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UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History to present ¡CARNAVAL!
November 6, 2005–April 23, 2006

A Major Traveling Exhibition on the Revelry of Carnival Around the Globe

In Tlaxcala, Mexico, rural Indians dance through village streets in pearly pink-skin masks, sequined capes and feathered headdresses, imitating once-dominant Spanish and Mexican ranchers. In Basel, Switzerland, members of an outspoken community group masquerade as “U.S. Mouse Marshals” in protest of a U.S. proposal regulating the size of holes in imported Swiss cheese. In a pigeon-filled piazza in Venice, Italy, a man in a fake wig and fussy, ruffled 18th-century finery turns toward the camera and strikes an aristocratic pose.

Every year before the Catholic season of Lent and the arrival of spring, remarkable scenes like these are recreated worldwide. Individuals and communities honor the past and celebrate the present by playing out historical fantasies, making social and political commentaries on contemporary issues, and reveling in the fun of coming together — all in the spirit of the cherished global tradition of Carnival. These celebrations are the subject of the multimedia exhibition ‘¡Carnaval!’ on view at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History from November 6, 2005 through April 23, 2006.

The exhibition transports viewers to eight rural and urban locations in Europe and the Americas where Carnival is among the most important occasions of the year:

- Laza, Spain
- Venice, Italy
- Basel, Switzerland
- Recife/Olinda, Brazil
- Tlaxcala, Mexico
- Oruru, Bolivia
- Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
- New Orleans, U.S.A.

‘¡Carnaval!’ is a 10,000-square-foot excursion into the folklore, fantasy and festivity of modern-day Carnival celebrations in places where the Carnival spirit is deeply rooted in cultural history, tradition and identity. Combining 49 colorful costumes with 15 short video programs and 80 large-scale photomurals shot on location, the exhibition recreates the Carnival experience as viewers are immersed in an atmosphere of motion, color, music and sound.

The multinational focus of this exhibition is expressed by the use of the Spanish spelling for the exhibition title, and by the global nature of the show's design. Each Carnival site is presented as its own section, featuring articulated mannequins in costumes that portray the community's cultural history and the vibrancy of the celebration today. The mannequins stand before photomural backdrops that capture the cityscapes and rural environs of the sites. Video monitors with two video programs per section bring the thrilling drama of Carnival to life.

Origins of Carnival: Ritual, Masquerade, Play and Renewal

Carnival began in Europe in the Middle Ages to mark the coming of Lent, when Catholics abstain from meat and other means of sin and vice. The name for the event was derived from the Latin term, *carnem-levare* — “to remove oneself from meat.”

In the next few centuries, as the celebration spread throughout Europe, the name was shortened to the Italian *Carnevale*, meaning “flesh farewell.” By the 18th century, European adventurers had transplanted the Carnival tradition to the New World. Wherever it spread, Carnival absorbed elements of other cultural festival traditions and was translated into the language of its new home: Carnival in Spanish and Portuguese, Carnival in English, *Mardi Gras* in French, and in German, *Karneval* or *Fasching*.

Though Carnival began in acknowledgement of a religious event, the celebration eventually became more secular and egalitarian, incorporating traditional festivities related to the seasonal transition from winter to spring, and inviting all ages and social classes to take part. Whether rich or poor, old or young, Carnival was a time for everyone in the community to let loose by joining in various forms of ritual, play and masquerade. In donning outrageous disguises, playing rowdy games and engaging in all-out revelry, communities were bonded and individuals uplifted through the shared sense of exhilaration and renewal that the Carnival experience inspired.

Carnival Around the World Today

By the 19th century, Carnival celebrations around the world were structured civic affairs whose distinct forms of ritual, masquerade and play gave rise to the cherished Carnival customs these communities are known for today. The exhibition ‘¡Carnaval!’ displays a range of masquerade and performance themes that illuminate the cultural history, identity — and even the special characters — that distinguish each site.

