

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

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ART
INSTITUTE
CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 30, 2009**

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**THE ART INSTITUTE AWARDED MAJOR GRANT FOR CONSERVATION RESEARCH
FROM ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION**

Museum Department Recognized for Cross-Institution Initiatives

The Art Institute of Chicago has been awarded a \$2 million challenge grant by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to aid the museum's efforts in conservation and scientific research on its collections. Of this generous grant, \$1.5 million, to be matched by \$500,000, will be used to endow a new position for an associate conservation scientist within the museum's Department of Conservation. The remaining \$500,000 of the grant will support, over a four-year period, the continuation and expansion, in both depth and scope, of the art conservation and scientific research collaboration the museum has recently undertaken with colleagues at Northwestern University and Argonne National Laboratory.

"The work of our world-class conservation department is absolutely vital to the mission of the Art Institute," said James Cuno, President and Eloise W. Martin Director of the museum. "The department is charged not only with maintaining the collection but also with performing highly technical analysis of our objects to better understand how they were made and where they came from. This research has led to many conferences, colloquia, and scientific papers that showcase the state-of-the-art techniques and processes of the conservation department while also revealing a great deal about the art objects we hold for the public. We are deeply grateful to the Mellon Foundation, whose early support was critical to the development of the department and whose continuing support, with this award, allows us to continue this significant and often revelatory work."

The conservation department, now led by Frank Zuccari, Grainger Executive Director of Conservation, was founded in 1962. Since that time, the Art Institute has developed extensive facilities for the conservation of paintings, works on paper, textiles, photographs, three-dimensional objects, and books. The staff in the department consists of 20 conservators, museum professionals who work in concert with curators to preserve the collection and conduct intensive study of the approximately 270,000 objects—from many cultures and all time periods, from ancient to modern—in their care. The results of their research are shared with a variety of audiences through exhibitions, exhibition catalogues, scholarly catalogues of the permanent collection, articles in the museum's semi-annual *Museum Studies* journal, presentations at professional meetings, publication in professional and scientific journals, public lectures, and tours of the galleries and conservation facilities.

The Mellon Foundation grant will both strengthen the Art Institute's research capabilities and allow the museum to continue to develop its Conservation Science Initiative, spearheaded by Francesca Casadio, A. W. Mellon Senior Conservation Scientist at the Art Institute, and supported in part by the first ever National Science Foundation grant to the Art Institute in 2007. The Conservation Science Initiative is a national model for integrative and cross-disciplinary collaboration among museums, universities, and scientific institutions with the goal of enhancing the field of cultural heritage science in the U.S. This initiative has not only provided access to the latest equipment and expertise used for materials science, chemistry, and computer science but has also offered opportunities for young scientists to understand the various applications of scientific tools to the care, preservation, and conservation of art objects.

The work of the Conservation Science Initiative has already produced significant results, including articles in both scientific journals and general interest publications. Its objects of study have ranged from ancient Chinese jades and bronzes to prints by the Mexican artist José Guadalupe Posada to house paints used by Pablo Picasso and the Art Institute's monumental painting by Henri Matisse, *Bathers by a River*, which will be the subject of a major exhibition next spring. The efforts of the collaboration have been published in such journals as *Analytical Chemistry*, *Applied Spectroscopy*, *Journal of Mathematics and the Arts*, and *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry*.

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MUSEUM HOURS

10:30 am–5:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

10:30 am–8:00 pm Thursday

10:00 am–5:00 pm Saturday, Sunday

TARGET FREE THURSDAY EVENINGS AFTER 5:00 pm

SUMMER HOURS (from Memorial Day to Labor Day)

10:30 am–5:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

10:30 am–9:00 pm Thursday, Friday

10:00 am–5:00 pm Saturday, Sunday

TARGET FREE SUMMER EVENINGS THURSDAY AND FRIDAY AFTER 5:00 pm

FREE FEBRUARY 1 TO 28

Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

ADMISSION

Adults \$18.00 Includes all special exhibitions and coat check

Children 14 and over, students, and seniors \$12.00 Includes all special exhibitions and coat check

Chicago residents receive a \$2.00 discount with proof of residency

Children under 14 always free

Members always free

Free Evenings are free to all. City of Chicago residents with Chicago Public Library cards can borrow a "Museum Passport" card from any library branch for free general admission to the nine members of Museums in the Park, including the Art Institute of Chicago.

The Art Institute of Chicago is a museum in Chicago's Grant Park, located across from Millennium Park. Visitors can enter the museum via the Michigan Avenue entrance or the Millennium Park entrance on Monroe Street.