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## **JoAnne Mancini Is Awarded the 20th Annual Eldredge Prize for Her Book on the Origins of American Modernism**

The Smithsonian American Art Museum has awarded the 2008 Charles C. Eldredge Prize for Distinguished Scholarship in American Art to JoAnne M. Mancini for her book “Pre-Modernism: Art-World Change and American Culture from the Civil War to the Armory Show” (Princeton University Press, 2005), which takes an innovative look at the origins of American modernism. It is recognized as “a groundbreaking and sophisticated examination of cultural change and its mechanisms in the modern era.”

“The Eldredge Prize was established with the hope that it would encourage new scholarship that would inspire future generations,” said Elizabeth Broun, The Margaret and Terry Stent Director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. “JoAnne Mancini has crafted a thought-provoking new history of modernism that has the potential to change the way this important period in American art is studied and understood.”

The three jurors who awarded the \$3,000 prize were Joy Kasson, professor of American studies and English at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Marc Simpson, associate director of the Williams College graduate program in the history of art and curator of American art at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Mass.; and Sylvia Yount, the Louise B. and J. Harwood Cochrane Curator of American Art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond.

The jurors wrote, “The historical arc of Mancini’s narrative—from the pre-modern to the postmodern—leaves the reader with much to ponder about how art, artists and art worlds operate. Her analysis of American visual culture—“high” and “low”—both broadens the discipline of art history and provides a compelling model for untangling the relationship between aesthetic change and the climate of social, cultural, institutional and economic flux in the decades around 1900. By challenging conventional wisdom about the meaning of modernism, she opens the way to new paradigms of continuity *and* rupture, acceptance *and* conflict. This supple and interesting formulation merits sustained consideration and will, we believe, prompt productive discussion and inquiry in the field. It is, in addition to all else, a lucidly written and handsomely produced book. ‘Pre-Modernism’ deserves to be widely read and debated for years to come.”

Mancini teaches American and world history at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. She earned a doctorate degree in history from Johns Hopkins University in 1997. She has published articles in journals, including *Critical Inquiry* and *American Quarterly*, and has received numerous fellowships and grants. Most recently she was a Getty Scholar (2006–2007) at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. She is currently writing a book to be called “Asian Objects: Visual Culture, Imperial Relations and the Pacific World.”

On Friday, Sept. 12, past winners of the Eldredge Prize will participate in a program to honor the 20th anniversary of the award. Presentations will begin at 2 p.m. in the museum’s McEvoy Auditorium. Mancini will present the keynote lecture, “Art Worlds, World Arts,” at 5 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

The 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. Dec. 1 is the deadline for 2009 nominations.

Recent Eldredge Prize recipients include Rebecca Zurier (2007) for “Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School” (University of California, 2006) and Margaretta Lovell (2006) for “Art in a Season of Revolution: Painters, Artisans and Patrons in Early America” (University of Pennsylvania, 2005). A complete list of past winners is available on the museum’s Web site at [americanart.si.edu/eldredge](http://americanart.si.edu/eldredge).

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.

### **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 (Red, Yellow and Green lines). Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Web site: [americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu).

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