In rural Laza, Spain, and Tlaxcala, Mexico, Carnival customs remain closely tied to the arrival of spring. Masquerading *peliqueiros* in Laza, wearing ornate costumes and masks said to derive from the 16th-century dress of tax collectors, run through town whipping residents to remind them it is time to play. Revelers also ritualize aggression, throwing ashes, flour, water and dirt filled with ants. A *morena*, or brown cow masquerader in a carved wooden mask, appears amidst the ant throwing to butt people, lift women's skirts and add to the chaos.

The Nahuatl Indians of Tlaxcala, disguised as wealthy Spanish and Mexican *charros*, furiously crack long whips to simulate the sound of thunder in a symbolic petition for rain, fertility, and the community's well being in the coming spring. In other Tlaxcalan villages, young men masquerade as *chivarrudos*, imitating working class, late-19th-century Mexican cattlemen wearing chaps made from the hides of goats, or *chivos*. The masquerade is a way that the Indians make fun of cowboys who often stopped in town for supplies.

Carnival came to an end in the early 20th century in Venice, Italy, after government and religious officials criticized the excessive nature of the event. But it was revived in the 1980s with all the pomp

and flourish of the Renaissance era, featuring costumed counts, Harlequins and Pierrots who float through fog in festooned gondolas along the city's famous canals.

Similarly, in 17th-century Oruro, Bolivia, Catholic priests who accompanied Spanish settlers hoped to repress the native Aymara and Quechua peoples' reverence for Supay, the Andean god of the underworld. The priests viewed Supay as the devil in disguise, prompting the natives to mock the religious directive by disguising themselves in brilliantly colored masks of big-eyed, long-horned diablos, or devils, which remains a popular Carnival costume today. Other masqueraders known as morenos emulate enslaved Africans who worked beside Indian laborers in the Bolivian mines and on lowland plantations. Their elaborate embroidered barrel-shaped costumes are believed to symbolize the richness and weight of the silver extracted by the slaves in the mines. The morenas also carry matracas, or noisemakers, whose creaking noise is said to imitate the sound of chains dragging behind the slaves' feet.

African slavery is also a strong Carnival theme in the Brazilian cities of Recife and Olinda. There Afro-Brazilians re-create 18th- and 19th-century performances that took place on rural sugar plantations where enslaved Africans worked alongside Brazilian Indians. Groups known as maracatu de baque solto dance to loose rhythms played by small orchestras. Spectacular figures known as caboclos de lanca, or Afro-Indian lancers, represent warriors possessed by Amerindian or African spirits. Wearing large cowbells and carrying long lances, they dance, leap, drop to the ground and sometimes duel with one another.

In Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago — where Carnival is known as Mas — modern-day Afro-Trinidadians masquerade as simple devil figures and elaborate devil “rulers” clad in large papier-mâché masks and ornate costumes with capes. The rulers have names such as Satan, Lucifer and the Bookman, who carries a book to record the sins of the people of Trinidad. Another important Carnival activity is the crowning of a King and Queen, who dance across the stage in ornate costumes highlighting a chosen theme. Costumes often integrate sophisticated technology—like pyrotechnics and enormous, wheeled armatures—to lend their performance special effects.

Perhaps more than anywhere, the communities of Basel, Switzerland, and New Orleans, U.S.A., stay true to the 19th-century transformation of Carnival to structured celebrations where tight-knit community groups and societies began representing themselves with costumes, floats and other public displays.

In Basel, where Carnival is known in Swiss-German as Fasnacht, members of work guilds form Carnival “cliques” and design costumes, elaborate lanterns and other props around a theme that criticizes or otherwise comments upon current political or social issues. Favorite Basel characters include the mischievous, confetti-carrying Waggis, whose large teeth and bulbous nose stereotypes the French Alsatian farmers who once sold their produce in Basel street markets. The elegant Alti Dante, or old aunt, wears a pointed nose, gray wig and straw hat adorned with feathers, flowers, or even a small bird. She offers revelers gifts from her purse: a spray of perfume, hard candies or a sip of spirits.

