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**New-York Historical Society and El Museo del Barrio Join Forces for
*Nueva York (1613 – 1945): the First Exhibition to Explore Centuries of
Interaction Between New York City and the Spanish-Speaking World***

**Multimedia Exhibition Will Open September 17, 2010, Organized with the
Collaboration of Pulitzer Prize-Winning Historian Mike Wallace**

NEW YORK, NY, September 14, 2010 – In an unprecedented collaboration, the New-York Historical Society and El Museo del Barrio will present *Nueva York (1613-1945)*, the first museum exhibition to explore how New York's long and deep involvement with Spain and Latin America has affected virtually every aspect of the city's development, from commerce, manufacturing and transportation to communications, entertainment and the arts.

Organized by the two institutions, *Nueva York* will be on view from September 17, 2010, through January 9, 2011, at El Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Avenue (at 104th Street), while the New-York Historical Society's landmark building on Central Park West undergoes a \$60 million architectural renovation. The project team has been directed by chief curator Marci Reaven of City Lore and chief historian Mike Wallace, Distinguished Professor of History at the City University of New York and Pulitzer Prize-winning co-author of *Gotham*.

Bringing together the resources of New York's oldest museum and its leading Latino cultural institution, this exhibition will span more than three centuries of history: from the founding of New Amsterdam in the 1600s as a foothold against the Spanish empire to the present day, as represented by a specially commissioned documentary by award-winning filmmaker Ric Burns.

Nueva York will bring this story to life with hands-on interactive displays, listening stations, video experiences and some 200 rare and historic maps, letters, broadsides, paintings, drawings and other objects drawn from the collections of the two museums, as well as from many other distinguished institutions and private collections.

Among the experiences offered in the exhibition's galleries will be:

- maps and interactives showing the vast networks of the Atlantic world in the 17th century, with its competing Spanish, Dutch, English and French shipping routes and colonial harbors;
- tools and artifacts of the trade between New York and South America, including a clipper ship model, navigation instruments, silverware, powder horns and slave shackles;
- paintings and books by New York artists and writers such as Washington Irving, Frederic Church and William Merritt Chase, who were deeply affected by their travels in Spain and South America;
- Spanish-language newspapers and books published in New York in the 19th century, and Spanish-language guidebooks to the New York of that period;
- military uniforms, political documents, paintings including a portrait of McKinley by Puerto Rican artist Francisco Oller, and propaganda posters reflecting years of Latin American political struggles and U.S. interventions;
- an interactive listening station, allowing visitors to sample the Latin music of New York;
- artworks by modern Latin American artists including Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and Joaquín Torres-García, reflecting their images of New York;
- and *From here to there / De aquí pa'llá (La guagua aérea)*, an art installation by Antonio Martorell (based on *La guagua aérea / The Air Bus*, by Luis Rafael Sánchez) showing Ric Burns's specially commissioned documentary that tells the stories of Latino New Yorkers from 1945 to the present.

Voces y Visiones: Four Decades Through El Museo del Barrio's Permanent Collection, will be on view concurrently, giving visitors a deeper understanding of Latino presence in American culture. The exhibition traces the institution's history from its founding in 1969 and the artistic contributions and milestones by Latino, Caribbean and Latin American artists that have been part of El Museo's forty-year trajectory.

According to Dr. Louise Mirrer, President and CEO of the New-York Historical Society, "The topic we address in *Nueva York* is so vast—spanning centuries and continents—and has so much to tell us about present-day national issues such as immigration, education and language, that it has taken nothing less than two major New York City institutions and an award-winning historian to tell the story. In *Nueva York*, museumgoers will experience how New York City went from being a decidedly hostile harbor for Spanish-speaking people in the 17th century to being a principal meeting ground, and home, for Latinos from every corner of today's world—an evolution that has been critical to the growth of the city's prosperity and its cultural richness."

Julián Zugazagoitia, outgoing Director and CEO of El Museo del Barrio, stated, "The tremendous impact of Sonia Sotomayor's appointment to the Supreme Court has helped awaken people around the country to the integral, complex and powerful presence of Latinos in New

York. But most people, including Latinos themselves, still do not appreciate how deeply our roots are sunk into this city, or how widely the branches of Latino cultures' influence have spread. We are thrilled to be telling this story at last, and telling it with all the depth and expertise at our command.”

Mike Wallace commented, “By laying out the myriad ties that have bound together the American continents, for better and for worse, we offer a way of seeing that can help us assess where we stand, as a city and a country, as we embark on the twenty-first century. We hope that *Nueva York* will help change the way New Yorkers think about their city, and the way the world—particularly the Spanish-speaking world—thinks about New York.”

Lead sponsorship of *Nueva York* is provided by Cablevision. “Cablevision is proud to support a one-of-a-kind exhibition like *Nueva York*, and to bring a deeper appreciation of more than three centuries of our Latino cultural legacy to students across the tri-state area through our educational initiative, Power To Learn. In addition to educational programs, such as the partnership with *Nueva York*, Power to Learn provides free Optimum Internet, video, and voice technology to schools to enhance learning,” said Trent Anderson, Vice President, Education for Cablevision.

