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## **Indianapolis Museum of Art Launches ArtBabble.org, A First-of-its-kind Website Dedicated to Art-based Video Content**

**Interactive online destination provides forum for engaging with videos about art**

*IMA partners with Art21, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The New York Public Library, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Smithsonian American Art Museum*

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN**, April 7, 2009—The Indianapolis Museum of Art today announced the launch of ArtBabble.org, an online community created to showcase art-based video content. The groundbreaking new site allows visitors to explore works of art online as never before, through a collection of interviews with artists and curators, original documentaries and art installation videos. Incorporating cutting-edge technology, ArtBabble features high-definition video, full text transcription of all the videos on site and interactive features including viewer feedback and video sharing.

Conceived and spearheaded by the IMA, ArtBabble is designed to allow other museums and organizations that produce high-quality, art-focused video content to join the IMA in building the premier online art video destination. The IMA has partnered with Art21, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The New York Public Library, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Smithsonian American Art Museum, each of which has provided video content on ArtBabble, with additional partnerships to be announced.

“ArtBabble is a new and innovative way to experience and engage with art, fostering in-depth discussions and dialogues about art in our communities and on the web,” said Maxwell L. Anderson, The Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. “The site provides the IMA and our partnering institutions with the ability to present, annotate and invite comment on a range of art-related videos, allowing greater accessibility to our collections, exhibitions and special projects. “

ArtBabble was developed by the IMA’s award-winning new media and technology departments and made possible by a grant from the Ball Brothers Foundation. A leader among museums in harnessing digital technology to engage and educate art audiences, the IMA already provides video on [imamuseum.org](http://imamuseum.org), iTunes U and YouTube.

ArtBabble’s unique design elevates the online presentation of art by selecting and organizing digital video content. A series of “notes” embedded in each video on the site offers visitors the ability to jump from point to point within a video, depending on their interests, and links them to additional content related to the video, such as art events, images on Flickr, books on Amazon, topics on Wikipedia and additional art videos within ArtBabble or on YouTube. Video options include a high-resolution video player with full-screen mode and download options including video iPod, iPhone and HD formats.

For ArtBabble, the IMA has utilized cloud computing, an emerging technology wherein website data is hosted entirely on a virtual server in the “cloud.”

“Cloud computing technology allows us to stream high-quality video instantly to site visitors, providing a superb viewing experience,” said Robert Stein, chief information officer at the IMA. “Because the technology is elastic, we can dynamically increase ArtBabble.org’s server

capacity and streaming capabilities to accommodate heavy site traffic, so videos will always load quickly.”

ArtBabble showcases videos featuring a range of artists and art-related topics. For example, viewers can log on to watch a major new documentary produced by the IMA about landscape sculptor Maya Lin, hear quirky commentary in the IMA’s award-winning series of webisodes based on the exhibition *Roman Art from the Louvre* and watch new videos from Peabody Award–winning producer Art21 about contemporary artists such as Laylah Ali, Arturo Herrera, Oliver Herring and Richard Tuttle. ArtBabble content also includes the online-only miniseries “Design by the Book,” in which NYPL partnered with the leading design blog Design\*Sponge to invite five New York City–based artists to sift through its collections in search of inspiration. Viewers can watch as the artists create unique works inspired by what they found.

Other content found on the site includes “30 Seconds,” an ongoing series created by artist and independent filmmaker Thilo Hoffmann in collaboration with The Museum of Modern Art. Hoffmann worked with MoMA members and staff to create short films based on their ideas and experiences in and around the museum. LACMA has included videos related to its current exhibition *The Art of Two Germanys*, as well as its permanent collection. LACMA curators describe the museum’s 11 most significant artworks, and artists like Jacob Lawrence discuss their creative motives.

Additional videos from collaborators San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Smithsonian American Art Museum present direct access to contemporary artists through engaging documentaries, in-gallery discussion and behind-the-scenes installations. The Smithsonian American Art Museum has contributed interviews with artists Will Barnet, David Beck, Grace Hartigan, Luis Jimenez and Alex Katz discussing the ideas, meaning and inspiration behind their work. Videos from SFMOMA include painter Brice Marden describing his work “Cold Mountain,” artist Kerry James Marshall discussing the concepts behind his murals “Visible Means of Support,” and Ann Hamilton talking about the inspiration behind her performance/installation “indigo blue,” with its roots in Howard Zinn’s “People’s History of the United States.”