At Carnival in New Orleans, famously known as Mardi Gras, societies called krewes build massive floats, host elegant balls and commission expensive costumes. However, the krewes, which are generally formed along social and racial lines, express themselves in very different ways — from the white society of Rex that sponsors the Mardi Gras royal who parades through the streets on an elaborate throne with a scepter and crown, to members of the working-class African-American Krewe of Zulu, who protest black stereotypes by dressing in black face and grass skirts and throw coconuts into the crowd.

The Art of Costume

While capturing diverse cultural histories, these costumes also display masterful artistic expression and skill. Carnival costumes and masks are usually made in small workshops run by mask makers and seamstresses, or by the organizers of a Carnival troupe. In many communities, the costumes are rented out during festival time. In New Orleans, where large groups create new masquerade themes each year, costumes are commissioned and purchased from master costumers. Often, they are worn for one day, then destroyed. When Mardi Gras is over, costumers start designs for the next year.

The nearly 50 ensembles acquired for ‘¡Carnaval!’ by Barbara Mauldin, curator of Latin American Collections at Santa Fe’s Museum of International Folk Art, came either directly from the masquerader who wore the costume or the individual who made it. “I wanted used costumes and masks so that I could be sure they were authentic,” says Mauldin.

Among the highlights of the handpicked costumes that will be on display is a child’s Mardi Gras costume made by Darryl Montana, a member of one of New Orleans’ most famous families of costumers. Montana’s father, Alliston “Tootie” Montana, is an acclaimed master costumer whose exquisitely detailed handmade costumes feature thousands of colorful beads, feathers and rhinestones. Darryl Montana shares his father’s talents in making ornate masquerades for the mythical Black Indian tribe, the Yellow Pocahontas.

Another classic is a “Doctor of the Plague” costume and mask from Venice, Italy. The disguise — a black dress and hat, white gloves and a mask with a long, bird-like nose — imitates the bizarre outfit donned by a famous 17th-century French doctor as a sanitary precaution before visiting plague patients.

From Basel, Switzerland, comes a large cloth lantern painted with an image of Uncle Sam examining the size of a hole in a piece of Swiss cheese. In 2001, members of the city’s Rätz-clique carried the lantern as a mocking criticism of a U.S. proposal to regulate the size of holes in imported Swiss cheese.

Finally, a sequin-studded Queen’s gown from the Recife/Olinda area of northeastern Brazil is a colorful and costly example of prized costumes worn by female leaders of Afro-Brazilian groups known as the maracatu nacao. Maracatu members make large financial investments in their costumes to parade proudly at Carnival in memory of royal pageants performed on 18th- and 19th-century rural sugar plantations.

Three Related Photography Exhibitions

In conjunction with this exhibition, the Fowler is mounting three consecutive photography exhibitions of Carnival celebrations around the world. The Goldenberg Galleria exhibitions are:

‘Carnaval in Africa: Photographs of Guinea Bissau by Doran H. Ross’

September 10–October 29, 2005

See images from this remarkable West African Carnival in 1987, which featured more than 500 newly made paper-mâché masks promoting the dual themes of "Vaccination for Health" and "Agricultural Development."

‘Carnevale in Italy: Photographs of Venice by David and Shirley Rowen’ <

November 6, 2005–January 29, 2006

The Rowen’s capture the elegance and grandeur of Venice’s festivities in these luminous photographs taken over the past twenty years.

‘Carnival in Europe and the Americas: Photographs by Robert Jerome’

February 5–April 23, 2006

Enjoy contrasting celebration around the world as Jerome's images take you from the Black Forest to the Canary Islands to Mobile, Alabama, and many locales in between.

