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For Immediate Release

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Please note: Digital images and slides are available of select images of paintings. If interested, please contact Margaret Keough at 816-753-5784.

Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art Celebrates Wayne Thiebaud's Fifty Years of Painting

Exhibition Only in Kansas City

For more than fifty years, California artist Wayne Thiebaud has enjoyed a prodigious career. Highlighting the work of this profoundly influential and inventive painter of landscapes, cityscapes, still lifes, and portraits, the exhibition *Wayne Thiebaud: Fifty Years of Painting* presents more than forty works from the past five decades. It also demonstrates Wayne Thiebaud's contributions to American popular culture and art history. The exhibition is on view June 6–August 31, 2003, at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art. Wayne Thiebaud is an artist in residence at the Kemper Museum. Museum admission is free.

The exhibition will open with a free public reception, 5:30–7:30 p.m., Friday, June 6, 2003, at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art. Wayne Thiebaud will speak at 3:00 p.m., Sunday, June 8, at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, which is located at 4525 Oak Street, just a few blocks from the Kemper Museum. Admission is free, but parking at the Nelson-Atkins' costs \$3.00 for the general public. Parking is free for members of the Nelson-Atkins Museum.

The exhibition has been drawn mainly from Thiebaud's family collection along with works from Midwestern public and private collections. "This exhibition will give rare insight into what an artist decides to keep in his collection," said exhibition curator Dana Self, curator of the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art. The exhibition's forty

canvases include Thiebaud's signature still lifes, portraits, cityscapes, and landscapes from the early 1950s to today.

Thiebaud has painted bountiful arrangements since the 1960s. Renowned for his images of cakes, pies, gumballs, and other confections, Thiebaud also explores color, lighting, and arrangement of mass-produced, commercial objects, including shoes, toys, flowers, and cosmetics. His still-life paintings celebrate the shapes and colors of what most of us perceive as ordinary, like the playful stack of bow ties in *Bow Tie Tree* (1969) or the culinary delights in *Cakes & Pies* (1994–95). Thiebaud experiments with his arrangements. Sometimes he makes one object monumental, and at other times, he places dozens of items in orderly rows.

Since the early 1970s, the rolling streets of San Francisco and its surrounding communities have captured Thiebaud's attention. He has translated them into dynamic cityscapes, including *Intersection* (1973), one of his first cityscapes, and his recent *Valley Streets* (2003). Thiebaud exaggerates the steep hills and skyscrapers by featuring extreme perspectives of the city. This same exaggerated view is reiterated in Thiebaud's fertile California landscapes. Visitors may study the plunging cliffs and sweeping landscapes of northern California in works such as *Heart Ridge* (1969) and *Green River Lands* (1998).

Thiebaud also works with portraits like his contemporaries Alex Katz and Philip Pearlstein. He paints monumental portraits of family members and friends in settings where there are no backgrounds and other forms of context. While the portraits are seemingly spare, viewers still find his dynamic palette of blues, yellows, reds, and pinks.

Wayne Thiebaud first began his career as a cartoonist and layout designer for Rexall Drug Company in the late 1940s. He began teaching in 1951 at Sacramento Junior College (now Sacramento City College). For nearly three decades, Thiebaud taught at the University of California, Davis, along with well-known California artists William Wiley, Manuel Neri, and Robert Arneson. Like his students, Thiebaud experiments. As a teacher and artist, Thiebaud draws influence from art history, including Dutch painter Jan Vermeer, French painters Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin and Edgar Degas, and American painter Edward Hopper. With more than fifty years of creativity, Thiebaud inspires future generations of artists.

A catalogue for the exhibition *Wayne Thiebaud: Fifty Years of Painting* will feature color plates of works in the exhibition as well as an interview with Wayne Thiebaud. The catalogue will be available in late May. It costs \$25.00.

Sponsors

Special thanks to the Kearney Wornall Foundation, UMB Bank, n.a., Trustee; and the R. C. Kemper, Jr. Charitable Trust and Foundation for their support of the exhibition *Wayne Thiebaud: Fifty Years of Painting*.

The Kemper Museum acknowledges the generous support of Bank of America for the 2003 Artists-in-Residence program. Financial assistance has been provided by the Walter E. Bixby Memorial Fund; the Francis Families Foundation; the Arvin Gottlieb Charitable Foundation, UMB Bank, n.a., Trustee; the Hallmark Corporate Foundation; the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation; the David Woods Kemper Memorial Foundation; and the Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts. Midwest Airlines provides travel for research and the Museum's visiting artists. Additional support is provided by *The Kansas City Star*, and vital corporate, foundation, and individual contributions.

About the Kemper Museum

Kansas City's acclaimed contemporary art museum, the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art opened in October 1994 and draws more than 120,000 visitors each year. The Museum boasts a rapidly growing permanent collection of modern and contemporary works of artists from around the world. Collection artists include Louise Bourgeois, Dale Chihuly, Frank Stella, Morris Louis, Hung Liu, Bruce Yonemoto, Nan Goldin, Christian Boltanski, and Georgia O'Keeffe. The Museum hosts temporary exhibitions, installations, performance work, film and video series, lectures, concerts, children's workshops, and other creative programs designed to both entertain and challenge.

The Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art is open 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Tuesday–Thursday; 10:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m., Friday–Saturday; and 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Sunday. Its popular Café Sebastienne serves lunch 11:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m., Tuesday–Sunday; and dinner 5:30–9:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday. Please note: the exhibition *Wayne Thiebaud: Fifty Years of Painting* will be closed Saturday, June 14, and the Museum and Café Sebastienne will close at 4:00 p.m. that day.

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