

INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART ANNOUNCES MELLON CHALLENGE GRANT TOWARD ENDOWMENT OF CONSERVATION SCIENTIST

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Grant of \$1.75 Million Advances Plans to Establish an Art Conservation Science Laboratory at IMA

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, (February 3, 2009) — The Indianapolis Museum of Art announced a \$1.75 million challenge grant awarded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, to establish an endowment for the position of a senior conservation scientist. This grant, which must be matched by \$1.5 million within three years, will enable the IMA to move forward immediately with conducting an international search to fill the position, and then to establish a state-of-the-art conservation science laboratory.

In October 2008, the IMA announced plans to strengthen its existing expertise in the care and treatment of the works of art in its collection through the development of a scientific capacity. The Conservation Science Laboratory will also augment the IMA's potential as a resource for training and professional development, and it will help the IMA to foster partnerships with universities and corporations involved in central Indiana's growing role as a hub of the life sciences industry.

"We are deeply grateful to the Mellon Foundation, a longtime champion of art museums and a critical force in developing the field of conservation science," said Dr. Maxwell L. Anderson, The Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO of the IMA. "This grant supports the IMA's objectives to not only preserve and care for its extensive collection, but also advance our technologies to do so."

Once the scientist has been appointed, the IMA will initiate a comprehensive plan for outfitting the center with instrumentation funded through a previously announced grant of \$2.6 million provided by Lilly Endowment, Inc. Longer-term goals include hiring a second scientist and implementing a fellowship program.

The Mellon Foundation's award is the third recent donation that has helped to underwrite a key position at the IMA. In May 2007, the IMA announced that it had received a \$10 million endowment gift from Melvin and Bren Simon to underwrite the position of director and CEO. The IMA announced in August 2007 that it had received a \$2.2 million gift from philanthropist Ruth Lilly to endow the IMA's first Deputy Director of Environmental and Historic Preservation.

Conservation Science Laboratory

The IMA's newly expanded conservation resources will support research and publication by museum conservators, scientists and curators to continue to strengthen the IMA's contributions to the fields of conservation, collections care and art history. Once equipped and fully staffed, the lab would join other leading institutions that have strong capacity in the field of science in the United States including: the National Gallery of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Getty Conservation Institute. The IMA intends to appoint a Scientific Advisory Committee, including leaders from Indiana's growing life sciences industry, to act as a resource for fostering collaboration and community involvement.

The variety of objects and materials in the IMA's collections requires a comprehensive conservation approach. Recent acquisition trends at the IMA have expanded the range of materials entering the collection. These acquisitions include works composed of modern synthetic materials, acquired by a new Design Arts Department; contemporary art commissions; and 1960s to 1990s couture garments.

The IMA will develop protocols for mitigating degradation processes in outdoor environments with ongoing, temporary installations in 100 Acres: The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, which opens to the public in spring 2010.

The IMA's significant collection of African art provides opportunities to explore the ethnobotanical origins of resins, dyes and other natural products used in their making, thereby making possible a significant contribution to a little-studied aspect of African art. The extensive Asian ceramics collection at IMA allows for the in-depth study of historical glaze and ceramic technology. Additionally, IMA conservation scientists will likely pursue the identification of ephemeral inks and paints employed by many artists, the binding media of experimental contemporary prints, and degradation mechanisms of modern art glass.

History of IMA Conservation

Earlier in its history and in recent years, the IMA has been a leader in museum conservation. In 2007, the IMA became the first U.S. art museum to acquire a digital x-ray unit, which has led to a discovery about the internal structure of African Songye figures that was previously unknown to specialists working in this field. The museum's professional conservation efforts started in the 1940s with the museum contracting well known first-generation American conservators such as Sheldon Keck, James Roth, and Louis Pomerantz to preserve some of the museum's finest paintings. The museum became a charter member of the Intermuseum Laboratory in 1952 and incorporated a small, custom-designed conservation laboratory into the new Indianapolis Museum of Art in 1970. In 1975, the appointment of a Chief Conservator led to the implementation of the American Institute for the Conservation of Artistic and Historic Works ethics and standards for practice and a preventative program for collections care.

The conservation department, now occupying 7,700 square feet, currently has a staff of seven conservators (in paintings, paper, objects and textiles), two conservation technicians, and a half-time digital imaging technician to care for the museum's collections. Additionally, since 1977, more than 220 institutions or public collections and more than 300 individual collectors have been clients of the Regional Services Program at the IMA, which works to help conserve artworks that are not a part of the Museum's collection. IMA conservators have done other work, such as facility surveys, collection surveys or on-site mural conservation including the Thomas Hart Benton mural cycle at Indiana University.

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 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.

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