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**EVENING CELEBRATES RADICAL COLLEGE NEAR ASHEVILLE
THAT TURNED THE AMERICAN ART WORLD UPSIDE DOWN**

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Mar. 25, 2019 – The Charlotte Museum of History and the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art will host an event on April 18 for fans of all things modern. The *Modernism in the Mountains* event tells the surprising story of Black Mountain College, an experimental art school set against the backdrop of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The college was open for only 24 years, but it continues to influence the worlds of art, design, architecture and fashion today.

“Black Mountain College opened during the early years of the Great Depression. At that time, Buncombe County was an unlikely place for an institution that attracted avant-garde artists,” said Adria Focht, president & CEO of The Charlotte Museum of History. “In addition to producing some extremely influential artists and work, the college’s two decades of existence were a really wild ride, complete with artistic pioneers who fled the Nazis and FBI infiltrators looking for communists. All of this happened right here in Charlotte’s backyard, yet most Charlotteans don’t know about it.”

Modernism in the Mountains: The 2019 “Mad About Modern” Mod Experience will feature a panel discussion about Black Mountain College (1933-57) in the Wells Fargo Auditorium at Knight Theater, followed by a reception at the Bechtler. Attendees can see the Bechtler’s newest exhibit, *Nomadic Murals: Tapestries of the Modern Era*. The exhibit, which opens April 5, presents tapestries and rugs designed by artists usually associated with painting, sculpture and architecture.

The evening’s panel of experts will discuss what made Black Mountain College so special and why it continues to be influential today. Panelists are:

- John Boyer, president & CEO of The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art;



- Siu Challons-Lipton, executive director of the Art, Design and Music Department at Queens University;
- Randy Shull, contemporary artist who designed and fabricated the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center in downtown Asheville; and
- Murray Whisnant, local modernist architect, artist and furniture designer whose award-winning modernist homes have been featured nationally.

Meg Freeman Whalen will moderate the panel. She is director of communications and external relations for the College of Arts + Architecture at UNC Charlotte.

“More than 60 years after it closed, Black Mountain College continues to inspire artists, educators and innovators around the world,” said John Boyer, president & CEO of the Bechtler. “The school was home to teachers and students who became leading figures in their fields, including composer John Cage; choreographer Merce Cunningham; painters Elaine and Willem de Kooning; and Buckminster Fuller, who patented the geodesic dome.”

The 2019 “*Mad About Modern*” *Mod Experience* is brought to you by The Charlotte Museum of History and The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art. A complement to the annual *Mad About Modern* home tour, the Mod Experience educational event is part of The Charlotte Museum of History’s efforts to advocate for the preservation of Charlotte’s history, especially its built environment. The museum will announce the date of the 2019 *Mad About Modern* home tour at the Mod Experience event.

How to Go

Modernism in the Mountains is in Wells Fargo Auditorium at Knight Theater on Thursday, April 18. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the Black Mountain College panel starts at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25 and include a reception at the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art and the chance to view the Bechtler’s latest exhibit, [Nomadic Murals: Tapestries of the Modern Era](#). Online registration is at charlottemuseum.org/events.



About The Charlotte Museum of History

The Charlotte Museum of History engages a broad audience in the history of the Charlotte region through the stories of its people, places and events to promote dialogue and historical perspective. The museum is the steward of the Hezekiah Alexander House (ca. 1774) and home site, a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the oldest home in Mecklenburg County. To learn more, visit charlottemuseum.org and follow the museum on Facebook and Twitter (@CLThistory).

About The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art

The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art is dedicated to the exhibition of mid-20th-century modern art. It is named after the family of Andreas Bechtler who assembled a collection created by many of the seminal figures of modernism. The museum is located at Levine Center of the Arts, 420 South Tryon Street, Charlotte, North Carolina 28202. Operating hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sunday 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.; closed Tuesdays. For museum details, visit www.bechtler.org.

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