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INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART UNVEILS NEW WEB SITE AND IS ONE OF THE FIRST MUSEUMS TO MAKE LIVE STATISTICS AVAILABLE

Dynamic, Innovative Site Features Videos, Blogs and a Real-Time Data Dashboard

Indianapolis, Oct. 11, 2007—The Indianapolis Museum of Art today announced that it has unveiled a newly designed web site at www.imamuseum.org. The site is one of the most progressive museum web sites in its use of the next generation of web technology enabling visitors to interact and to share information online. In conjunction with the launch of the new site, the IMA also has created a dashboard of data, offering the public access to real-time statistics such as fiscal performance, number of new works on view in the permanent collection, energy consumption and numerous other metrics of institutional performance.

“Our web site is one of the most important tools we have to communicate with visitors, and to keep them excited about programming and engaged with the Museum,” said Maxwell Anderson, The Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO of the IMA. “In particular, our new IMA dashboard provides the public with access to information that helps them better understand how we operate, as a public institution with a responsibility to our community. We hope that this innovative approach will serve as a model for other museums in communicating with their constituencies.”

The site’s design is based on four modules: a “how to visit” module, a calendar of events, a gallery of images from the museum and its collection, and an “explore” module, which focuses on the IMA’s collection, its exhibitions, and its other educational resources. Visitors to the site will have access to the entire IMA collections database, which is illustrated with images of the collection, and they will be able to express and share their views by tagging. Tagging is the practice of associating key words or “tags” with an image. These tags will help others find art more easily and will offer the museum new insight into how the public views the collection.

In addition, the new IMA web site features an “interact” section within the “how to visit” module that will allow web visitors to view a large collection of IMA-produced videos, to respond to Museum staff through the Museum’s blog and to tag across all of our art collection areas. This section also allows IMA staff to experiment with new approaches to digital content. The blog features posts from IMA employees that offer a glimpse of life at the IMA. Through blog updates on IMA projects, IMA staff members hope to connect with online visitors.

“The web site is another platform for us to tell stories about the IMA, and it provides a space in which the public can contribute their thoughts, comments and viewpoints,” explained Rob Stein, the IMA’s chief information officer and director of management information systems. “The technology of the web is simply a way to deliver IMA content to larger and larger audiences in a fresh and exciting way.”

The IMA dashboard grew out of the Museum’s ongoing commitment to transparency and a desire to provide an inside perspective on IMA operations. The IMA staff also uses the

web site's real time performance indicators as a management tool to measure progress in pursuit of its mission. The dashboard is accessible at <http://www.imamuseum.org> or <http://dashboard.imamuseum.org>.

In the coming months, the IMA will provide additional video content, user generated tours of the collection, new browsing interfaces for the collection, and enhanced abilities to use the social tags contributed by the public. The IMA also plans to leverage communities of web visitors who are interested in art and the IMA through social web technologies such as flickr, YouTube, myspace and Facebook. The site currently serves approximately 1,000 visitors per day.

The site was designed collaboratively by IMA technology and marketing staff members and the design firm of Studio Blue and Palantir. The site is based on an open-source software platform that allows IMA's team of developers to leverage the work of a much larger community of web developers, while delivering a web site that is specific to the IMA and its needs as an art museum. It is the culmination of more than two years of work by IMA staff members and outside researchers who evaluated the old web site, conducted market research and interviewed more than two dozen potential users of the site in order to establish categories of content that made the most sense to the future users.

About IMA Technology

In addition to developing its new web site, the Indianapolis Museum of Art has demonstrated a commitment to museum technology as a means to engage and educate its visitors. The IMA has 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. The IMA's program leads the nation's museums in its development of new media content, adding new dimensions to its programming and connecting new audiences to art.

With its focus on technology as a means to bridge the gap between visitors and art, the IMA's recent technological initiatives have included:

- distribution of museum-related audio and video content through web-based outlets such as iTunes
- a YouTube channel featuring staff and artist bios, as well as programming-related video
- cell phone audio tours for Oldfields-Lilly House and Gardens, as well as other areas of interest on the IMA campus
- development of a series of 10 IMA-produced downloadable videos that will bring to life various themes in the current exhibition, *Roman Art from the Louvre*

About the IMA

Encompassing 152 acres of gardens and grounds, the IMA connects visitors to its unique and expansive view of art with its Indianapolis Museum of Art, the future Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park and Oldfields–Lilly House & Gardens. The Indianapolis Museum of Art is the fifth largest encyclopedic art museum in the United States and features significant collections of African, American, Asian, European, contemporary and decorative art, including paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings and photographs, textiles and costumes.

In 1997, the IMA began a three-part expansion initiative in order to meet the demands of and better serve its growing audience. The first phase was marked by the restoration of the historic Oldfields–Lilly House & Gardens, which reopened in June 2002. The recently-completed second phase of the expansion features the Museum's three new wings, 50 percent more gallery space, expanded educational spaces, two new restaurants by Wolfgang Puck Catering and an enhanced museum store. The construction added 164,000 square feet to the Museum and includes the renovation of 90,000 square feet of existing space. The third and final phase of the Indianapolis Museum of Art three-part expansion project will be marked by the opening of the Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, which will begin to take shape in the fall of 2009.

For more information, call 317.923.1331 or visit www.imamuseum.org.

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