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ART | CRAFT | DESIGN
BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM

March 26, 2009

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Bellevue Arts Museum announces Michael Monroe to retire from BAM in February 2010; will become Director Emeritus

Bellevue, WA - The Board of Trustees of **Bellevue Arts Museum** (BAM) announced today that Michael Monroe, Director of Curatorial Affairs, will retire from **BAM** in February 2010. Upon his retirement, Monroe will become **Director Emeritus** in honor of his outstanding achievements at the Museum.

Monroe joined the Museum in 2004 as Executive Director/Chief Curator and oversaw all artistic programs as well as administrative operations. In October 2008, he moved into the role of Director of Curatorial Affairs to focus on the curatorial and artistic leadership of **BAM**.

“Michael has created an exceptional museum,” says Susan Edelheit, President of the Board of Trustees. “Through his passion, dedication and expertise, he has elevated the regional, national and international stature of the Museum and has given exposure to many remarkable artists, including numerous Northwest artists working in craft media. We are most grateful for the artistic vitality he has brought to this community.”

A vibrant and influential figure in contemporary American craft, Monroe has established **Bellevue Arts Museum** as a leader in the national conversation on art, craft and design. Under Monroe’s leadership, the Museum has become a center of artistic activity and excellence on the Eastside and welcomes over 50,000 visitors each year.

The Museum has showcased over 40 world-class exhibitions by renowned national and international artists and collectors as well as emerging regional artists. More than 20 exhibitions have been internally organized celebrating the extraordinary work of on-the-rise Northwest artists, including **Mandy Greer, John Grade, Etsuko Ichikawa** and, opening this spring, **Michael Peterson**. Three exhibitions originated by **BAM** are currently traveling to other museum venues around the country.

The Museum has published ten exhibition catalogues, including *Dim Sum at the On-On Tea Room: The Jewelry of Ron Ho* which won an award from the prestigious American Association of Museums. The Museum has also produced a wide range of educational activities, including the **First Free Friday Lecture Series, Get Crafty Saturdays!** and established a highly popular **Teen Docent** program. The **Bellevue Arts Museum artsfair**, held annually in July, has continuously grown under Monroe’s leadership attracting over 350,000 visitors every year.

“The Museum is in an excellent position to make this transition,” Monroe states. “It has continuously garnered critical acclaim for its superb exhibitions, publications and programs while building a track record of financial stability. In my 40 plus years as director, curator and advocate for the arts, I have never worked with a more

talented staff, board and volunteers. I want to extend a particular acknowledgement to Curator Stefano Catalani who joined **BAM** in 2005. During this transition, I will continue to work with Stefano and the entire artistic staff to bring unique, thought-provoking and engaging exhibitions and programs to this community. I have complete confidence in the Museum's leadership during this time and beyond."

In the Museum's Strategic Plan, approved in January 2008, the Board of Trustees recognized the need for succession planning. In October 2008, as a first step in supporting the Museum's on-going administrative and operational management requirements, the Museum hired **Mark W. Crawford** as Interim Executive Director. The Board of Trustees has appointed a committee to plan for the Museum's future leadership requirements and expects to present its findings no later than August 2009.

About Bellevue Arts Museum:

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of art, craft and design. A treasured community center on the Eastside, **BAM** celebrates regional, national and international artists working in a broad range of craft media, including ceramics, fiber, metal, wood and glass. The Museum also offers a unique array of free or low-cost educational programs such as artist demonstrations, lectures and workshops as well as a variety of engaging and fun hands-on kids activities. www.bellevuearts.org

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