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## **Smithsonian American Art Museum Meets the Challenge for New Curator of Craft Position at its Renwick Gallery**

The Smithsonian American Art Museum has met the challenge posed by Lloyd Herman, the founding director of its Renwick Gallery, to create a \$2 million endowment to support a new curator of craft position. Herman's \$800,000 challenge gift was the catalyst for attracting \$1.2 million in matching funds from private contributors around the country.

"Lloyd Herman has inspired us for a generation, first as the Renwick Gallery's founding director, bringing a passion and expertise to building the museum's craft collection, and now, fostering that passion through a new curatorial position," said Elizabeth Broun, The Margaret and Terry Stent Director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

"I am heartened by the outpouring of support from other craft lovers who helped bring this endowment to fruition," said Herman. "A second curator will allow the Renwick to explore new directions in our field, highlighting the enormous array of talent and ingenuity of American craft artists, scholars and collectors."

Other major contributors to the endowment are Fleur and Charles Bresler, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, Colleen Kollar-Kotelly and John Kotelly, and Julie Walters and Sam Rose.

The Renwick Gallery, established as a branch of the Smithsonian American Art Museum in 1972, features one of the finest collections of American craft in the United States. Its collections, exhibition program and publications highlight the best craft objects and decorative arts from the 19th century to the present. The museum's craft program currently includes one curator; the new position will provide a second curator for the program. Among its initiatives is a biennial exhibition series, the Renwick Craft Invitational, established in 2000 to honor the creativity and talent of craft artists working today. "History in the Making: Renwick Craft Invitational 2011" opens March 25.

Herman has been a leader throughout the history of the modern craft movement. As the founding director of the museum's Renwick Gallery, he established what has become one of the most respected venues and voices for American craft. During his tenure, from 1971 to 1986, Herman

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presented 116 exhibitions at the Renwick Gallery and established the museum's permanent collection of contemporary craft. He brought a new generation of supporters and collectors to the field. The Renwick, under Herman's leadership, introduced to the public artists such as Dale Chihuly, Maria Martinez and Albert Paley, among countless others. Herman worked with the Smithsonian Women's Committee to establish the nationally juried Smithsonian Craft Show, now a prestigious annual event.

The Smithsonian Board of Regents approved the establishment of the dedicated endowment in 2008. Naming of the curator of craft position for Lloyd Herman will be presented to the Regents at an upcoming meeting.

### **About the Smithsonian American Art Museum and its Renwick Gallery**

The Smithsonian American Art Museum celebrates the vision and creativity of Americans with artworks in all media spanning more than three centuries. Its main building, a National Historic Landmark and major example of Greek Revival architecture, is located at Eighth and F streets N.W. in the heart of a revitalized downtown arts district. It is open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. The museum's branch for contemporary craft and decorative arts, the Renwick Gallery, is steps from the White House in the heart of historic federal Washington. Its Second Empire-style building, also a National Historic Landmark, was designed by architect James Renwick Jr. in 1859 and completed in 1874. Located on Pennsylvania Avenue at 17th Street N.W., it is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Website: [americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu).

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