



Smithsonian
***Donald W. Reynolds Center for
American Art and Portraiture***
Smithsonian American Art Museum

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Margaretta M. Lovell Awarded the 18th Annual Eldredge Prize For Her Book on Artists and Patrons in Early America

The Smithsonian American Art Museum has awarded the 2006 Charles C. Eldredge Prize for Distinguished Scholarship in American Art to Margaretta M. Lovell, professor of the history of art at the University of California, Berkeley. Her recent book, “Art in a Season of Revolution: Painters, Artisans and Patrons in Early America” (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), is recognized for expanding the understanding of art in the colonies during the tumultuous decades that bracketed the American Revolution.

“In this meticulously researched and closely argued book, Lovell has reconstructed the complex networks and affiliations that constituted Colonial New England’s communities, and has broken through a whole series of boundaries traditionally separating artists from artisans, and social history from art history,” the Eldredge Prize jurors wrote in their decision. “As the author puts it, her project was to ‘map how sets of objects formed an organic part of cultural life,’ and to determine just how these objects helped individuals situate themselves. She succeeds in doing both brilliantly.”

“I am delighted that the jurors have chosen to honor Margaretta Lovell, whose book is an invaluable resource to anyone studying early American art and life,” said Elizabeth Broun, the museum’s Margaret and Terry Stent Director.

“Art in a Season of Revolution” includes a series of focused case studies, some organized around particular works of art, others centering on groups of creators like the Goddard-Townsend workshop in Newport, R.I., which produced some of the finest 18th-century furniture.

The jurors continue in their statement, “these case studies are fascinating to read, in part because of Lovell’s precise descriptions of the production processes, incorporating a broad range of media from portraiture and architectural drawings to cabinet making and textile manufacture.

No detail is too small to escape sensitive analysis, often with surprising and invariably with satisfying results. The reader comes away with a greater understanding of both the art and the value systems of this distinctive society in a period of self-transformation.”

The three jurors who awarded the \$2,000 prize were: Neil Harris, the Preston and Sterling Morton Professor of American History at the University of Chicago; James Meyer, associate professor of art history at Emory University in Atlanta; and Sally Stein, associate professor of art history at the University of California, Irvine.

On April 4, 2007 at 6 p.m., Lovell will present the annual Eldredge Prize lecture, “Art in a Season of Revolution,” in the museum’s new Nan Tucker McEvoy Auditorium. A reception follows the event. The lecture and reception are free and open to the public.

Margaretta Lovell currently is a professor of the history of art at the University of California, Berkeley. Lovell received her doctorate in American studies from Yale University in 1980 after earning a master’s degree in early American culture from the University of Delaware. From 1981 to 1985, she held a concurrent appointment as both an assistant professor at Berkeley and as a curator of American art at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. While teaching at Berkeley, she also served as co-director (1995–2000) then director (2003–2004) of the university’s American studies program. She has been a visiting professor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Harvard University; and Stanford University. She received the Ralph Henry Gabriel Prize in 1981 from the American Studies Association for her book “A Visitable Past: Views of Venice by American Artists 1860–1915.” Lovell is a contributing author for a forthcoming survey textbook of American art history titled “American Encounters” and is at work on two books, “Interrogating a Continent: American Landscape Painting” and “Journey to the Ruins of Aztalan: In Search of the Scenic and the Prehistoric in Early 19th-century America.”

The Charles C. Eldredge Prize, named in honor of the former director of the museum (1982–1988), is sponsored by the American Art Forum, a patrons’ support organization. This annual award, initiated in 1989, seeks to recognize originality and thoroughness of research, excellence of writing and clarity of method. Single-author, book-length publications in the field of American art history appearing within the three previous calendar years are eligible. It is especially meant to honor those authors who deepen or focus debates in the field or who broaden

the discipline by reaching beyond traditional boundaries. December 1 is the deadline for 2007 nominations.

Recent Eldredge Prize recipients include:

- 2005: Elizabeth Johns, “Winslow Homer: The Nature of Observation” (University of California Press, 2002)
- 2004: David Lubin, “Shooting Kennedy: JFK and the Culture of Images” (University of California Press, 2003)
- 2003: Richard Meyer, “Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art” (Oxford University Press, 2002)

Further information about the Eldredge Prize and a complete list of past winners is available on the museum’s Web site at <http://americanart.si.edu/education/opportunities-eldredge.cfm>.

The museum’s research programs include fellowships for pre- and postdoctoral scholars, extensive photographic collections documenting American art and artists and unparalleled art research databases. An active publications program of books, catalogs and the journal American Art complements the museum’s exhibitions and educational programs.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum collection began with gifts of art donated to the federal government in 1829 and has evolved into one of the world’s most important American art holdings, with approximately 41,000 artworks in all media spanning more than three centuries. The museum is located at Eighth and F streets N.W. in the heart of a revitalized downtown arts district, above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station (Red, Yellow and Green lines). When its building opens July 1, the museum will be a dazzling showcase for American art and portraiture that celebrates the vision and creativity of Americans. Web sites: www.americanart.si.edu or www.reynoldscenter.org.

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