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Hartford, Conn. (August 5, 2021) — The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art has been awarded a 2021 Bank of America Art Conservation Project Grant to support the technical analysis and conservation of three twentieth century works of art by women artists. The study and treatment of a painting by American artist Florine Stettheimer (1871-1944), and sculptures by Brazilian artist Maria Martins (1894-1973) and French artist Germaine Richier (1902-1959) will culminate in a symposium exploring the treatment process. The Wadsworth Atheneum’s conservation projects are one of a select group of 23 Art Conservation Projects announced this year by Bank of America. Recipients are based in 13 countries and 9 U.S. cities.

“The project supported by our Bank of America grant is an in-depth collaboration between the Wadsworth’s curators and conservators. It will benefit the stewardship of our collection as well as contribute to a broader appreciation of three greatly under-recognized artists,” says Wadsworth Objects Conservator Casey Mallinckrodt.

A highlight of the Wadsworth’s American art collection, Stettheimer’s 1924 painting Beauty Contest: To the Memory of P.T. Barnum parodies the circus-like atmosphere of the beauty pageants held in Atlantic City, New Jersey beginning in 1921. A technical study to better understand the materials, techniques and physical changes of the painting over time will help to inform potential conservation treatment strategies in the future, while also broadening the general knowledge of Stettheimer’s working process.
The sculpture *Ma Chanson* by Surrealist Brazilian artist Maria Martins is included in the project. Martín enjoyed notable success in the 1940s. Her work often fuses plant-like elements and human extremities, as seen in *Ma Chanson*, reflecting her interest in exploring the mythic relationships between humans, nature, myth and primordial forms. A technical analysis of the cast bronze sculpture will generate information about the casting method, materials, and surface to guide the treatment.

The third work in the project is *The Bat* by French artist Germaine Richier, considered one of the most experimental sculptors of her generation. She is known for her haunting, monstrous sculptures. *The Bat* is cast bronze and features membrane-like, richly textured areas that suggest the underlying nerves and sinews of a bat. The project will generate information about Richier’s processes and guide treatment and reassembly of the figure on its original mount.

“We are incredibly grateful for the support from Bank of America,” said Jeffrey N. Brown, Interim Director & CEO of the Wadsworth Atheneum. “It is essential that we preserve the works in our collection for future generations. This grant will allow us to give these exceptional artworks the care, study, and recognition they are due.”

Once the projects are completed the newly conserved works of art will be placed on display accompanied by related programs designed to engage a broad audience in both the conservation process and the work of these under-recognized women artists. A symposium with conservators and curators will focus on the technical and scholarly aspects of these artists’ work.

“At Bank of America, we believe that art makes our communities stronger, supports economic development, and fosters greater cultural understanding,” said Joe Gianni, President, Bank of America Greater Hartford. “The Art Conservation Project at the Wadsworth Atheneum will help preserve the historical and cultural impact of each work of art ensuring they remain in the public domain for years to come. We are honored to have the Wadsworth as a recipient and look forward to viewing the completed conserved works of art.”

**About the Art Conservation Project**
The Art Conservation Project (ACP) is a unique program through which Bank of America provides grants to nonprofit museums across the world to conserve historically or culturally significant works of art that are in danger of deterioration. Through a decade of ACPs, Bank of America has funded the conservation of over 5,000 individual pieces of art through nearly 200 projects in 36 countries across six continents.

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About the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
Founded in 1842 with a vision for infusing art into the American experience, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is home to a collection of nearly 50,000 works of art spanning 5,000 years and encompassing European art from antiquity through contemporary as well as American art from the 1600s to today. The Wadsworth Atheneum’s five connected buildings—representing architectural styles including Gothic Revival, modern International Style, and 1960s Brutalism—are located at 600 Main Street in Hartford, Conn.

Hours are noon–8pm Fridays, and noon–5pm Saturdays, and Sundays. Visitors are required to wear a face mask/covering while inside the museum. The library, food service, and Austin House are currently closed to the public. Admission: $5–15; discounts for members, students and seniors. Free admission for Hartford residents with Wadsworth Welcome registration. Free “happy hour” admission 4–5pm. From July 1 to September 6, Connecticut children age 18 and under plus one accompanying adult can visit free of charge through the Connecticut Summer at the Museum program. Advance ticket registration via thewadsworth.org is encouraged, not required. Phone: (860) 278-2670; website: thewadsworth.org.


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