

# Mint Museum Uptown in Charlotte, NC, Celebrates the 100th Anniversary of the Panama Canal

The Mint Museum Uptown in Charlotte, NC, will present *Connecting the World: The Panama Canal at 100*, on view from Nov. 1 through Feb. 1, 2015.

The exhibition, organized by the Mint is timed to coincide with the centennial of the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914, will feature a stunning selection of more than 50 works of art drawn from important collections across the country, fascinating historical ephemera, and two exciting new commissions created especially for the occasion by the internationally-renowned contemporary artist Mel Chin and the award-winning author Anthony Doerr.

"The Mint is proud to be able to share this remarkable project with our community. The theme of international connectivity that underpins this exhibition is perfectly aligned with a number of initiatives already underway as Charlotte positions itself as a truly global city," said Dr. Kathleen V. Jameson, President and CEO of the Mint.

*Panama Canal at 100* was organized by the museum's Senior Curator of American, Modern, and Contemporary Art, Dr. Jonathan Stuhlman. Wells Fargo is lead sponsor of the exhibition, which will be bilingual with exhibition texts in both English and Spanish. Stuhlman drew his inspiration for the show from a painting by Alson Skinner Clark depicting the excavation of the canal that has been on long term loan to the museum since 2010. This is the first exhibition of its kind to bring together a broad sampling of art related to the canal and to situate this art in a historical perspective.

"I have long been fascinated by the way in which the bright colors, delicate brushwork, and elegant frame of Clark's painting contrast so strikingly with the actuality of the gritty, extraordinarily difficult conditions under which the canal was actually created," says Stuhlman.

"The centennial of the canal's opening provided a perfect opportunity to not only examine Clark's paintings more closely, but to look at both how they fit into a historical context and to think about how the canal has impacted the world over the century that it has been operational."

This year marks not only the centennial of the opening of the canal, but also a moment at which the canal is poised to expand to double its previous capacity. An international multibillion-dollar project to widen and deepen the canal is expected to be completed by 2016. Meanwhile, the exhibition's home city, Charlotte, is opening a state-of-the-art Intermodal Transfer Facility at Charlotte/Douglas International Airport, giving it the ability to manage efficiently the increased flow of goods and establishing the region as a major center for global trade and commerce. The exhibition's opening will coincide with the US Commercial Service's Discover Global Markets: The Americas 2014 Conference to be held in Charlotte. Jonathan D. Farrar, US Ambassador to Panama, is scheduled to attend.

The construction and opening of the canal were of tremendous global interest and importance in the early 20th century, earning it the nickname "The Eighth Wonder of the World" and inspiring a major international exposition in 1915. Photographs of the canal, disseminated via popular magazines, postcards, stereoscopic views, and even playing cards, kept an eager American audience up to date with the latest developments in its construction. These types of objects will be interspersed with the paintings and prints that make up the main body of the show. As the canal neared completion, three highly-regarded American artists, printmaker Joseph Pennell and painters Jonas Lie and Alson Skinner Clark, seized the opportunity to document this monumental undertaking, traveling to Panama to work on site. Each created a remarkable body of work that captures the scale, activity, and dynamism of the site. *Panama Canal at 100* marks the first time that works from these three series have ever been brought together and presented to the public.

In addition, the exhibition will include



"T.R. in Panama," by Edward Laning (American, 1906-1981) Created: 1939, Oil on fiberboard, Smithsonian American Art Museum. Gift of Mrs. Mary Fife Laning, 1984.148

a number of paintings by key 19th century American artists who had worked in South America, including Frederic Church and Martin Johnson Heade. It will also feature paintings by such early 20th century artists as Julien Alden Weir, Ernest Lawson, and George Bellows, each of whom took innovative new approaches to examining the American landscape, painting scenes that included factories and urban development in the popular styles of their day. Together these two groups of paintings will provide a rich context for the subsequent paintings and prints by Pennell, Clark, and Lie.

New commissions join exhibition with support from Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation and Knight Foundation

This centennial year provides a perfect opportunity to both reconsider these historic works of art and to reflect upon the legacy of the canal itself. In conjunction with the exhibition, the Mint has commissioned a major new work of art, an installation titled *SEA to SEE* by Mel Chin, made possible with major support from The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The Mint has also commissioned a new short story by author Anthony Doerr, entitled "The Fever Dreams of William Crawford Gorgas," and will publish it in the exhibition catalogue thanks to major support from the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation.

