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April 2009

Luce Foundation Center for American Art Fact Sheet

The Smithsonian American Art Museum's Luce Foundation Center for American Art is the first visible art storage and study center in Washington, D.C. This innovative public space provides new ways to experience American art. The Luce Foundation Center's imaginative design allows visitors to select an area to explore at a glance with more than 3,300 works from the permanent collection in 64 secure glass cases.

The Luce Foundation Center, which occupies 20,400 square feet on the third and fourth floors of the museum's historic building, features paintings densely hung on screens; sculptures, contemporary craft and folk art objects arranged on shelves; and portrait miniatures, bronze medals and jewelry in drawers that slide open with the touch of a button. Large-scale 19th- and 20th-century sculptures are displayed on the main floor. The center also exhibits highlights from John Gellatly's European collection of decorative arts.

The Luce Foundation Center runs a variety of programs that are free and open to the public. These include themed scavenger hunts for children, a weekly sketching workshop and Art + Coffee tours. Museum staff members are available at the Luce Foundation Center information desk seven days a week to answer visitor questions and conduct tours. Free public wireless Internet access (Wi-Fi) is available in the Luce Foundation Center.

In 2008, the Smithsonian American Art Museum was the first museum in the world to develop and host an alternate reality game, which offered a new way of engaging with the collection in its Luce Foundation Center. Staff worked with game designers at City Mystery to create "Ghosts of a Chance," which ran for six weeks and attracted more than 6,000 online participants. The museum offers a spin-off version that can be played in the galleries once a month or by appointment for groups of 10 or more. Detailed information is available online at americanart.si.edu/calendar/activities/ghosts.

Ten award-winning interactive computer kiosks provide the public with information about every object on display and include discussions of each artwork, artist biographies, audio interviews, still images and nearly 70 videos created exclusively for the center. A special Web site, lucefoundationcenter.si.edu, features these resources.

In 2001, the Henry Luce Foundation gave \$10 million to establish the Luce Foundation Center for American Art at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The center opened July 1, 2006, following an extensive renovation of the museum's historic building.

About the Smithsonian American Art Museum

The Smithsonian American Art Museum celebrates the vision and creativity of Americans with approximately 41,000 artworks in all media spanning more than three centuries. Its National Historic Landmark building, a dazzling showcase for American art and portraiture, is located at Eighth and F streets N.W. in the heart of a revitalized downtown arts district. Museum hours are 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Metrorail station: Gallery Place/Chinatown. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Web site: americanart.si.edu.

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SI-165-2009