

**For Immediate Release**

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**CLAREMONT MUSEUM OF ART OPENS THIS SUNDAY**

- What:** The Opening of the Claremont Museum of Art
- When:** Sunday, April 15
- Time:** 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Details:** Free admission, street painting, live music, and family art activities

***Chalk it Up!***

*Chalk it Up!* is the Museum's opening day street painting event. Julie Kirk, a modern day 'madonnaro' (professional street painter), will transform the outdoor east plaza of the Packing House into a work of art. Come prepared to pick up a piece of chalk and unleash your inner artist. Materials will be provided, including shade umbrellas and a wash-up area for chalky hands.

What is *madonnaro*? In 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy, itinerant artists began transforming pavement into canvas using chalk. The tradition was revived 400 years later, in 1972, when the Italian village of Grazie di Curtatone hosted the first known international festival of street painting. In Italy, street painters are called 'madonnari' after their historical practice of creating chalk paintings of the Madonna.

Over the past 30 years there has been a major revival of this art form. Artists worldwide are appearing on streets throughout Europe and at festivals in the United States. Chalk painting can take many hours – sometimes days – before a masterpiece is born, only to be washed away by a hose or street cleaner, or trampled upon by passing pedestrians. Like a fresh flower, they won't last forever, but their fleeting nature makes them all the more beautiful.

***Family Days at the Museum***

The Museum's opening day kicks off its first *Family Days at the Museum*, which will take place the third Sunday of every month and also the Sunday of an exhibit opening – in this case, the Museum's opening!

Designed to inspire creativity and allow families to make art together, *Family Days at the Museum* are free and take place from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

These casual, ‘walk-up and make art’ events feature new activities each month, inspired by upcoming holidays or the Museum’s current exhibits. On April 15, the art will be inspired by the Museum’s inaugural exhibit “A Conversation with Color: Karl Benjamin, Paintings 1953–1995.” This is a great way for families to spend creative time together. We provide the materials and our volunteers will assist in getting you started, but the finished masterpiece is up to you.

### ***DJ Matthew Rubino***

Matthew Rubino, resident DJ at The Standard Downtown, will mix ambient sounds, soundscapes, Brazilian dance music, Latin jazz, and other atmospheric and flavorful sounds from noon to 5 p.m.

### ***Exhibits***

The Museum’s inaugural exhibit is a retrospective of the work of world-renowned Claremont painter Karl Benjamin. *A Conversation with Color: Karl Benjamin, Paintings 1953-1995* (April 15 – June 25) will feature 46 paintings spanning 42 years that trace Benjamin’s career, from his early experiments with cubism to works that represent his role as one of the founders of abstract classicism.

The permanent collection, *Building a Legacy: Founding a Museum, Building a Collection*, will occupy the smaller of the two museum galleries with works exhibited on a rotating basis. The inaugural showing of the collection (April 15 – June 25) will present work by Jean Ames, Aldo Casanova, Rupert Deese, Phil Dix, Betty Davenport Ford, James Grant, Susan Lautmann Hertel, Norm Hines, James Hueter, William Manker, Harrison McIntosh, Walter Mix, Roland Reiss, Millard Sheets, Albert Stewart, James Strombotne, and Milford Zornes, and other notable local artists.

### ***About the Museum***

The Claremont Museum of Art, located inside a renovated citrus packing house, will be a regional museum of international significance, exhibiting art connected to Claremont as well as art from around the world. In addition to a diverse slate of exhibits, the museum features a contemporary museum shop with many recycled and eco chic goods. A comprehensive slate of educational programming and events is offered for all ages. The Claremont Museum of Art is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization.

The Museum is open Wednesday through Monday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The store is open until 7 p.m. Both are closed on Tuesday. The Museum and store are open until 8 p.m. the first Friday of every month. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Admission to the Museum is free through the end of May. Beginning June 1, admission is \$3.00 for adults; under 18 free.

Claremont Museum of Art  
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