



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

***National Portrait Gallery  
Smithsonian American Art Museum***

News

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**Media Web sites:** [americanart.si.edu/press](http://americanart.si.edu/press) and [npg.si.edu](http://npg.si.edu)

**“Temple of Invention: History of a National Landmark” Fact Sheet**

**Exhibition**

“Temple of Invention: History of a National Landmark”  
July 1, 2006 – Jan. 21, 2008

**Location**

Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery, Eighth and F streets N.W.

**Description**

“Temple of Invention: History of a National Landmark” honors the historic home of the National Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, which is one of the oldest public buildings constructed in early Washington, D.C. Begun in 1836 and completed in 1868, it is considered one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in the United States and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The exhibition traces the history of the building, from the completion of its first wing on F Street under the direction of Robert Mills, who is recognized now as one of America’s architectural geniuses, to the innovative design of a glass enclosure for the courtyard by internationally-renowned architect Norman Foster, which will open in November 2007. Charles Robertson, former deputy director at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and specialist in American decorative arts, is the guest curator of the exhibition. The companion Web site for the exhibition is available at [npg.si.edu/exhibit/pob/index.html](http://npg.si.edu/exhibit/pob/index.html).

**Publication**

Robertson wrote the accompanying book, which details the historical and cultural significance of the building. Published by the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Scala Publishers, it features more than 80 images, including historic photographs, engravings and other archival materials. In 2007, the book received the Ruth Emery Award from the Victorian Society in America. It is available for \$19.95 in the museums’ store and online at [americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu).

**Credit**

“Temple of Invention: History of a National Landmark” is co-organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Portrait Gallery. The exhibition and publication are made possible by generous support from Allan J. and Reda R. Riley. Additional support for the publication was provided by Furthermore: a program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Portrait Gallery are located at Eighth and F streets N.W., above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station. Open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Admission is free. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Web site: [reynoldscenter.org](http://reynoldscenter.org).

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