



NEWS RELEASE

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LEGENDARY COLLECTION OF AMERICAN DECORATIVE ARTS ON VIEW AT THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

Collecting at Winterthur: Henry Francis du Pont's American Vision
May 24–September 7, 2008

Toledo, Ohio—On May 24, 2008, the Toledo Museum of Art (TMA) opens the exhibition *Collecting at Winterthur: Henry Francis du Pont's American Vision*, a selection of more than 300 masterpieces from the most extensive collection of American decorative arts in the United States. The exhibition is organized by Winterthur Museum & Country Estate in Delaware and remains on view in TMA's Canaday Gallery through September 7, 2008. Admission to TMA and the exhibition are free.

Founded by Henry Francis du Pont, Winterthur Museum & Country Estate is located in Delaware's picturesque Brandywine Valley and is best known for its museum, garden, and library. *Collecting at Winterthur* features furniture, textiles, paintings, prints and drawings, ceramics, glass, and metalwork from this collection, all made or used in America between 1640 and 1860.

"Henry Francis du Pont discovered his collecting interests in American decorative arts in the 1920s," said Dr. Jutta-Annette Page, Toledo Museum of Art curator of glass. "At Winterthur, his family's estate, he created magnificent rooms with historic woodwork and objects purchased from a variety of sources. He did so with great attention to color and detail, from exquisite furniture and textiles, right down to packets of hand forged nails."

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EXHIBITION THEMES

The exhibition is organized around major style periods from Henry Francis du Pont's collection. Recurring themes appear throughout the exhibition: English, European, and Asian sources of inspiration, documented works signed or labeled by the maker, and connections to important American people and places.

Early Settlement and Sophistication: This section explores the decorative arts of the earliest settlers in colonial America. Many of these works are reminiscent of mannerist and late Renaissance designs that were popular in England and the Netherlands during the same time. Highlights include an impressive 1680 court cupboard from Essex County, Massachusetts, displaying fine examples of silver, pewter, and ceramic.

East Meets West: 18th-century American design was heavily influenced by China. Du Pont collected both objects that were imported from the East and those produced by European and English craftsmen who interpreted the Oriental motifs in their own fashion. Among the items brought to America from China are towering porcelain pagodas and enormous dinner sets of individually monogrammed porcelain made specifically for export to Europe and America. Among Western interpretations of Oriental designs in the exhibition are a lacquered, or japanned, Boston high chest of drawers, circa 1750, and a tea table with Oriental fretwork galleries and stretchers.

Passion for Rococo: The works in this section include objects created by mid-18th-century artisans working in American cities such as Philadelphia, Charleston, and Boston. The style is often called Chippendale after the English craftsman whose design books helped disseminate a taste for extravagant curves and ornamentation. Included in this section are a magnificent 1769 mahogany high chest, (8½ feet high, with gilded hardware) and the matching dressing table and chair made *en suite* for Michael and Miriam Gratz of Philadelphia. Seven major paintings by preeminent American artists of the day are also featured.

The Arts of the Pennsylvania Germans: This section highlights du Pont's earliest collecting interests. Considered to be one of the great strengths of the Winterthur collection are the colorful decorative arts of the German settlers of eastern Pennsylvania. Highlights here are cupboards filled with boldly decorated pottery, chests painted and inlaid with symbolic images of flowers and birds, woven coverlets and quilts, and illuminated manuscripts called *Fraktur*, which served as paper records of births, marriages, and house blessings. Such objects, made by and for these rural communities, document various aspects of their daily lives and the wealth of their cultural heritage.

American Classicism: The final section of the exhibition displays the brilliance of the classical revival in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as colonials became Americans and created patriotic heroes like George Washington, who was depicted in scores of textiles, ceramics, paintings, and other decorative objects from this period. These images of America's first president, including John Trumbull's renowned painting *Washington at Verplanck's Point* (1790), reinforced the concept of democracy and the birth of a new nation.

A final vignette in the exhibition demonstrates du Pont's quest for objects with historical significance and his genius for arranging works with relation to color, proportion, and composition. It features a spectacular 1790 New York sideboard, adorned with six matching tankards made by Boston silversmith Paul Revere in 1772, two mahogany urn-shaped knife cases owned originally by wealthy merchant Elias Hasket Derby, and a selection of exquisite pieces of Chinese porcelain made for the American market. Above the sideboard hangs Benjamin West's important unfinished painting *American Commissioners of the Preliminary Peace Negotiations with Great Britain* (1783-1784), a scene which heralds the official conclusion of the American Revolution.

CATALOGUE

The exhibition is accompanied by the fully illustrated 224-page color catalogue, *An American Vision: Henry Francis du Pont's Winterthur Museum*, written by Wendy A. Cooper and published by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and Winterthur, Delaware, in association with Lund Humphries. The catalogue is available in hardcover for \$60 and in paperback for \$35 at the Museum Store. Phone and mail orders include an additional charge for shipping and handling, call 419-254-5766.

The Toledo Museum of Art's presentation of *Collecting at Winterthur* is supported in part by Sotheby's; exhibition organized by Winterthur Museum & Country Estate, Wilmington, Delaware.

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<http://www.toledomuseum.org/mailforms/use/ImageOrderForm/form1.html>

EXHIBITION-RELATED PROGRAMS

All dates and times are subject to change without notice.

