



Wadsworth Atheneum to Receive Significant NEH Funding

HARTFORD, Conn., July 29, 2011 – The Wadsworth Atheneum announced today its receipt of a \$325,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections program. The grant will be used to acquire custom-designed storage equipment as part of Phase I of the museum’s Collection Storage Renovation Project.

As part of the Wadsworth’s ongoing renovation project, the museum recently completed a comprehensive multi-phased Art Storage Master Plan to reverse legacy environmental and organizational issues in its storage facilities.

“Inadequacies with current storage areas have forced us to convert prime gallery space into art storage to accommodate our expansive collection,” said Linda Roth, the museum’s Curator of European Decorative Arts and the project’s leader. “This funding is a crucial step towards enabling the museum to relocate the collections stored in the upper floor galleries back to the basement level, thus expanding the amount of gallery space to display art and special exhibitions.”

Phase I of the Plan focuses on the renovation of the basement of the museum’s Morgan Memorial building to create and outfit storage rooms for its furniture, metalwork, ceramics, glass, and sculpture collections. The new facility will also improve security, maximize storage efficiency and create work spaces for staff and scholars.

NEH funding is very competitive and only 11% of applicants received support during the current cycle, which totaled \$40 million in grants distributed to more than 249 humanities projects.

“The NEH grant was the catalyst we needed to bring our fundraising efforts to the halfway mark of our \$4,000,000 goal and allows us to move forward with construction documents and detailed pricing,” said Susan L. Talbott, Director & CEO of the Wadsworth Atheneum. “Several possible funding sources for the additional \$2,000,000 are identified and requests are being developed now to ensure that the project keeps moving forward so that we continue to be a good steward of our world-class collections.”

In addition to the NEH grant, the museum has also received \$132,000 in funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services designated for the HVAC component of Phase 1.

The Wadsworth is currently undergoing a comprehensive renovation across all five of the museum's buildings, which will result in the addition of 8,000 square feet of reclaimed gallery space, a 14% increase, and the complete reinstallation of the museum's permanent collection.

Marking the completion of the first phase of the renovation, the Morgan Great Hall reopened in May 2011 after a year-long closure, and has been reinstalled for the first time with large-scale works from the museum's Contemporary Art collection by artists such as Willem de Kooning, Helen Frankenthaler, Andreas Gursky, Robert Rauschenberg, Sean Scully, Frank Stella, and Andy Warhol, among others. The renovation will also bring significant improvements for visitors, including improved wayfinding, new interior and exterior signage, bi-lingual signage, and space for commissioned art on the exterior of the museum. The entire renovation project is slated for completion in 2013.

About the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is located at 600 Main St. in Hartford, Connecticut. The Museum is open Wednesdays to Fridays, 11 am to 5 pm and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm. For more information, please visit www.wadsworthatheneum.org.

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