Additional Information

This exhibition has been organized by the Museum of International Folk Art (MOIFA), Santa Fe, in collaboration with the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History. It was curated by Barbara Mauldin, Curator of Latin American Folk Art, MOIFA. Major funding has been provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, International Folk Art Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Neutrogena Corporation, and Museum of New Mexico Foundation. The Los Angeles presentation and its educational programs are made possible by the Donald B. Cordry Memorial Fund; Shirley and Ralph Shapiro Director's Discretionary Fund; Neutrogena Corporation; Yvonne Lenart Public Programs Fund; Jerome Joss Endowment Fund; Dana Foundation; Office of the Dean, School of the Arts and Architecture; and Manus, the support group of the Fowler Museum. ¡Carnaval! partners include the Consulate General of Switzerland, Los Angeles; Italian Cultural Institute in Los Angeles; Tourist Office of Spain; Consulate General of Brazil in Los Angeles; the departments of Ethnomusicology and World Arts and Cultures and the Latin American Center at UCLA. Special thanks to Playa Digital Media, www.pelourinho.com, Varig Brazilian Airlines, and local media sponsor 89.9 KCRW.

After its run at the Fowler Museum, the exhibition will embark on a national tour with stops at the Mingei International Museum in San Diego (May 20–September 5, 2006), the New Orleans Museum of Art (October 14, 2006–January 6, 2007), the Dallas Museum of Art (February 11–May 6, 2007), and the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh (June 13, 2007–January 5, 2008).

‘¡Carnaval!’, a lavishly illustrated, 350-page book published in conjunction with this exhibition and edited by curator Barbara Mauldin, is distributed by the University of Washington Press (ISBN: paper: 0-295-98427-9, \$40; Cloth: 0-295-98426-0, \$60.00). In addition to essays and illustrations exploring the show's eight featured sites, the book examines Carnival festivities in rural Bulgaria, Haiti and the Cajun region of Louisiana.

The Fowler Museum is open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5 p.m., and on Thursdays, noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA's School of the Arts and Architecture, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Campus parking is available for \$7 in Lot 4.

Related Programs

Saturday, November 5, 2005 7–10 pm

Opening Celebration and Preview

A celebration of the Los Angeles opening of ¡Carnaval! featuring an exhibition preview, savories and libations from around the world, zydeco music, strolling merry-makers, and a few surprises ... costumes encouraged! Two complimentary tickets for members. Non-member tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at door. For questions or to RSVP contact our membership department at 310/206-0306 or fowlermembership@arts.ucla.edu.

Sunday, November 6, 2005 12–5 pm

Opening Day: ¡Carnaval!

2 pm Lecture

‘Carnival Play Today’

¡Carnaval! curator Barbara Mauldin of the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe takes you on a worldwide tour of Carnival celebrations. See her beautiful photos of amazing and diverse festivities around the globe.

3:30 pm Reception

Enjoy live Bolivian music and dance by Los Sambos and light refreshments.

Sunday, November 20, 2005 1–4 pm

Kids in the Courtyard Series: Hats Off

Create a zany hat for your own parade or to use during Carnival UCLA in April 2006.

Thursday, December 1, 2005 7 pm

Fowler Outspoken: An Evening at Mardi Gras with Harry Shearer

Join actor/satirist/musician and Carnival aficionado Harry Shearer to celebrate the enduring legacy of New Orleans and Mardi Gras. Harry and friends pay tribute to the citizens and culture of this beloved city. The ¡Carnaval! exhibition will remain open following the concert. This event is a benefit for the Hurricane Katrina relief effort. Suggested donation at the door of \$25 per person, cash or check only.

Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. Please arrive early to ensure entry or become a Fowler member for priority seating. Membership: 310/206-0306.

Sunday, December 11, 2005 1–4 pm

Kids in the Courtyard Series: Stilt Walking

Learn the basics of stilt walking from professionals. A perfect first step for Carnival UCLA in April 2006.

Thursday, December 15, 2005 6 pm

Fowler Outspoken: An Evening at Venice Carnevale with Maurizio Scaparro

Join leading Italian theater director Maurizio Scaparro, recently appointed director of the 2006 Venice Theater Biennale, and the man widely credited with the revitalization of Venice's Carnival in 1980. Scaparro will discuss the Biennale and focus on the upcoming 2006 Carnevale, which launches the Biennale and features China as its primary theme. Reception to follow.

