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THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO AWARDED MAJOR GRANT FOR AMERICAN ART
Museum Receives $250,000 from Henry Luce Foundation for Cataloging and Online Publication of American Silver Collection

The Art Institute of Chicago is pleased to announce that the museum has been awarded a $250,000 grant by the Henry Luce Foundation to support a multi-year effort to complete the first-ever comprehensive catalogue highlighting the renowned American silver holdings in the museum’s Department of American Art. The project will encompass cataloguing the Art Institute’s collection of silver decorative arts, and will include publishing high-resolution images and a great wealth of scholarly information online as well as in an accompanying printed volume: American Silver at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Long considered among the finest in the United States, the American silver collection at the Art Institute has never been fully published. This grant will make it possible to give due consideration to the collection, providing a history and use of these exquisite objects and making a lasting contribution to the study of American silver from 1700 to the present.

“We are grateful to the Luce Foundation for their long-standing support of the Art Institute, and very much appreciate this generous grant. In our view, the history of American silver reveals the history of the nation itself,” said Judith Barter, PhD, Field McCormick Chair and Curator, Department of American Art. “The study of inscriptions on objects has yielded fascinating information on silver
commissioned for church work, for presentation to war heroes, in celebration of marriages and births, and even objects given to judges for their decisions in international law suits.”

Specifically, silver objects included in the seminal 2013 exhibition, *Art and Appetite: American Painting, Culture, and Cuisine*, were used to tell wonderful stories about eating, drinking, and entertaining in the first three centuries of the Republic.

The proposed 224–page printed catalogue will be richly illustrated with 300 color images and have an initial print run of 1,300 and be available for purchase in the Art Institute’s Museum Shop, with international distribution through the museum’s publishing partner, Yale University Press.

The project team will be led by Barter, who will serve as editor and work in concert with conservation professionals under Frank Zuccari, Grainger Executive Director of Conservation; the publications staff under Robert V. Sharp, Executive Director of Publications; and the information technology staff.

The Luce Foundation’s American Art Program focuses on American fine and decorative art, and is committed to scholarship and the overall enhancement of American art history. The program supports exhibitions, publications and research that emphasize an aesthetic approach to American art. For 2014, special consideration was given to projects focusing on the digitization of permanent collections. The Art Institute’s commitment to providing digital access to its collection makes the partnership particularly significant.

Scheduled for completion by 2016, the Art Institute’s comprehensive catalogue will be built upon the Luce Foundation’s past encouragement of the Department of American Art and its publishing program, and develop new means of communicating the content and strengths of this important collection to a worldwide public, at no cost, through digital access.
Images:

Robert Riddle Jarvie. Punch bowl, ladle and tray, 1911. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John R. Hattstaedt in memory of his father, John J. Hattstaedt.

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