

Phoenix Art Museum receives prestigious Henry Luce Foundation Grant for ongoing reinstallations of American art collection

The Museum will present six thematic exhibitions over three years to showcase its permanent collection of historical American art

PHOENIX (October 2018) – Phoenix Art Museum has been named the recipient of one of eight grants in support of American art from the Henry Luce Foundation, which will enable the Museum to reinstall its American art collection dating prior to 1945. Founded in 1936, the Henry Luce Foundation is focused on broadening knowledge through eight key grant-making program areas, and nearly all grants awarded to arts institutions focus on permanent collections. Over the next three years, the Museum will present a series of exhibitions that will showcase the strength of its historical American art holdings. Beginning in six months, the \$100,000 grant will fund gallery enhancements, education and programming materials, and improved signage for the Museum’s North Wing.

“We are thrilled that the Henry Luce Foundation has selected Phoenix Art Museum for this notable grant,” said Amada Cruz, the Sybil Harrington Director and CEO of Phoenix Art Museum. “We are pleased that this award will enable us to engage our audiences in new ways.”

The Museum’s American art collection contains approximately 2,700 works and includes a recent acquisition, an oil painting by Emil Bisttram (c. 1937) depicting the most painted and recorded building in the southwestern United States—the Ranchos de Taos Church in New Mexico. The artwork was purchased with funds provided by Western Art Associates, a support group of Phoenix Art Museum, and Men’s Arts Council in honor of Western Art Associate’s 50th anniversary. Over the years, Western Art Associates, along with the Museum’s growing Membership and Circles of Support, have contributed generously to the Museum’s collection of American, Western American, Latin American, Asian, modern and contemporary art and fashion design.

“The Luce grant will support the ongoing reinvigoration of the American galleries, enabling the Museum to bring works long in storage out on view,” said Betsy Fahlman, PhD, adjunct curator of American art at Phoenix Art Museum. “Old favorites will be showcased in new contexts, and the Museum will be able to present two collection-based exhibitions annually. In addition, thanks to the help of Vanessa Davidson, PhD, the Museum’s Shawn and Joe Lampe Curator of Latin American Art, Mexican historical works will be presented with examples of Euro-North American art from the United States to broaden our guests’ understanding of the Americas. The Luce grant represents a truly dynamic opportunity for Phoenix Art Museum, and we are excited for the support from one of the most important foundations for American art.”

Phoenix Art Museum is among several institutions who received the Henry Luce Foundation Grant, including the Center for Curatorial Leadership (New York, NY), Joslyn Art Museum (Omaha, NE), Mystic Seaport Museum (Mystic, CT), and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art (Hartford, CT).

The Museum’s American art collection returned to the galleries on September 15, 2018, and the first Luce-supported special installations will open in late March 2019 with a focus on the Transcendentalists in the collection.

About the Henry Luce Foundation

Founded in 1936 by the co-founder and editor-in-chief of Time Inc. Henry R. Luce, in honor of his parents' passion for education. The Foundation is focused on broadening knowledge through eight grant-making programs, including one for American art. For 72 years, the Foundation has bequeathed grants to institutions and 501(c)(3) organizations or their international equivalent.

About Phoenix Art Museum

Phoenix Art Museum has provided access to visual arts and educational programs in Arizona for nearly 60 years and is the largest art museum in the southwestern United States. Critically acclaimed national and international exhibitions are shown alongside the Museum's permanent collection of more than 19,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. The Museum also presents festivals, a comprehensive film program, live performances, and educational programs designed to enlighten, entertain, and stimulate visitors of all ages. Visitors also enjoy vibrant photography exhibitions through the Museum's landmark partnership with the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. To learn more about Phoenix Art Museum, visit phxart.org, or call 602.257.1880.

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