



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, February 10, 2012

THE HARWOOD MUSEUM OF ART, UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO PRESENTS
“AGNES MARTIN: BEFORE THE GRID”

Taos’s Harwood Museum of Art explores the aesthetic roots of Agnes Martin’s subtle glory.

Taos, N.M.—“Agnes Martin: Before the Grid,” opens Saturday, Feb. 25, at the Harwood Museum of Art and will remain on view through Sunday, June 17. Concurrently, the museum presents “Agnes Martin: Works on Paper,” a companion exhibition of her later works on paper. The Harwood Museum of Art is home to the Agnes Martin Gallery, a permanent exhibition of seven large scale paintings donated by the artist in 1997. This is the first large Agnes Martin posthumous exhibit.

Little attention has been paid to Martin’s aesthetic roots. “Agnes Martin: Before the Grid” is designed to fill this historical art gap. The exhibition, along with a series of lectures, films and a symposium, pays tribute to this remarkable artist while celebrating the 100th anniversary of her birth. The 30 paintings and drawings in the exhibition, many of which have never been exhibited before, were culled by curators Tiffany Bell and Jina Brenneman from private and public collections. These pieces, dating from the early 1940s through the 1950s, comprise a little-known body of work demonstrating Martin’s evolution from portraits, still-lives and landscapes to the biomorphic and geometric abstractions preceding the grid paintings for which she is internationally recognized.

Agnes Martin is among the most admired and influential American painters of the last half century. With her spare but emotionally rich paintings, based on grid compositions and a severely muted palette, she created a singular genre, a combination of Minimalism and Abstract Expressionism that has inspired two generations of collectors, curators and fellow artists. Her work is included in virtually every major museum of contemporary art. In 1998 she received the National Medal of Arts awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

At the behest of art dealer Betty Parsons, Martin moved to New York City in 1957 and took up residence at Coenties Slip. Many in the art world assume that Martin emerged fully developed in her 1958 solo show at the Betty Parsons Gallery in New York. By then, Martin had been working for nearly 20 years, much of that time in the fabled but isolated art community of Taos, New Mexico, moving step by seemingly inevitable step from landscapes and portraits to biomorphic and geometric abstraction, resulting in the mature work that is perhaps the purest abstract art ever made.

Martin quickly came to prominence with Parsons’ financial backing and full support beginning in 1958. However, in 1967 she dropped out of the New York art world, bought a pickup truck and headed back west. She landed first in Cuba, NM, where she built an adobe home. Later she moved to Galisteo, outside of Santa Fe, where, after seven years of not painting, she went back to work and quickly regained her fame. In 1993 she returned to Taos. She lived and worked in Taos until her death in 2004 at the age of 92.

“Throughout the 1950s, throughout her artistic career, Agnes Martin was on a continual quest to express the language of the inner mind,” writes Harwood curator Jina Brenneman, “a place where perfection and beauty existed as spiritual



absolutes.” As Martin herself once said, “When I think of art, I think of beauty. Beauty is the mystery of life. It is not in the eye, it is in the mind. In our minds there is an awareness of perfection.”

Agnes Martin: Before the Grid Catalogue

A 70-page color catalogue is being produced to accompany the exhibition with an art historical essay by Dr. Richard Tobin. The catalogue includes introductory text by Arne Glimcher of The Pace Gallery and artist and friend of Martin, Richard Tuttle. Info: 575-758-9826 (x102) or send an e-mail to shop@harwoodmuseum.org. Cost: \$40. Alliance members get a 10% discount.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Exhibition Dates: February 25 – June 17, 2012

Friday, Feb. 24, 2012

4 p.m. Director’s Circle and VIP Reception, (Private and invite-only.)

5-7 p.m. Alliance Members’ Opening Reception (Private and invite-only.)

Info: Juniper Manley, 575-758-9826 x 116.

Thursday, March 22, 2012

11 a.m. Remarkable Women of Taos Kick-off News Conference at the Harwood Museum of Art. For decades, artists and free spirits of all kinds have been drawn to the beauty and mystery of the Northern New Mexico landscape. In 2012, the Town of Taos offers visitors a first hand look at what inspired the Remarkable Women of Taos, including Georgia O’Keeffe, Agnes Martin, Millicent Rogers and Mabel Dodge Luhan. With self-guided and guided tours and itineraries, art exhibitions with never before seen paintings by Agnes Martin, and the photography and jewelry of Millicent Rogers, Taos unveils a yearlong celebration of its past and present Remarkable Women with a kickoff event at the Harwood Museum on March 22, 2012. Speakers: Jina Breneman, Harwood Curator of Collections and Exhibitions, Marsha Mason and many other Remarkable Women of Taos luminaries. <http://taos.org/women>. Contact: Joan Griffin jgriffin@griffinassoc.com (505) 764-4444 ext. 222, (505) 261-4444 cell.

12 p.m. A screening of “Remarkable Women of Taos: What’s in the Water?,” a 30-minute film featuring 40 remarkable northern New Mexico women. The film explores the phenomenon that an uncommon proportion of the Taos community consists of remarkably independent, intelligent and brave women. Many of the women featured in the film will be in attendance. This film is produced by Peter Walker and Krystina Siebenaler of Swashbuckler Media. Free and open to the public.

