



**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

CONTACT:

Austin Henson, i.d.e.a.

619-295-8232 x124

austinh@theideabrand.com

CONEY ISLAND: VISIONS OF AN AMERICAN DREAMLAND
COMING TO THE SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART THIS SUMMER
More than 150 works span 150-year evolution of
America's Legendary Playground

San Diego, Calif. – The San Diego Museum of Art is pleased to announce *Coney Island: Visions of an American Dreamland, 1861-2008*, on view from July 11 through October 13, 2015. Composed of more than 150 objects including celebrated icons of American art and rarely seen works from public and private collections, this exhibition explores the lure Coney Island has exerted on the American imagination for more than a century.

Coney Island has been viewed as a microcosm of the American experience by an extraordinary array of artists including William Merritt Chase, John Henry Twachtman, Reginald Marsh, Walker Evans, Diane Arbus, poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Frank Stella, and Red Grooms. Showcasing an eclectic mix of drawings, prints, paintings, photographs, film clips, and assorted artifacts such as carousel animals, this exhibition brings to life the excitement of Coney Island, which occupies not only a strip of sand in Brooklyn but a singular place in the American imagination.

From Reginald Marsh's glamorous and gaudy *Pip and Flip* and *Wooden Horses* to Arnold Mesches' gothic-inspired canvas from the Museum's Permanent Collection, *Coney Island: Visions of an American Dreamland* is the first exhibition to explore Coney Island as a place and an idea. Looking at the evolution from glamorous beach playground to entertainment mecca, and the decay and neglect that followed, *Coney Island: Visions of an American Dreamland* illuminates the contrasts between this once great place and the artifacts that remain.

"We are thrilled to be offering our visitors the chance to see an iconic American landmark from a new perspective," says Roxana Velásquez, Maruja Baldwin Executive Director of The San Diego Museum of Art. "There are traces of Coney Island throughout San Diego in places such as Belmont Park and in Balboa Park's history as a fairground, so it's momentous to have the opportunity to see the artistic impact of a destination with such a rich past."

To accompany the featured works, a fully illustrated scholarly catalogue has been co-published by the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art and the Yale University Press. It includes the first sustained visual analysis of great works about Coney Island by exhibition curator Dr. Robin Jaffe Frank, and essays by other distinguished cultural historians.

Developed by the Wadsworth Atheneum, the exhibition has been organized in San Diego by Dr. Ariel Plotek, Associate Curator of Modern Art. The display at The San Diego Museum of Art follows a run at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Ct. After this, *Coney Island: Visions of an American Dreamland* will travel to The Brooklyn Museum, and McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, Tx.

Select activities will accompany the exhibition including:

- Film in the Garden | Monday's July 27, August 3 & 10
- Culture & Cocktails | Thursday, August 6
- Painting on Tap | Thursday, July 30
- Summer Camps (Grade K-2) | Monday through Friday, August 24-28
- Second Saturday Workshop | Saturday, September 12
- Drawing in the Galleries | Friday, October 2
- ArtStops | Select Thursdays
- Docent-led tours | Select days throughout the exhibition

For more information on The San Diego Museum of Art or to purchase tickets or a membership, visit www.SDMArt.org.

About The San Diego Museum of Art

The San Diego Museum of Art is located at 1450 El Prado in Balboa Park, San Diego, Calif., 92101. General Information, (619) 232-7931, Group Sales: (619) 696-1935, Website: <http://www.sdmart.org> Twitter: @SDMA, Instagram:

@SanDiegoMuseumofArt Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/TheSanDiegoMuseumofArt>

Providing a rich and diverse cultural experience, The San Diego Museum of Art houses the world's finest art in America's Finest City. Located in the heart of Balboa Park, the Museum's nationally renowned collections include Spanish and Italian old masters, South Asian paintings including the Edwin Binney 3rd Collection of Indian paintings, and 19th and 20th century American paintings and sculptures. The Museum regularly features major exhibitions of art from around the world, as well as an extensive year-round schedule supporting cultural and educational programs for children and adults. At The San Diego Museum of Art, exhibition text is always in English and Spanish.

###