Co-presented by the Italian Cultural Institute in Los Angeles and the Fowler Museum in conjunction with UCLA's Departments of Theater and Italian Studies, the Compagnia Italiana, the Gabinetto Vieusseux in Florence, the Italian Theater Company in Rome, and the Venice Biennale.

Saturdays, January 14 and 28, 2006 9 am–12 pm or 1–4 pm

A World of Art Family Workshop: Mask-Making with Artist Katrina Alexy

This is the first of three two-part workshops on Carnival costuming, meant to prepare you for our spring finale: Carnival UCLA on April 8, 2006. In this workshop, you will create an elaborate paper-mâché mask. Future workshops are:

Sunday, January 15, 2006 2 pm

Fowler OutSpoken: Disruption and Fool's Play: Carnival Bells in Greece and Italy

Since the Middle Ages, bells in Europe have been symbols of authority and control. Ethnomusicologist and MacArthur Fellow Steven Feld will explore how bells in Carnival act as agents of chaos and subversion. A performance by the popular UCLA Balkan Music Ensemble will follow the lecture.

Thursday, January 19, 2006 6:30 pm

Fashion Show: Carnival on the Catwalk

Sensational clothes—or lack thereof—define Carnival for many people. Experience the playfully seductive style of these out-of-this world original pieces created by local designers inspired by our exhibition.

Sunday, January 22, 2006 1–4 pm

Kids in the Courtyard Series: Carnavalescos

In communities in Brazil, Mexico, and Bolivia where Carnival is widely celebrated, artists called *carnavalescos* work all year long to create the elaborate and often outlandish masks and clothing worn by revelers. Find out what it takes to be a *carnavalesco* and design a costume for the April 8th Carnival UCLA.

Thursday, January 26, 2006 4:30–6:30 pm (Part 1) and February 2, 2006 3–5 pm (Part 2)

Fowler Museum/J. Paul Getty Museum Course: Beyond Masquerade: The Arts and Culture of Carnival

This collaboration between the Fowler Museum and the J. Paul Getty Museum explores the world of Carnival. Part one of this course meets at UCLA for a guided cultural excursion through the “streets” of the ¡Carnaval! exhibition, where surprises await around every corner. Part two meets at the Getty, where UCLA adjunct associate professor and Getty educator Peter Tokofsky will explore representations of Carnival in European art and consider the appeal and significance of masked performances. \$20 fee for Fowler members; \$25 fee for non-members. Reservations required: 310/440-7300.

Thursday, February 9, 2006 7 pm

Fowler Outspoken Film Screening: "Adored in Languages I Don't Understand"

From the ordinary to the extraordinary, inspiration for costumes comes from unique sources—even bubble wrap in the case of designer Tim Dey, whose courtly plastic couture transforms festival goers into Marie Antoinette and Louis XIV. Filmmaker JonBeau Lee will screen his documentary *Adored in Languages I Don't Understand*, which followed the duo on an enchanting adventure to Italian Carnevale as they fulfilled their dreams and competed in Venice's international costume competition in 2003.

Saturdays, February 11 & 25, 2006 9 am–12 pm or 1–4 pm

A World of Art Family Workshop: Headdress Creations with Artist Michelle Berne

Michelle Berne of the 18th Street Arts Center will bring her festival expertise to the Fowler to guide your preparations for April's Carnival UCLA in this two-part workshop. Choose between two morning or two afternoon sessions. \$15 fee for members; \$25 fee for non-members. Reservations required: 310/825-7325.

Sunday, February 12, 2006 1–4 pm

Symposium: Caribbean Carnival Beat

Themes of excess and indulgence, liberation and renewal infuse the social, political, and aesthetic rhythms of Caribbean Carnival. UCLA professor and Guggenheim Fellow Donald Cosentino commences the afternoon with a keynote focusing on Haitian Carnival, and other Caribbean scholars explore Carnival celebrations throughout the region.

Co-sponsored by the UCLA Latin American Center.