Friday, May 30

Presentation: *Riches, Rivals and Radicals* | 7:30 P.M., Little Theater

Marjorie Schwarzer, Professor and Chair of Museum Studies, John F. Kennedy University, Berkeley, California

Every collection of objects says something about its owner. Join author Marjorie Schwarzer for a lively presentation, not only about Henry du Pont and the founding of Winterthur, but also about some of America's most notable early 20th-century art collectors, such as Andrew Mellon and William Randolph Hearst. Were they motivated by money, ego, or a grander civic vision? Come hear some of their hidden stories and decide for yourself.

Sunday, June 29

***Hands-on Activity: Maker's Marks: What Are They?* | 2–4 P.M., Libbey Court**

Objects in the *Collecting at Winterthur* have a hidden maker's mark. This logo identifies the artist and where the piece was made. What would your maker's mark look like?

July 11-September 5

Conversations at TMA: *Good, Better, Best: Connoisseurship and How to Make the Perfect Choice.*

Join TMA curators and staff to discover how the Museum acquires objects for the collection.

Fridays | 7:30 P.M., Libbey Court

July 11: Amy Gilman, associate curator of modern and contemporary art

July 18: Jeff Boyer, conservation technical assistant

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August 1: Sandra Knudsen, associate curator of ancient art

August 8: Tom Loeffler, collections manager for works on paper

August 15: Jutta-Annette Page, curator of glass

August 22: Steve Nowak, director of exhibitions and interpretive programs

August 29: Carolyn Putney, curator of Asian art

September 5: Lawrence W. Nichols, William Hutton Curator of European and American painting before 1900

Friday, July 18

Hands-on Activity: Getting Framed | 7–9 P.M., Libbey Court

Artists and curators think about what frames are best for a work of art. Using postcards of works in the TMA collection, create your own frame. Then visit the galleries, find the work of art, and see if you like the choice that was made.

Friday, July 25

Presentation: Creating a Sense of Place: Art, Architecture and Nature at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art | 7:30 P.M., Little Theater

Robert G. Workman, Executive Director, Crystal Bridges Museum

Henry du Pont was able to pursue his dream of filling his house, Winterthur, with the American decorative arts that he loved. He wanted to share his passion with the public, and Winterthur today remains one of greatest collections of decorative arts made or used in early America. Alice Walton is also following her dream by founding the Arkansas Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. This museum is envisioned as a premier national art institution dedicated to American art and artists. Robert Workman, Executive Director of the Crystal Bridges Museum, takes you behind the scenes with stories about the planning, organization, construction, and implementation of this new museum project.

Friday, August 22

Hands-on Activity: Enhance your Living Space | 7–9 P.M., Libbey Court

Collecting at Winterthur shows examples of the decorative arts in the du Pont family home. Explore the art of calligraphy and decorative motifs using “flora and fauna” to enhance your own living space.

Saturday, September 6

Heirloom Appraisal Day: What Treasures Are in Your Collection? | 10 A.M. – 3 P.M., Community Gallery

Do you have special objects in your home that you would love to know more about? Meet appraisers from DuMouchelle’s as they assess objects from your collection. TMA members pay only \$10 for the first item and \$7 for additional items. (Please only three items per person.) Fees for nonmembers are \$15 and \$10, respectively. Call 419-254-5771, ext. 7432, starting July 28 for reservations.

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Sunday, September 7

Hands-on Activity: Painted Mini-Chests | 2 – 4 P.M., Libbey Court

Like the painted chests in *Collecting at Winterthur*, decorate a box to house your very own collection.

PUBLIC TOURS

All dates and times are subject to change without notice.

Collecting at Winterthur: Henry Francis du Pont's American Vision is free to the public and is on view in TMA's Canaday Gallery. Free Docent-led tours of the exhibition are scheduled as follows:

Saturday, May 24, 2 P.M.
Sunday, May 25, 2 & 3 P.M.
Friday, May 30, 6:30 & 7:30 P.M.
Saturday, May 31, 2 P.M.
Sunday, June 1, 2 & 3 P.M.
Friday, June 6, 6:30 P.M.
Saturday, June 7, 2 P.M.
Sunday, June 8, 2 P.M.
Friday, June 13, 6:30 P.M.
Saturday, June 14, 2 P.M.
Sunday, June 15, 2 P.M.
Friday, August 22, 6:30 P.M.
Saturday, August 23, 2 P.M.
Sunday, August 24, 2 P.M.
Friday, September 5, 6:30 P.M.
Saturday, September 6, 2 P.M.
Sunday, September 7, 2 P.M.

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The mission of the Toledo Museum of Art is based upon the belief in the power of art to ignite the imagination, stimulate thought, and provide enjoyment. Through our collection and programs, we strive to integrate art into the lives of people.

The Toledo Museum of Art is a nonprofit arts institution funded through individual donations, foundation grants, corporate sponsorships, and investments. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund programs at the Toledo Museum of Art through a sustainable grant program that encourages economic growth, educational excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans.

Admission to the Museum is free. The Museum is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 10 A.M.–4 P.M.; Friday, 10 A.M.–10 P.M.; Sunday, 11 A.M.–5 P.M.; but closed Mondays and major holidays. Friday evening hours are made possible by Fifth Third Bank.

The Museum is located at 2445 Monroe Street at Scottwood Avenue, just west of the downtown business district and one block off I-75 with exit designations posted. For general information, visitors can call 419-255-8000 or 800-644-6862, or visit www.toledomuseum.org