia Gonzales, Lupita Sanchez, Alejandro Macias, Bardo Padilla and Zach Yentzer. The advisory committee assisted the museum in reviewing exhibition themes, building contemporary connections, engaging in “Community Voices” label writing or procurement, building a network of partners and serving as community ambassadors. Additionally, the museum will be collaborating with a variety of local groups, nonprofits and educators to develop an extensive bilingual curriculum.

The Latin American art collection at TMA includes over 6,000 works from all periods, from ancient to contemporary. These include art of the Ancient Americas, which encompasses objects from Mesoamerica, the intermediate zone and South America; a Colonial collection that includes works created from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries; folk art of the Americas, and a collection of Modern and Contemporary Latin American and Latinx art.

Concurrent with the Kasser Family Wing and opening in 2021, TMA will present a new exhibition of folk art of the Americas in the Bernard and Jeanette Schmidt Gallery of Latin American Art. The exhibition includes the debut of a significant gift of Peruvian folk art from Cheryl and Bill Green and selections from the Shepard Barbash and Vicki Ragan Collection of Oaxacan Folk Art.

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About Andy Anderson, L.L.C., Architecture & Planning

Richard “Andy” Anderson is the owner of Andy Anderson L.L.C. Established in 1997, he created the company to provide architecture, consulting and project leadership to a diverse set of clients. Although his company is relatively young, Anderson is no newcomer to the world of architecture and business. In 1971 he helped found and lead Anderson DeBartolo Pan. The 350-person architectural, engineering and construction management firm became the 15th largest firm of its kind in the United States. It was also the largest in Arizona with offices in Tucson, Phoenix and San Francisco. The firm earned more than 75 design awards for work primarily in commercial, industrial, institutional, and sports and entertainment markets. Anderson worked on many high-profile projects including the 1994 World Cup and 1996 Olympic venues. Today, Anderson stays active in the architecture industry, working for a select group of clients including the Tucson Museum of Art. A Trustee Emeritus, Anderson is a long-standing supporter of the museum through his work and expertise including the original brutalist building he designed while a partner with William Wilde, FAIA, TMA’s master plan, the renovation of the Alice Chaiten Baker Center for Art Education, and his latest architectural feat – the Kasser Family Wing of Latin American Art.

About Advantech Facilities Design Inc.

Founded in 1999 by the design leadership team, leading the Advanced Technology group for one of the world's largest EPCM companies, Advantech Facility Design has been bolstered with the very team that had executed many world-class facilities as a team for over 20 years. These include highly complex, global projects, for world leading companies requiring up to 1.5 million SF with construction costs exceeding \$650 Million. During this time, members of our team have held direct responsibility for over \$3.0 Billion in total construction value. Past clients include Global Solar Energy, Inc.; Ventana Medical Systems, Inc.; Tucson Museum of Art; and XSunX, Inc.

About Kittle Design and Construction

Founded in 2001, Kittle Design and Construction is Tucson-based construction company led by Tom Kittle and Susan Petrus. Kittle’s experience and clients in Southern Arizona include the City of Tucson, American Airlines, Cox Communications, Hilton Hotels, Pima Community College, Reid Park Zoological Society, Tucson Airport Authority, Tucson Museum of Art, and the University of Arizona. Among many awards and accolades, the firm received the Cornerstone Award for “General Contractor of the Year,” in 2010 and 2016.

About Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block

The Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block was founded in 1924 and located within the El Presidio Historic District of downtown Tucson. TMA is a regional museum and center for artistic inquiry and appreciation, that seeks to inspire dynamic human experiences, create a passion for the visual arts and celebrate Southern Arizona’s rich and diverse culture.

The museum features permanent and traveling exhibitions of Modern and Contemporary art, Indigenous art, art of the American West, Latin American art, art of the Ancient Americas, European and Asian art. Encompassing a four-acre city block, the museum campus includes a historic block of 19th and 20th-century adobe and Mission

Revival-style buildings, the recently expanded 40,000-square-foot main museum building including the new Kasser Family Wing of Latin American Art, the 22,000-square-foot Alice Chaiten Baker Center for Art Education, the highly acclaimed museum restaurant Café a la C’Art, the Museum Store and 50,000-square-feet of courtyards and exterior spaces. The museum provides a robust schedule of community programs, educational opportunities and guided tours.

Hours: Thursday-Sunday, 10 am-5pm. Closed Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and most major holidays. Admission: Adults \$12; seniors \$10; students/youth (13-17) \$7; children (12 and under), veterans, active military, museum members, FREE.

TMA is a private 501(c)(3) charitable arts and education organization. For additional information visit TucsonMuseumofArt.org or call (520) 624-2333.

TMA’s Mission and Commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA)

The Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block connects art to life through meaningful and engaging experiences that inspire discovery, spark creativity and promote cultural understanding.

The purpose of IDEA is to position the Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block (TMA) as a responsive community-centered institution that represents, activates and advocates for its communities. TMA connects art to life through meaningful and engaging experiences that inspire discovery, spark creativity and promote cultural understanding. In order to support and impact audiences under this mission the museum is committed to developing quality exhibitions, expanding and diversifying its collection and presenting relevant and innovative programs.

Furthermore, as a collecting institution TMA believes that the artworks in its care are dynamic: they evolve as histories, are re-examined and varying perspectives are taken into consideration – broadening how the institution preserves, exhibits and interprets these works.

As an institution built upon the original territories of the O’odham, the Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block acknowledges the Indigenous Sonoran Desert communities, past and present, who have stewarded this region throughout generations.

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Attached: