



September 2004

### **Redesigned and Renovated Brooklyn Museum Libraries and Archives Opens to Public October 20, 2004**

When the Brooklyn Museum Libraries, one of the nation's most important collections, reopen to the public on October 20, they will occupy greatly enhanced space. The Libraries have been completely renovated and now feature climate control, new storage facilities, and a dramatically improved reading room. Comprising the Main Reference Library material, Museum Archives, and the Wilbour Library of Egyptology, the collections occupy nearly 7,700 square-feet on the Museum's second floor. The collections are available to the public by advance appointment.

The Library space has been redesigned by Museum staff architect Kenneth Kurtz and the renovation overseen by the Museum department of Planning and Architecture, working with Principal Librarian Deirdre Lawrence, Museum Archivist Deborah Wythe, and Preservation Associate Keith Duquette.

The renovation of the Brooklyn Museum Libraries and Archives was made possible by the Booth Ferris Foundation and the Starr Foundation. Additional generous support was given by the Achelis Foundation, the Vincent Astor Foundation, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, Mrs. Mildred Gralla in memory of Vice Admiral Arthur Robert Gralla, and other generous friends of the Museum.

To provide greater access to the research collections, the Museum has recently launched an online catalog. The Library's online catalog was supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, and the H. W. Wilson Foundation.

For the first time in the history of the Museum Libraries and Archives, the space is climate controlled, stabilizing both the temperature and humidity, making it possible to better protect and preserve all of the research collections. The Main Reference Library was last renovated in 1965. The Wilbour Library of Egyptology, formerly on the third floor, had not been renovated since it opened in 1934. The Museum Archives had previously been housed in a temporary storage space in another location.

"Since our founding in 1823 as the Brooklyn Apprentices Library, the Library holdings have always been an integral component of the Museum. This is a wonderful transformation of the envelope that contains these

## **Brooklyn Museum**

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important collections, into space that better preserves them, as it provides greater and more comfortable access to those who use this vital resource," comments Museum Director Arnold L. Lehman.

The two libraries have a total of some 250,000 volumes, together forming the fifth largest art museum library collection in the United States. The Archives hold over 1,600 linear feet of textual and visual documents. Nearly 900 units of Spacesaver compact shelving, a total of nearly 22,000 linear feet of shelving, were installed in the Library stacks, providing high-density storage for both Library and Archives collections. These units ride on steel rails operated by manual handles, replacing wooden shelving originally installed in 1902 when the Library was first brought in to the then newly built Museum.

The Library also has a new reception space, where staff may assist visiting researchers, where three computer terminals are available to access the online catalog, as well as a newly designed Reading Room. The new design combined the Libraries original nineteenth-century oak tables and Windsor chairs with recycled light fixtures from the 1930s, originally installed in the Wilbour Library of Egyptology, providing a comfortable research setting, in which wireless Internet access is available.

The Museum's Reference Library and Wilbour Library of Egyptology were developed to encourage understanding of the Museum's object collections and the broader areas of art and cultural history. These non-circulating research collections, which parallel the strength of the Museum's art collections, are world-renowned for their rarity and comprehensive scope, ranging from antiquity to contemporary times. The Library collection is particularly strong in the arts of North and South America, Africa, Asia, Egypt, Islam, and the Ancient Near East. It contains books, periodicals, exhibition catalogues, files on art and artists, auction and trade catalogues, and microforms. Special collections include sketches, documentary photograph, rare volumes, and artists' books.

The Wilbour Library of Egyptology is one of the most comprehensive research collections on the cultural history, art, and archaeology of Ancient Egypt from its Paleolithic beginnings up to the Islamic period. It was formed through a bequest from Charles Edwin Wilbour, who left his personal library, along with his collection of ancient Egyptian art to the Brooklyn Museum. Now, with over 35,000 volumes, the Wilbour Library serves as an important resource for textual and visual information about the history of ancient Egypt and the art and culture of the ancient Middle East.

In addition to the Libraries, a comprehensive history of the Museum may be found in the Museum Archives, which contains institutional records, curatorial correspondence, expedition reports, and related records that date back to the 1823 founding of the institution.

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**Contact:**

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**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.