Public programs for *Nueva York* are made possible through the support of American Express. “*Nueva York* builds on American Express’s rich history of celebrating our diverse cultural heritage,” said Timothy J. McClimon, president of American Express Foundation. “In addition to supporting *Voces y Visiones* at El Museo del Barrio, we’re pleased to support *Nueva York* for audiences to rediscover and enjoy an important part of our cultural heritage.”

Plan of the Exhibition

Visitors to *Nueva York* will trace the exhibition’s story through a series of five galleries, each dedicated to a particular theme and time period.

The first gallery, on the theme of *Empires and Revolutions*, begins in the 1620s, when New York (as first a Dutch and then an English town) exhibited extreme animosity toward Spaniards and Catholics and made it a point to exclude them (with certain notable exceptions, such as Sephardic Jews). Displays of these early years will include baptismal and court documents newly discovered by the CUNY Dominican Studies Institute on Juan Rodriguez, a black or mulatto Spanish-speaking sailor from Santo Domingo who is the first non-Native ever recorded as residing in the area of New York Harbor, and thus the first immigrant in New York’s history. The gallery then shows how the situation changed with the American Revolution, when Spain became an ally and the first small Spanish colony was established in New York, along with the first above-ground Catholic church, St. Peter’s (built with aid from Spain and Mexico). Displays will testify to the wealth of the Spanish empire and to the taste for luxury goods in New York’s rising middle class. This gallery concludes in 1825, by which time New York had established a booming trade with Cuba, Puerto Rico and the newly independent countries of South America (whose liberation struggles were occasionally helped by Gotham). New York was now a critical

link between the U.S. and Spain on the one hand, and between the U.S. and Spain's former empire (and its remaining Caribbean possessions) on the other.

The second gallery, focusing on *Trade*, shows how the Port of New York in the years 1825-1898 was the place where U.S. flour and manufactured goods flowed south to Latin America, and Latin American and Caribbean products such as sugar, coffee, hides and silver flowed north into the U.S. The flourishing of this trade was the source of the economic and political fortunes of some of New York City's most famous names, such as Havemeyer and Grace, as well as the basis of the development of Spanish and Cuban and Puerto Rican communities. One display in the gallery will explore the involvement of both New Yorkers and Cubans in sugar refining in New York. (Cuba sold some 80 percent of its annual sugar production to the United States through New York City.) Another will tell the story of William R. Grace, who founded his merchant steamship line in Peru, subsequently relocated the headquarters of his international trading company to New York and eventually was elected Mayor for two terms.

The third gallery, on *Cultural Encounters*, shows how New York, as the principal U.S. hub of communications and shipping, fostered not only commercial and political connections but also new cultural interactions. The old, negative views of New Yorkers and other North Americans about "the Spanish character" began to change, as Washington Irving made Christopher Columbus and the Spanish crown into central figures in the story of America's origins, and William Merritt Chase turned Diego Velázquez into a model for American painters. New views developed during these years also led to stereotypes: Spain became picturesque, quaint and exotic; whereas South America began to appear in North American eyes as a lush, open opportunity for the dynamic U.S. The highly popular landscape paintings of Frederic Edwin Church thrilled New Yorkers, who began to take a great interest in the vast unknown lands to the South. North American voyagers, taking advantage of the new ease of steamship travel, returned to New York with exotic products—birds of paradise and beetle carapaces became sought-after fashion accessories—and with souvenirs of ancient indigenous cultures. Meanwhile, political turmoil and economic interests were pushing more and more Latinos into New York City. Cubans especially flowed into New York as exiles during the long battle for independence from Spain; but poets, educators and politicians from Mexico to Argentina also came to do business, publish or get an education without crossing the Atlantic. They sent their impressions of New York's social life and U.S. institutions to their compatriots, influencing their views; and they also exerted an influence of their own on New York, in sports, religion, architecture, engineering, business and the arts. As a special case study in cultural encounters, this gallery will include a display about Esteban Bellán, a Cuban who came to New York in the 1860s to study at Fordham University, became the first Latin American to play major league baseball and then helped to establish baseball in Cuba following his return in 1874.

The fourth gallery, on *Political Encounters*, details how New York's ties to the Caribbean gave the city a special role in the colonial rebellions against Spain throughout the 1800s. The city offered economic and political refuge to thousands escaping repression and turmoil, and provided a staging ground for Caribbean activists to form governments in exile, publish their newspapers and direct insurrection at home. The gallery follows this story from May 1850, when *The Sun* newspaper hoisted a Cuban flag from its building at Nassau and Fulton Streets to hail Narciso López's attempted liberation of Cuba from Spain, through the decisive intervention of

the U.S. in the Cuban Spanish-American War of 1898: a conflict sold to the American public by New York newspaper publishers including Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, and fought most famously on the American side by New Yorker Theodore Roosevelt. In the aftermath of the war, which made Puerto Rico a U.S. territory and established a legalized U.S. role in Cuba's internal affairs, New York City became the capital of a new American empire, and a magnet for millions of immigrants who arrived in the early decades of the 20th century.

