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## **WADSWORTH ATHENEUM MUSEUM OF ART TO UNVEIL RENEWED BUILDINGS AND COLLECTIONS IN 2015**

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art will remain open as it completes a five-year, \$33 million renovation. Galleries in the museum's Goodwin, Morgan Memorial and Wadsworth buildings will close Feb. 24 to accommodate construction and reinstallation; the museum's Avery building—the world's first International-style museum structure, housing the acclaimed MATRIX series, contemporary art, 20th-century European art, 18th- and 19th-century American art including works from the Hudson River School—will remain open to visitors while work on the other buildings is completed. Beginning January 2015 the Wadsworth will roll out a year of festivities celebrating the renewal and reinvention of the museum for a 21st century audience.

### **REnew**

The ongoing renovation project began in 2010, and has already addressed façade and below-grade waterproofing; replacement of roofs on the Morgan, Avery and Goodwin buildings; the complete renovation of the Morgan Great Hall; the installation of a proprietary heating and cooling plant to reduce utility costs significantly; and a high-security, state-of-the-art storage system for the museum's 50,000-object collection.

Work scheduled for the coming months includes enhancements to gallery lighting systems; installation of durable, high quality flooring in major exhibition galleries; restoration of the historic, 1910 Heinigke & Bowen skylight in the Morgan Atrium; a facelift of the central Gray Court lobby off Main Street to provide visitors with a more welcoming experience; and incorporation of new directional signage, additional ADA-compliant bathrooms and an ADA-compliant elevator car.

Once complete, the renovation will have addressed 31,418 square feet, spanning 32 galleries, 15 public spaces and more than 8,800 square feet of existing space repurposed to create new special exhibition galleries.

“We are thrilled that in 2015, after nearly five years of continuous work, we will open buildings restored to their original splendor with modern enhancements that aim to drastically improve the visitor experience,” said Susan L. Talbott, Director and CEO of the Wadsworth Atheneum. “This transformation will reveal stunning new displays of our world-renowned collection as well as a welcoming place for the public to gather and explore.”

The State of Connecticut is the lead investor in the Wadsworth's renovation project, providing an aggregate \$25 million towards building enhancements. Additional support comes from a number of private and public funders and individual contributors.

### **REmix**

A comprehensive reinstallation of the museum's modern and contemporary art collection will showcase pivotal works by artists like Franz Kline, Sol LeWitt, Jackson Pollock, Martin Puryear, Cindy Sherman, Kiki Smith, Richard Tuttle, Kara Walker and Andy Warhol, and will open Jan. 31, 2015. Also opening Jan. 31, 2015, is "Coney Island: Visions of an American Dreamland, 1861 – 2008," the inaugural presentation in the museum's expanded special exhibition galleries and the first to use visual art as a lens to explore the lure that Coney Island exerted on American culture over a period of 150 years.

Opening Fall 2015, the historic Beaux-Arts Morgan Memorial Building will offer the first complete reinstallation of the Wadsworth's collection of European art in over 20 years. The visually-compelling and thematically-innovative presentation will feature more than 800 paintings, sculptures and decorative arts. The museum's collection of European paintings—exceptionally strong in Old Master and Impressionist art—will be highlighted through displays of major works by Caravaggio, Zurbaran and Monet. An immersive Cabinet of Art and Curiosities will feature remarkable 17th-century objects, many assembled by the great collector J. Pierpont Morgan, combined with natural history specimens and other rarities. Funds from a recent \$9.6 million bequest by Charles H. Schwartz will be used in the future to add important works of European art to these galleries.

Innovative installations will provide various opportunities for discovery, encourage participation and connect visitors with the power of art. Throughout the museum and across collections, unexpected and enlightening juxtapositions of paintings, sculpture, decorative arts and textiles—paired with interactive technology in the galleries—will engage the museum's visitors like never before.

The Amistad Center for Art & Culture is renovating its space on the second floor of the Wadsworth building to create a high-caliber, multi-purpose destination for the enjoyment of art and culture of people of African descent. This renewed area combining exhibition, study, program and office space will open early in 2015.

### **REconnect**

The museum's commitment to providing accessible programming through its Community Engagement Initiative will continue through the renovation and beyond via First Thursdays after-hours events, Second Saturdays family programs and the Community Arts Program outreach initiative. A robust series of public programs accompanying the reopening will include lectures, performances, films, discussions and gallery talks.

The museum will share trivia and updates about its history and renovation on its social media platforms at [facebook.com/wadsworthatheneum](https://www.facebook.com/wadsworthatheneum) and [twitter.com/thewadsworth](https://twitter.com/thewadsworth), and plans to launch a blog in 2014 to chronicle behind-the-scenes efforts. Visit [thewadsworth.org/renewremix](http://thewadsworth.org/renewremix) for more information on the project and forthcoming updates on opening festivities.

A special presentation by the architects and curators involved in the renovation and reinstallation project will be given Monday, March 3 at 6 p.m. and again, Tuesday, March 4 at 10 a.m. Press wanting to attend this preview should contact Amanda Young.

**About the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art**

Founded in 1842, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is the oldest public art museum in the United States. The museum's nearly 50,000 works of art span 5,000 years, from Greek and Roman antiquities to the first museum collection of American contemporary art. The museum's five connected buildings—representing architectural styles from Gothic Revival to modern International Style—are located at 600 Main Street in Hartford, Connecticut. Hours: Wed – Fri: 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sat & Sun: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; First Thursdays: 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. Admission: \$5 – 10; discounts for members, students and seniors. Public phone: (860) 278-2670; website: [thewadsworth.org](http://thewadsworth.org).

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