

**WORCESTER ART MUSEUM RECEIVES MAJOR GRANT FROM
HENRY LUCE FOUNDATION FOR THREE YEAR PROGRAM
OF EXHIBITIONS AND CURATORIAL APPRENTICESHIPS IN PRE-CONTEMPORARY ART**

**Grant Supports New Research & Presentation of Museum's Hidden Treasures,
Major American Works by Artists Such as Louis Comfort Tiffany, John La Farge,
Asher B. Durand, John James Audubon, and Edward Augustus Brackett**

Worcester, MA—January 12, 2017—The Worcester Art Museum today announced that it has been awarded a three year grant of \$825,000 from the Henry Luce Foundation to support a series of projects focused on the Museum's extensive—and exceptional—collection of pre-contemporary American art. One of the largest awards given by the Foundation's American Art Program last year, these funds will support a new series of installations and rotating exhibitions that will highlight important but less frequently seen works from the Museum's holdings of American art. This includes an exhibition to open in 2018 centered on several stained glass windows by John La Farge and Louis Comfort Tiffany, which have not been on view in more than 40 years.

“Since its earliest days, the Museum has prioritized the acquisition of American art and, as a result, we have an exemplary collection of paintings, prints, drawings, and decorative arts from the 1600s to the present day,” said Jon L. Seydl, director of curatorial affairs and curator of European Art at WAM. “However, many of these works have received less attention for research and exhibition in the last twenty years as the Museum focused on presenting its colonial and 20th century holdings. This crucial support from the Luce Foundation makes it possible for the Museum, led by our curator of American art, Elizabeth Athens, to re-engage vigorously with many of these compelling works and explore new ways to present them to the public.”

The Museum was invited by the Henry Luce Foundation's American Art Program, based on its commitment to support exhibitions, publications, and research. These funds will make possible a series of research projects and new exhibitions that will unfold over the next three years. This work also coincides with the Museum's ongoing, institution-wide initiative to explore new narratives based on works in its collection, such as with its newly reinstalled Medieval galleries and the reinstallation of its Old Master galleries in 2013.

“The Luce Foundation is honored to help the Worcester Art Museum explore compelling areas of its extensive collections of pre-contemporary American art and present them in innovative ways for new audiences,” said Dr. Teresa A. Carbone, Program Director of the Henry Luce Foundation's American Art Program. “We are pleased that, under the leadership of Director Matthias Waschek and Chief Curator Jon Seydl, the museum will implement this grant supporting three original exhibitions of rarely-seen holdings. The exciting projects proposed by

the Museum’s rising curator of American art, Elizabeth Athens, will provide an invaluable professional opportunity for the curatorial apprentices supported by the grant.”

In Summer 2018, the Museum will open an exhibition focused on two sets of memorial windows—one by John La Farge, the other by Louis Comfort Tiffany—made for Boston’s Mount Vernon Congregational Church. Donated to the Museum in 1975, the works were never uncrated or displayed. The La Farge windows, dating to 1898, depict a scene from the New Testament, in which an angel of God stirs the healing waters of the pool at Bethesda. The Tiffany windows depict the Angel of Resurrection (1899), bracketed by columns and a field of lilies. Following conservation treatment to stabilize the objects, they will be installed in an exhibition that highlights the artists’ design methods and aesthetic influences. Also presented will be a number of paintings, works on paper, and favrile glass, as well as John La Farge’s experimental *Peacock Window* (1892–1908), also in the Museum’s collection.

Beginning in 2019, the Museum will open new installations in its American art galleries that emphasize works from its significant collection of pre-Civil War paintings, prints, and sculptures. As part of this process, many of these works will receive conservation prior to display, most notably Edward Augustus Brackett’s celebrated marble sculpture *Shipwrecked Mother and Child* (1848–50), which was acquired by the Museum in 1904 but has not been on view since the 1940s. In the mid-nineteenth century, Brackett’s sculpture was lauded as a masterful *tour de force* that deftly blended realism and idealism, and was acclaimed when exhibited at New York City’s Stuyvesant Institute in 1852. Together with such important works as Asher B. Durand’s *Capture of Major Andre* (1833) and examples from John James Audubon’s *Birds of America* (1834), the new installation will highlight common cultural themes of the period—filial and religious piety, violence, pathos—while also emphasizing the “too-muchness” of the period’s aesthetic sensibility.

The third and final project focuses on the Museum’s nearly 5,000 North American drawings, prints, and photographs from before 1945 and, in particular, the approximately 3,600 of these drawn from the Charles E. Goodspeed Collection. Purchased by the Museum in 1910, this collection has remarkable—and little known—strengths in maps and maritime views, colored lithographs, and art prints, all pre-dating the 20th century. As part of the Luce grant, a curatorial apprentice will review and catalogue the Collection, and plan a series of rotating exhibitions beginning in 2019 and continuing through 2020.

Photo captions:

Asher B. Durand, American, 1796–1886, *Capture of Major Andre*, 1833, oil on canvas, Museum Purchase 1933.161

Yellow Shank, Totanus Falipes, Vieill, Male Summer Plumage, View in South Carolina, 1836, from *The Birds of America* by John James Audubon (American, 1785–1851), etching and aquatint with watercolor on cream Whatman wove paper, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. H. Paul Buckingham III, and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas W. Buckingham, 2001.460

About the Henry Luce Foundation

The Henry Luce Foundation seeks to bring important ideas to the center of American life, strengthen international understanding, and foster innovation and leadership in academic, policy, religious, and art communities.

About the Worcester Art Museum

Founded in 1896, the Worcester Art Museum's encyclopedic 37,500 piece collection covers 51 centuries of art. Highlights include the Medieval Chapter House, Renaissance Court, and Worcester Hunt Mosaic, as well as the recently integrated John Woodman Higgins Armory Collection of arms and armor. The Museum is internationally known for its collection of European and American art. It was the first in America to acquire paintings by Monet and Gauguin and one of the first to collect photography. As the first U.S. museum to focus on collaborating with local schools, it has been at the forefront of engaging audiences and giving them a meaningful and personal experience.

The Worcester Art Museum, located at 55 Salisbury Street in Worcester, MA, is open Wednesday through Friday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and every third Thursday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is \$14 for adults, \$6 for children 4-17, \$12 for seniors 65+, and \$12 for college students with ID. Members and children under four are free. Parking is free. For more information, visit worchesterart.org.

###

For more information, please contact:

Worcester Art Museum
Julieane Frost
508-793-4373
JulieaneFrost@worchesterart.org

PAVE Communications & Consulting
Sascha Freudenheim / Alina Sumajin
sascha@paveconsult.com /
alina@paveconsult.com
917-544-6057 / 646-369-2050