EXHIBITION CELEBRATES LEGACY OF MONTANA ARCHITECT A.J. GIBSON

MISSOULA – The Montana Museum of Art & Culture at The University of Montana will present an exhibition Aug. 20 through Oct. 23 honoring the work of Montana architect A.J. Gibson.

“The Original Man: The Life and Work of Montana Architect A.J. Gibson” was co-curated by MMC and UM professor of art history and art criticism Hipólito Rafael Chacón.

The exhibition will open with a reception from 4 to 6 p.m., Friday, Aug. 20, at the museum's Meloy and Paxson galleries, located in the Performing Arts and Radio/Television Center at UM.

Chacón is also the author of a book of the same name, published in 2008 in partnership with MMC and The University of Montana Press. Chacón worked with the University’s Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library K. Ross Toole Archives and the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula to organize the exhibition and create the first complete biography of Missoula County’s best-known and most beloved architect, Albert John Gibson.

The exhibition, which traveled the state the past two years, returns to Missoula to coincide with centennial of the Missoula County Courthouse. The final showing includes models of several Gibson buildings constructed by members of the Montana chapter of the American Institute of Architects,
reproductions of Gibson’s architectural plans, original drawings, scrapbooks, photo albums and architectural fragments.

Between the 1880s and the 1910s, Gibson defined great architecture in western Montana and northern Idaho. This was remarkable given that he had no professional training. Despite this, he designed and built a broad range of buildings, from private homes to grand residences and civic structures. He helped reshape Missoula from a rustic accumulation of buildings into a civilized space.

Gibson’s work has endured for more than a century and includes the first five buildings on the UM campus in Missoula, the Daly Mansion near Hamilton, and the Ravalli County and Missoula County courthouses.

Chacón will sign copies of his book and present a lecture on Gibson at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 16, at the Montana Theatre in the PAR/TV Center. The event is free and open to the public.

The Montana Museum of Art & Culture has new, expanded hours and is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday from noon to 3 p.m. and Thursday and Friday from noon to 6 p.m. For more information, call 406-243-2019 or go online to http://www.umt.edu/montanamuseum.

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**NOTE TO MEDIA:** Digital images of select items included in the exhibition are available upon request by calling 406-243-2019.

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