



PRESS RELEASE

Williams College Museum of Art Partners with Yale University Art Gallery

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Williamstown, Mass. — **DATE** The Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) is pleased to announce that it is once again partnering with the Yale University Art Gallery (YUAG). WCMA is one of six other college museums participating in a collection-sharing project with the YUAG. The loans and associated teaching initiatives are being funded through a grant made to Yale by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

WCMA, which reopened on February 3 after temporarily closing while it reinstalled its permanent gallery spaces, is featuring over 50 artworks on loan from the Yale University Art Gallery and hundreds of major artworks from its own collection. WCMA's re-presentation of its permanent collection, called *Reflections on a Museum*, features eight related exhibitions in ten galleries that take "the museum" as their subject. From Egyptian funerary pots made 5,000 years ago to digital photographs made in 2010, the installation celebrates exquisite art in all its varied forms.

Reflections on a Museum will be on view for approximately three years at WCMA. Although the exhibitions predominantly feature works from WCMA's own collection of nearly 13,000 works, loans from the Yale University Art Gallery punctuate the exhibitions. Selected by the Williams College art department faculty and museum staff, the works from YUAG range from Japanese hanging scrolls; ancient Greek and medieval art; sculpture by Constantin Brancusi and

Alberto Giacometti; and paintings by Thomas Eakins, Paul Klee, and Pablo Picasso.

Says WCMA Director Lisa Corrin, “We are thrilled to be working with the Yale University Art Gallery once again after our successful collaborations on the LeWitt wall drawing retrospective at MASS MoCA and the exhibition *Making It New: The Art and Style of Sara and Gerald Murphy*. These projects have drawn our institutions together and have provided tremendous teaching and learning opportunities for our faculty and students. Yale’s willingness to lend some of the great treasures of its collection to Williams has added immeasurably to our ability to support teaching with the collection, especially in areas where our collection is limited. Jock Reynolds, Director of the Yale University Art Gallery, and his curatorial team really understand the importance of sharing objects and expertise to enrich the education of the next generation of scholars and museum professionals.”

Professor Peter Low, Art Department Chair, adds: “The Art Department is thrilled to have had the opportunity to collaborate with WCMA staff in conceiving of this innovative reinstatement. We are equally excited at the prospect of teaching from the new exhibitions that include so many fabulous works of art on loan from Yale. What’s more, we’re optimistic that the reinstatement will spark a dynamic, interdisciplinary discourse about art and the museum across the entire campus.”

Yale University Art Gallery Collection-Sharing Initiative

Funded by a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Yale University Art Gallery Collection-Sharing Initiative comprises a program of major loans from Yale’s encyclopedic collection to six “partner museums” for use in strategically developed exhibitions and related coursework. The Initiative is intended to promote intra- and inter-institutional collaboration, foster object-based teaching, and strengthen the larger community of college art museums.

The Collection-Sharing Initiative derives from the belief that, while digital technologies have increased access to museum collections, there is no substitute for original works of art, which contain not only a particular

magnetism, but also a wealth of information about history, human culture, and much more. As such, they can serve as a vital part of educational experiences in a variety of disciplines.

Jock Reynolds, The Henry J. Heinz II Director of the Yale University Art Gallery, notes, “The Gallery is deeply grateful to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for its support, which has enabled museums across the country to undertake major collection-care and educational initiatives, and share the results of that work with a broad community. It is in this same spirit of sharing that the Gallery—which is blessed with an extraordinarily rich collection—proposed an initiative in which it would invite smaller college museums to borrow works that would enrich their own programs and curricula. Moreover, the program is reciprocal, as the development of new projects and the ongoing sharing of expertise will benefit the Gallery as much as the loans of artworks will benefit our partner museums.”

The other museums that are partnering with the YUAG are the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine; Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts; Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts; and the Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. Most of the partner museums had for a period of more than a decade received support from the Mellon Foundation designed to strengthen the use of original works of art across the curriculum.

About the Williams College Museum of Art

Reflections on a Museum is an opportunity for the public to re-discover WCMA. A free, public reception to celebrate this project will be held on Thursday, April 7, 2011 at 5 p.m. at the museum. All are invited to attend.

WCMA houses nearly 13,000 works that span the history of art. The museum’s principle mission is to encourage multidisciplinary teaching through encounters with art objects that traverse time periods and cultures. An active, collecting museum, its strengths are in modern and contemporary art, photography, prints,

and Indian painting. The museum is also noted for its stellar collection of American art from the late 18th century to the present. With the largest collection in the world of works by the brothers Charles and Maurice Prendergast, the museum is a primary center for study of these American artists in a transatlantic context of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

WCMA is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 am to 5 pm, and on Sunday from 1 to 5 pm. Admission is free and the museum is wheelchair accessible; www.wcma.org.

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