

**News Release  
Public Information  
Department**

September 2003

**Refurbished Hall of the Americas to Open in Celebration of  
Museum's New Front Entrance and Plaza**

The Brooklyn Museum of Art's Hall of the Americas will be refurbished and completely reinstalled this spring for the first time since the mid-1960s. The new presentation, entitled *Living Legacies: The Arts of the Americas*, is the first of two phases of reinstallation and will include selections from the Museum's renowned holdings of Meso-American, South American, and Native American material. This thematic exhibition will open on April 16, 2004 to coincide with the reopening of the new front entrance pavilion and plaza.

The hall's colonnaded space, designed by architects McKim, Mead, & White, will feature bright colors and new display cases. Nearly all of the works in this new presentation have been off view for three years, many have not been on view for several decades. All have been surveyed, and treated if necessary, by the Museum's Conservation Laboratory. Nancy Rosoff, the Andrew W. Mellon Curator and Chair of Arts of the Americas, is project director. The presentation has been designed by Matthew Yokobosky, BMA Chief Designer.

Organized to illustrate the diversity and continuity of artistic traditions, *Living Legacy: The Arts of the Americas* includes three thematic sections. *Threads of Time: Woven Histories of the Andes* features more than thirty Andean textiles and related materials from the Museum's holdings of some 800 objects, which comprise what is considered one of the most important collections of its kind outside of South America. The centerpiece of this exhibition is the "Paracas Textile," made about two thousand years ago on Peru's South Coast and thought by experts to be one of the most important Andean textiles in existence. Renowned for its beauty and demonstration of technical virtuosity, this small mantle has a center field of stylized faces surrounded by an elaborate border of ninety figures of humans, plants, animals, and fantastic beings. Among the other works in this presentation will be a Nasca mantle embroidered with fish created some time

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between the first and sixth century A.D.; a remarkable Wari hat crafted of cloth, reed, and feathers; a miniature Wari woven tunic; a tunic from Peru's Central Coast adorned with painted birds and fish; a weaver's work basket, ancient spindles, and a wooden loom. Contemporary textiles purchased recently in Peru and Bolivia, along with photographs and videos will demonstrate the continuing vitality of this artistic tradition. This section of the exhibition is being organized by Project Director Nancy Rosoff, with the assistance of Research Associate Georgia de Havenon.

*Enduring Heritage: Art of the Northwest Coast* will present more than thirty-five objects from seven cultures. Many of these items were created in the late nineteenth century and acquired in the early twentieth century by Stewart Culin, the Museum's first Curator of Ethnology (1902–1929), who provided detailed documentation for many of the objects he obtained. Featured will be the Kwakwaka'wakw Speaker Figure, two house posts by an unknown Heiltsuk artist, and the Haida totem pole from Canada's Queen Charlotte Islands. As part of the reinstallation, the totem poles will undergo on-site cleaning and conservation, a process that visitors will be able to view. Among the other works in this exhibition will be a range of household and ceremonial objects, including a Kwakwaka'wakw Thunderbird Transformation mask, used by dancers in potlatch ceremonies; a Bella Bella wooden feast ladle with skull designs; a Haida trick chest, used during performances to conceal a small child; and a Tsimshian carved wood chief's headdress with a grizzly bear crest inlaid with abalone. *Enduring Heritage* is being organized by Susan Kennedy Zeller, Assistant Curator, Arts of the Americas.

The third thematic section of this phase of the reinstallation is entitled *Stories Revealed*. It presents nearly twenty works reflecting how various indigenous cultures throughout the Americas portray and preserve history, knowledge, and religious beliefs. Several items in this section include examples of pictographic "writing," among them a painted elk hide robe by Shoshone artist, Cadzi Cody, that contains a complex narrative of a sun dance, an ancient Mimbres bowl decorated with dancing figures, and an Alaskan scrimshaw walrus tusk portraying scenes of hunting and fishing. Post-Conquest documents, rendered on plant-fiber paper, illustrate how the pictorial tradition later came to combine indigenous and European elements. *Stories Revealed* is organized by Nancy Rosoff and Susan Kennedy Zeller.

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### **Contact:**

Sally Williams, (718) 501-6330

James Gordon, (718) 501-6334

Adam Husted, (718) 501-6331

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **Admission:**

Contribution \$6; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$3. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

#### **Directions:**

**Subway:** Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. **Bus:** B71, B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.

#### **Museum Hours:**

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; First Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; all other Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.