6 p.m. Agnes Martin Centennial Birthday Party

March 22, 2012 marks the centennial of the birth of the internationally acclaimed artist Agnes Martin. The Harwood Museum of Art will celebrate Agnes’ birthday with a fundraising event at the Ranchos Trading Post Cafe, one of Agnes’ favorite Taos restaurants. Sponsor tickets are \$250, general tickets are \$175, and tickets for Harwood Museum Alliance members are \$150. Proceeds will benefit the Harwood’s exhibitions. Advance tickets are available at the Museum Admissions. For more information, contact development@harwoodmuseum.org.

Friday, March 23, 2012 7p.m. Mary Lance & Film “Agnes Martin: With My Back to the World”

Discussion + Q&A Following

Cost: \$8 for Harwood Alliance Members; \$10 non-members, unless otherwise noted. Tickets are available in the Museum Admissions. Info: education@harwoodmuseum.org.

Saturday, March 24, 10 a.m.--5 p.m. Agnes Martin Lectures

As part of the exhibition “Agnes Martin: Before the Grid,” the Harwood presents a day long lecture program featuring scholars and artists focusing on the life and work of Agnes Martin.

10 a.m. Ann Wilson “Agnes Martin & Coenties Slip”

11 a.m. Christina Rosenberger

Christina Rosenberger serves as the Research Coordinator for the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art at the Harvard Art Museums. She is pursuing her doctorate at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, where she is a Connoisseurs Circle Fellow and a Craig Hugh Smyth Fellow. She has held fellowships at the Harwood Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and worked as a Teaching Fellow at the Whitney Museum of American Art. She received a BA from Harvard College and an MA in modern art from Columbia University.

12 - 1:45 p.m. Lunch Break

2 p.m. Michelle Rumney & Beck Hunter “Meeting Agnes Martin”

3 p.m. Kristina Wilson, "A Contribution to a Further Understanding of Agnes Martin"
3:15 pm Tiffany Bell & guest "Dialogue on Agnes Martin"
4:15 p.m. Panel with Q & A, led by Tiffany Bell, Co-Curator of "Agnes Martin: Before the Grid"
Tickets: \$32 Harwood Museum Alliance Members; \$40 non-members. Seating limited. Advance tickets are available at the Museum Admissions Info: education@harwoodmuseum.org

Sunday, March 25, 2 p.m. "Gabriel," a film by Agnes Martin

The Harwood will screen "Gabriel," Agnes Martin's only completed film. This historically unique work both illuminates and complicates our understanding of the artist and her paintings. "My movie is about happiness, innocence, and beauty," Martin observed, "It's about this little boy who climbs a mountain and all the beautiful things he sees." To those familiar with the luminous, tactile, exacting geometries of her paintings, "Gabriel"'s elusive style and structure may come as a surprise: the lack of logical continuity; the point of view that shifts between that of the boy and an unseen observer; the handheld camera that is rarely at rest, but instead feels its way across the landscape, meandering and contemplating. Whatever tension exists in "Gabriel" comes from transition, variation, and difference: between shore and land, snow and desert, silence and Bach, solidity and movement, abstraction and nature. 78 min. Free with museum admission.

This exhibition is made possible by the generous support of The Pace Gallery, The Brown Foundation, Inc. of Houston, The Robert Lehman Foundation, the Fisher Family, The Harwood Museum Alliance, John E. and Jeanne T. Hughes Charitable Foundation, the Peters Family Art Foundation, Mabel Dodge Luhan House, La Posada de Taos, Gregory Nelson, Rosamaria Ellis Clark, and Tony Abeyta and Family. "Agnes Martin Centennial: Before the Grid" is an Official Project of the [New Mexico Centennial](#).

Lodging Sponsors

The Historic Taos Inn, El Monte Sagrado and La Posada de Taos Bed and Breakfast
Visit www.harwoodmuseum.org for special rates.

Hours

Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.; Sunday, 12- p.m – 4 p.m., November through February; Closed Mondays. March through October, the museum is open every Monday and until 5 p.m.

General Admission

\$10 adults, \$8 seniors (65+) and students; Free to children age 12 and under, members of the Harwood Museum of Art Alliance and University of New Mexico students and staff and Taos County residents on Sundays. \$25 Museum Association of Taos Ticket is available for admission to the Harwood Museum of Art, the Taos Art Museum, the Millicent Rogers Museum, the Blumenschein Home and Museum, and La Hacienda de los Martinez.

Ski and the Harwood Museum of Art Special

Bring your lift ticket or season pass from any New Mexico Ski Resort and receive either 20% off museum admission (one discount per lift ticket) or 10% off any item in the Harwood Museum of Art Museum Store. (Films and special performances are not included).

Where: The Harwood Museum of Art of UNM, 238 Ledoux Street, Taos, NM

Directions: The Harwood Museum of Art is located on historic Ledoux Street, just south of, and within walking distance of the Taos Plaza. If driving, turn west onto Camino de la Placita and west onto Ledoux Street.

Info: 575-758-9826, www.harwoodmuseum.org

The Harwood Museum of Art, located in Taos, New Mexico, founded in 1923, is the second oldest art museum in New Mexico. In 2010, the Harwood Museum inaugurated its expansion which includes an auditorium, library, additional exhibition space, and a state-of-the-art collection storage facility.

<http://www.harwoodmuseum.org/agnesmartin>

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