ArtBabble will continue to evolve and expand as new video content is created and additional partnerships are announced. The IMA plans to create some of its new digital content in response to user interest and will add new content about IMA programs and exhibitions. Videos produced by the IMA also will include at least one major documentary per year on a contemporary artist. ArtBabble also will stream live events in the future.

“We’ve taken a very non-traditional approach to the presentation of art, making it accessible to a wide-ranging audience through a multimedia platform,” said Daniel Incandela, director of new media at the IMA. “ArtBabble not only provides original video content online, but allows viewers to upload videos to their mobile devices, embed the videos on their own websites or respond directly through comments and discussion. We see this new site as an important step supporting the growth of the online art community.”

### **ArtBabble in the IMA Galleries**

The launch of ArtBabble coincides with the opening of The Davis LAB in the IMA galleries. Located on the first gallery level, the newly conceived space opened January 24. The sleek, interactive area allows IMA visitors to view original video content on ArtBabble, read the IMA blog, check out IMA images on Flickr, become an IMA fan on Facebook and learn more about the Museum via four computer stations and a theater-style area outfitted with large-screen projection and lounge furniture. Visitors to the Davis LAB are encouraged to offer feedback by rating videos and leaving comments on the IMA blog.

## **Technology at the IMA**

The Indianapolis Museum of Art has received numerous awards for its digital efforts, including recognition from the W3 awards, Tellys and Webbys. In addition to its commitment to produce digital audio and video content, the Indianapolis Museum of Art has demonstrated a commitment to museum technology as a means to engage and educate its visitors and to promote transparency. The IMA was one of the first museums to make live statistics available. The Museum's web dashboard, available at [dashboard.imamuseum.org](http://dashboard.imamuseum.org), includes real-time tracking of IMA key facts and figures such as attendance, works of art on loan, expenses and other institutional measures of success.

The IMA has a significant presence on Flickr, Facebook and YouTube, and it has recently launched an expanded blog on its website ([www.imamuseum.org/blog](http://www.imamuseum.org/blog)). The blog features regular contributions from IMA staff. Other digital initiatives of the Museum include special exhibition websites and downloadable digital audio tours. The IMA received a \$385,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to develop *steve.museum*, a tool enabling social tagging of artworks created in collaboration with 10 leading art museums.

In January 2008, the IMA launched its own iTunes U channel. iTunes U delivers easy access to educational content from hundreds of colleges, universities and educationally focused organizations across the country. The IMA's videos *Hirokazu Kosaka: Calligraphy* and *Hello Kitty: The Global Brand with Nine Lives* both peaked at No. 4 on the iTunes U top 10 download list.

## **About the Indianapolis Museum of Art**

The Indianapolis Museum of Art offers visitors an inclusive view of creativity through its collection of more than 54,000 works of art that span 5,000 years of history from across the world's continents. Encompassing 152 acres of gardens and grounds, the IMA is among the 10 largest encyclopedic art museums in the United States, and it features significant collections of African, American, Asian, European and contemporary art, as well as a newly established collection of design arts. The collections include paintings, sculpture, furniture and design objects, prints, drawings and photographs, as well as textiles and costumes.

Through its new articulation of the interconnectedness of art, design and nature, the IMA welcomes its visitors to experiences at the Museum, in 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, which will be the largest contemporary art park in the United States when it opens in spring 2010, and at Oldfields—Lilly House & Gardens, an historic Country Place Era estate on the IMA's grounds.

The IMA completed a \$74 million expansion project in May 2005. The construction added 164,000 square feet to the Museum and includes renovation of 90,000 square feet of existing space. In order to present major exhibitions of its own and to accommodate major traveling exhibitions, the expanded Museum was outfitted with new 10,000-plus-square-foot Clowes Special Exhibition Gallery on the Museum's first level. In November 2008, the IMA opened the renovated 600-seat Tobias Theater. Nicknamed, "The Toby," the theater is a venue for talks, performances and films.

Located at 4000 Michigan Road, the IMA and Lilly House are open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The IMA is closed Mondays and Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days. For more information, call 317-923-1331 or visit [www.imamuseum.org](http://www.imamuseum.org).

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