



Office of Public Affairs

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Smithsonian Successfully Completes \$10 Million Fundraising Campaign for the Lunder Conservation Center

The Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Portrait Gallery announced the successful completion of a \$10 million fundraising campaign to support the Lunder Conservation Center. A \$4 million challenge grant from The Lunder Foundation of Maine was the catalyst for attracting a \$6 million match from 65 additional private contributors from across the United States.

The Lunder Conservation Center will be the first art conservation facility that allows the public permanent behind-the-scenes access to the preservation work of museums. The 10,200-square-foot center will be visible to the public through floor-to-ceiling glass walls that allow visitors to see first-hand all the collections care and modern conservation techniques that conservators use to examine and treat artworks. In addition to providing expanded space for conservation projects, the center will be a destination for learning about conservation science and techniques through educational kiosks, videos, public programs and outreach initiatives.

The Lunder Conservation Center will be a jointly administered facility that houses conservation staff for both museums.

The Smithsonian Board of Regents approved naming the visible conservation labs the Lunder Conservation Center in honor of the lead donor.

“The Lunder Foundation is delighted to provide lead support for this innovative facility,” said John Emory, president of the foundation. “We are inspired by plans to educate the public about the essential need to preserve our cultural heritage.”

Peter Lunder currently serves on the Smithsonian National Board and the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s Board of Commissioners. Lunder and his wife Paula are collectors of American art and contributors to the museum. In 2001, they established the Lunder Education Chair at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Other major supporters of the center were the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation of New York City and the Getty Foundation, a program of the J. Paul Getty Trust in Los Angeles.

“We want every visitor to see the magic performed by conservators who make certain that our collections are in great condition for future generations,” said Elizabeth Broun, The Margaret and Terry Stent Director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. “An array of public programs will highlight their work and other ways we can all help ensure the survival of our cultural treasures.”

“We hope that the public will not only learn first hand about the care we give our national treasures, but will also be inspired to care for their own family treasures,” said Marc Pachter, director of the National Portrait Gallery. “We are all conservators of our collective heritage.”

Claire Larkin, special projects director at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, oversees planning for the center. She consulted with conservation staffs at top museums in the United States and visited the country’s best facilities to refine the center’s concept and to generate program ideas. More than 35 conservators from across the country participated in creating the educational components for the Center. A 40-foot media wall in the center will feature many of these experts.

“We received invaluable support from conservation scientists and professionals who are excited that this work will be spotlighted in such a positive and public way by the museums,” said Larkin.

The National Historic Landmark building which houses the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Portrait Gallery is currently undergoing an extensive renovation. The museums (located between Seventh and Ninth streets and between F and G streets N.W.) will re-open in July 2006 as the centerpiece of a revitalized downtown Washington, D.C.

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Note to Editors: Additional information about the Lunder Conservation Center and the renovation project is available at <http://newsdesk.si.edu>. Images for publicity only may be downloaded from <ftp://160.111.16.40/opa/>.