Chin, who is based in Burnsville, NC, and is a former Artist-in-Residence at McColl Center for Art + Innovation, is currently in the process of fabricating *SEA to SEE*. The immersive environment will allow visitors to pass between two monumental plate-glass hemispheres representing the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, mimicking the passage of people and goods through the canal. These hemispheres, whose grid-structured structure evokes both the latitude and longitude lines of a globe and the structure of the massive lock gates of the canal, will come alive through two reverse-projected films that will feature imagery derived from historical data pertaining to each ocean.

The installation will be documented on the museum's website, ([www.mintmuseum.org](http://www.mintmuseum.org)), with video and other digital content. Chin, known for his varied and prolific career including his "Safehouse" project drawing attention to lead poisoning in New Orleans, was recently described in *The New York Times* as an artist who "has spent 40 years obliterating boundaries between science, education, politics and, perhaps most pointedly, people."

For his writing, Anthony Doerr has been awarded four O. Henry Prizes, the Rome Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Story Prize, among others. His most recent book, the full length novel "All the Light We Cannot See," was released this May to widespread acclaim and remains near the top of *The New York Times* Best Sellers list. The short story that Doerr has crafted for this exhibition immerses viewers in a richly crafted narrative that follows the fascinating life of William Crawford Gorgas, an American doctor whose journey eventually led him to Panama to battle malaria and yellow fever.

*Panama Canal at 100* is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue containing an essay by Stuhlman, the new work of fiction by Doerr, and photographs, sketches, and an interview related to Chin's commission.

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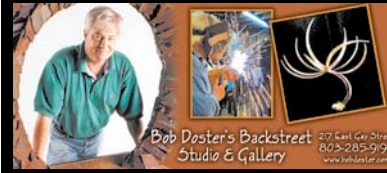
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The exhibition will be accompanied by several special events and programs. Stuhlman will give an introductory lecture, "Looking out from 'the big ditch,'" at 3pm on Sunday, Nov. 2, 2014, which is free after museum admission. Visitors are invited to combine small plate and drink pairings at Halcyon, Flavors from the Earth and E2 Emeril's Eatery with a private gallery tour during "Taste of the Mint" on Nov. 12 (tickets \$50 or \$35 for museum members).

A free panel discussion on "Perspectives on Collecting Latin American Art" will be at 7pm, on Nov. 12, 2014. Spotlight gallery tours, free after admission, will be offered Nov. 19, Dec. 10, and Jan. 28, 2015, at 2 & 6:30pm. The use of trains as a theme in the works of art will be explored in "All Aboard the Giving Train," free with donation of a gift to a local nonprofit, at 6:30pm, on Dec. 10, 2014. "Travels through Latin America with Music" will be offered Jan. 18, 2015, at 3pm, free after museum admission.

Following the Mint's ongoing policy with special exhibitions, non-members of the museum will be required to pay an additional admission fee to see *Panama Canal at 100*.

Wells Fargo is the lead sponsor of *Connecting the World: The Panama Canal at 100*; major support has also been provided by The Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Horowitz Foundation for the Arts. Additional support provided by Carolina Tractor. The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation has provided generous support for the commission of *SEA to SEE* by Mel Chin.

The catalogue for *Panama Canal at 100* was made possible in part by the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation. Exhibition media partners are WDAV and WTVI. Latino and bilingual initiatives are generously supported by The Hearst Foundations



"The Gaillard Cut," by Alson Skinner Clark (American, 1876-1949) Created: 1913, Oil on canvas, Private collection

and Duke Energy Foundation. Exhibition organized by The Mint Museum.

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. The foundation believes that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged.

The Mint Museum is a leading, innovative museum of international art and design committed to engaging and inspiring all members of our global community. Established as the first art museum in North Carolina in 1936, The Mint Museum has grown to include two dynamic facilities, Mint Museum Uptown and Mint Museum Randolph, and currently boasts one of largest collections in the Southeast. The Mint proudly offers its visitors inspiring and transformative experiences through art from around the world via its renowned collections, exhibitions, educational programs, and scholarship.

For further information check our NC Institutional Gallery listings or visit ([www.mintmuseum.org](http://www.mintmuseum.org)).

Check us out at ([www.carolinaarts.com](http://www.carolinaarts.com)) or e-mail to ([info@carolinaarts.com](mailto:info@carolinaarts.com))

The deadline each month to submit articles, photos and ads is the 24th of the month prior to the next issue. This will be Nov. 24th for the December 2014 issue and Dec. 24 for the January 2015 issue.

After that, it's too late unless your exhibit runs into the next month. But don't wait for the last minute - send your info now.

And where do you send that info?  
E-mail to ([info@carolinaarts.com](mailto:info@carolinaarts.com)).