

**News Release
Public Information
Department**

**BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART RECEIVES \$10 MILLION GRANT
FROM HENRY LUCE FOUNDATION TO ENHANCE VISITOR EXPERI-
ENCE AND INCREASE ACCESS TO AMERICAN ART HOLDINGS**

April 2001

Accessibility to one of the largest and most important collections of American art in the United States will be significantly increased through a grant of \$10 million from the Henry Luce Foundation to the Brooklyn Museum of Art to establish the Luce Center for American Art. The Center will comprise 17,000 square feet of both permanent collection galleries and a study facility for public and scholars.

“The Luce Center for American Art at the Brooklyn Museum of Art will make more of the Museum’s 375,000 objects of American painting, sculpture, decorative arts, works on paper, and Native American art available to public view and scholarly research,” said Henry Luce III, Chairman of the Henry Luce Foundation.

“We are immensely grateful to our colleague Trustee Henry Luce III and to the Luce Foundation for this magnificent leadership gift in support of American art at the Brooklyn Museum of Art and for the critical contribution it makes in securing our commitment to excellence in serving our growing and increasingly diverse audience,” said Robert S. Rubin, Chair of the Museum’s Board of Trustees.

Dr. Arnold Lehman, Director of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, stated, “The first phase of Brooklyn’s Luce Center for American Art will open on September 5, 2001 with completely reinstalled galleries of our American collections. It will accomplish two major goals for the Museum, by substantially increasing the numbers of major American objects on public view and by achieving for the first time the

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integration of our extraordinary holdings of American art from all related curatorial departments. This will significantly enrich our visitors' understanding and experience of these exceptional objects and their context in American history."

The gallery presentation is titled *American Identities: A Reinterpretation of American Art at the BMA*. To be on view in 12,000 square feet of gallery space on the fifth floor of the Museum's East Wing, it will include nearly 200 paintings, sculpture, and works on paper, which will be complemented by more than 125 related holdings representing the depth and quality of the American Decorative Arts collections, among them furniture, ceramics, silver, Tiffany objects, textiles, and more than a dozen Native American objects.

To further enhance the visitors' experience, an introduction to the collection will be available in an orientation section. The presentation will be thematic and intended to speak to the concerns of daily life through the works of art. It will also include contemporaneous photographs and four film and video stations throughout the galleries, where short period films related to the themes will play on a continuous loop. There will also be extensive text panels exploring each of the themes and, for the first time, descriptive labels for many of the individual works, as well as "new voices" in the form of statements from artists, members of the Museum's community, and from period literature. Highlights from the collection will also be included in an audio tour of the entire permanent collection that is planned for the near future.

American Identities: A Reinterpretation of American Art at the BMA is also supported by a generous grant from the Independence Community Foundation for the Museum's project *American Identities: Building Audiences for the Future*, and by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The second phase of the Luce Center for American Art at the BMA will create a new study center that will open in 2002 directly adjacent to the public galleries. More than 3,000 objects, never before accessible to the public, will be available

for viewing and research by students, scholars, and the general public. The study center will reclaim for public use 5,000 square feet of space that has not been accessible to visitors.

Two large, glass-walled bays will contain nearly 600 paintings and drawings from the core collection of American works, which will include Spanish colonial and contemporary material, all on rolling racks that will be regularly rotated so that visitors may view an ever-changing array of the collection's reserves.

The study center will also contain glass walled storage for a significant number of large- and small-scale sculptures. Visible double-tiered storage will include American and Spanish colonial furniture as well as silver and ceramics. There will also be a study-storage area, which will house works on paper in a rotating display.

"The Luce Center will transform Brooklyn's collections of historic American paintings, watercolors, sculpture, and decorative arts, long recognized for their importance, into one of the most important resources for the study of American art in the United States," states Dr. Linda S. Ferber, Andrew W. Mellon Curator of American Art and Chair of the Department of American Art. The gallery reinstallation is being organized by Dr. Ferber, Teresa A. Carbone, Curator of American Painting and Sculpture; and Dr. Barry Harwood, Curator of Decorative Arts. They will also organize the study center, along with Kevin Stayton, Acting Chief Curator and Chair of the Department of Decorative Arts, and Dr. Barbara Dayer Gallati, Curator of American Painting and Sculpture. Vice Director for Education Dr. Joel Hoffman will play a major role in the project. Matthew Yokobosky is the designer of the gallery and the study center.

The Henry Luce Foundation has supported the Brooklyn Museum of Art with seven prior grants for research and exhibitions, including the recent Eastman Johnson: Painting America, just awarded by the New York State Historical Association the distinguished Henry Allen Moe prize for the most outstanding catalogue in the arts published in the New York State.

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Contact: Sally Williams. extension 330