Friday, February 24, 2006 4–8 pm

Family Program: Mardi Gras Masquerade!

Celebrate Carnival in an evening featuring art making, music, silliness, and hot chocolate. Come dressed in your own fantastic costume or have your face painted like a beautiful Venetian-style mask to show off in a children's parade through the Museum.

Tuesday, February 28, 2006 5 pm

UCLA Regent's Lecture: Henry Butler

Acclaimed jazz pianist and visiting Regent Scholar Henry Butler celebrates Fat Tuesday at the Fowler with a lecture and performance. Butler's distinctive piano style is a rich amalgam of jazz, Caribbean, classical, pop, R&B, and blues influences, exemplary of the eclecticism of his New Orleans birthplace.

Co-sponsored by the UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology.

Thursday, March 2, 2006 6 pm

Fowler OutSpoken Film Screening: An Evening with Les Blank

Join us for a special screening of the extraordinary documentary, *Always for Pleasure*, an intense insider's portrait of New Orleans's street celebrations and unique cultural gumbo, featuring the music of Professor Longhair, the Wild Tchoupitoulas, the Neville Brothers, and more. A Q&A follows with director Les Blank. UCLA Film Professor Marina Goldovskaya leads the discussion with Blank about the evolution of New Orleans and Mardi Gras in the nearly 30 years since the film was made. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. Priority seating for Fowler members.

Saturdays, March 11 & 18, 2006 9 am–12 pm or 1–4 pm

A World of Art Family Workshop: Brazilian Music and Dance

In this two-part workshop, participants will make several types of percussion instruments and then learn how to shake their bodies to the beat, led by student educators from UCLA's Departments of World Arts and Culture and Ethnomusicology. Choose between two morning or two afternoon sessions. \$15 fee for members; \$20 fee for non-members. Reservations required: 310/825-7325.

Friday, March 17, 2006 9:30 am–4:30 pm

Symposium: Taking It to the Streets: Spectacle and Satire in the Arts and Antics of Carnival

Leading scholars of Carnival explore how individuals and communities have "taken it to the streets" to satirize their world in an expressive fusion of revelry and rebellion. With a keynote by professor Samuel Kinser, director of Newberry Library's Center for Research in Festive Culture, scholars and artists look at the world-turned-upside-down mode, extravagant spectacle, and cutting parodies that distinguish Carnival worldwide.

Co-sponsored by UCLA's Departments of Ethnomusicology and World Arts and Cultures and Latin American Center.

Sunday, March 26, 2006 1–4 pm

Kids in the Courtyard Series: Lead the Way to Carnival

Many Carnival celebrations feature processions of groups in which leaders carry ornamental objects to identify themselves. Decorate a banner or farola—a special umbrella from Brazil—to carry in the UCLA Carnaval on April 8th.

Thursday, April 6 7 pm

Fowler Outspoken: Axé e Evoê! An Evening at Carnaval in Northeast Brazil

Visiting Brazilian carnavalesco José Ataíde shares his experiences as a community leader and cultural representative of his city in Pernambuco, Brazil. Accompanied by Brazilian musicians, Ataíde will

demonstrate the rhythm and dance traditions unique to the northeast of Brazil, including batucada, frevo, and maracatú.

Co-sponsored by UCLA's Latin American Center, Women and Philanthropy at UCLA, and Varig Brazilian Airlines.

Saturday, April 8, 2006 12–5 pm

Carnaval UCLA: A World Tribute to New Orleans

Let the good times roll! Come to the Fowler for a campus-wide parade from 1–2:30 pm, followed by a festival highlighting the international music, food, and arts of Carnival. Over-the-top performances, wild costuming, family art activities, and frivolous fun make this an event you'll not want to miss! To march in the procession as a group or individual, please call 310/206-5663 for registration information. Participants of all ages are welcome.

Unless otherwise noted, events are FREE and no reservations are required. For current program and exhibition information call 310/825-4361 or visit www.fowler.ucla.edu.

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