The fifth and final gallery, *Landscape of Nueva York*, maps the neighborhoods, factories, dance halls, clubs, museums, churches and political offices that provided the sites for encounters among Latinos and with non-Latinos in the 20th century, as New York City filled with people from the Spanish-speaking world. Displays will illustrate the development of Little Spain around 14th Street (circa 1910) and then of El Barrio in East Harlem; the entry of Latinos into New York's garment industry and its unions; the role of New York's Spanish-speaking community in supporting the Loyalists during the Spanish Civil War and bonding with other anti-fascist forces; and the ever-increasing artistic and cultural exchange between Latin America and New York, as seen in major New York institutions such as The Museum of Modern Art (with Mexican muralists and other Latin American artists) or the music industry (with tango, salsa and rumba).

Related Publication

The exhibition will be accompanied by a full-color catalogue titled *Nueva York: New York and the Spanish-Speaking World*, edited by Edward J. Sullivan, the Helen Gould Sheppard Professor of the History of Art, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. The catalogue will feature illustrated essays by ten noted scholars: exhibition Chief Historian Mike Wallace; Carmen Boullosa (City College of New York); James Fernández (NYU); Juan Flores (NYU); Anna Indych-Lopez (City College of New York); Richard Kagan (Johns Hopkins University); Katherine Manthorne (CUNY Graduate Center); Cathy Matson (University of Delaware); Lisandro Pérez (Florida International University); and Virginia Sánchez Korrol (Professor Emerita, Brooklyn College).

Public Programs

An extensive series of public programs, including lectures, conversations, film screenings, musical performances and walking tours of the city will complement the exhibition and feature some of the nation's top historians, authors, and curators as well as Latino baseball and boxing greats, Broadway performers and musical artists. Educational programs will range from docent-led tours and a brochure for family visits produced by *El Diario La Prensa*, the oldest Spanish – language newspaper in United States, to professional development programs for teachers and a full array of standards-based curriculum materials. An interactive exhibition website will provide access to exhibition themes and scholarship and a variety of links to audiovisual materials. *Nueva York* public programs are generously supported by American Express.

Curatorial Team

The Guest Curator for *Nueva York* is Marci Reaven of City Lore, an organization dedicated to presenting programs about New York's cultural heritage. Kathleen Hulser, Curator, N-YHS, and Elvis Fuentes, Curator, El Museo del Barrio, also served as advisors.

Advisors to the curatorial team for *Nueva York* include Carmen Boulosa (City College); Emilio Cueto (formerly of the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, DC); Arcadio Díaz-Quiñones (Princeton University); James D. Fernández (NYU); Juan Flores (NYU); Juan González; Gabriel Haslip-Viera (City College); Ramona Hernández (Dominican Studies Institute); Claudio Iván Remeseira (Columbia University); Miriam Jiménez-Román; Richard Kagan (Johns Hopkins University); Enrique López Mesa (Center for Martí Studies in Havana); Cathy Matson (University of Delaware); Lisandro Pérez (Florida International University); Virginia Sánchez Korrol (Professor Emerita, Brooklyn College); Robert Smith (Baruch College); Doris Sommer (Harvard University); Ilan Stavans (Amherst College); Edward Sullivan (NYU); Silvio Torres-Saillant (Syracuse University); and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto.

The galleries have been designed by exhibition consultants Esposito Design Studio.

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ABOUT THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1804, the New-York Historical Society is New York's oldest cultural institution. Its museum and internationally renowned research library collections comprise over four million items that span four centuries and document the history, culture, diversity, and continuing evolution of the United States as seen through the prism of New York City and State. The New-York Historical Society is dedicated to presenting groundbreaking exhibitions and intellectually

engaging programming and educational activities that capitalize on its extraordinary museum and library collections, and to fostering research that reveals the dynamism of history and its influence on the world of today.

ABOUT EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO

El Museo del Barrio, New York's leading Latino cultural institution, welcomes visitors of all backgrounds to discover the artistic landscape of the Latino, Caribbean and Latin American cultures. Their richness is represented in El Museo's wide-ranging collections and exhibitions, complemented by performing arts, music concerts, cultural celebrations, and educational programs. A dynamic artistic, cultural, and community gathering place, El Museo is a center of cultural pride on New York's Museum Mile.

El Museo was founded 40 years ago by artist and educator Raphael Montañez Ortiz and a coalition of parents, educators, artists, and activists who noted that mainstream museums largely ignored Latino artists. Since its inception, El Museo has been committed to celebrating and promoting Latino culture, thus becoming a cornerstone of El Barrio, and a valuable resource for New York City. El Museo's varied permanent collection of over 6,500 objects spanning more than 800 years of Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino art includes pre-Columbian Taíno artifacts, traditional arts, twentieth-century drawings, paintings, sculptures and installations, as well as prints, photography, documentary films and video.

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