FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THE ART INSTITUTE WELCOMES EVERYONE “HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS”
* Holiday Celebration 2010 Begins November 1, 2010 *

Longtime Favorites Chagall Windows and a Selection of Arms and Armor Reinstalled
Six Thorne Miniature Rooms Decked Out for the Season

19th Annual “Wreathing of the Lions” and Other Festive Events for the Whole Family

The Art Institute of Chicago invites everyone to get into the spirit of the holiday season beginning November 1, 2010, when the museum welcomes visitors of all ages “Home for the Holidays” to celebrate the return of two of the most-loved works in the museum’s collection as well as a special presentation of an old favorite. Returning are Marc Chagall’s masterpiece America Windows and a selection of nearly 50 pieces from the Harding Arms and Armor Collection, accompanied by Thorne Miniature Rooms specially decorated for the holiday season. As always, in what has become a grand annual tradition, the “Wreathing of the Lions” ceremony will take place on the day after Thanksgiving, Friday, November 26, at 10:00 am. Combined with a full roster of festive performances, enlightening gallery tours, and engaging activities for children, the Art Institute is the holiday destination for the entire family.

After a five-year absence, the Art Institute welcomes back Marc Chagall’s America Windows. First debuting at the Art Institute in 1977 and made forever famous in the 1986 film Ferris Bueller’s Day Off, the “Chagall Windows,” as they are more popularly known, hold a special place in the hearts of Chicagoans. Following an intensive period of conservation
treatment and archival research, the windows return as the stunning centerpiece of a new presentation at the east end of the museum’s Arthur Rubloff building (G144). Accompanying the reinstallation of the America Windows is a celebratory presentation that gathers models and maquettes from the earliest moment of the modern cultural renaissance in the city’s center—works by such artists as Jean Dubuffet, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso—which are in the collection of the Art Institute, and are connected to the historical inception of Chagall’s gift. Augmenting the installation is the model for Alexander Calder’s Flamingo (c. 1975), on loan from the Fine Arts Program, Public Buildings Service, U.S. General Services Administration.

Another Art Institute favorite, the George F. Harding Jr. Arms and Armor Collection, will also be reinstalled just in time for the holidays. This grouping of nearly 50 pieces of arms and armor, many of which have not been on view for years, includes full suits, half suits, pole arms, cannons, and a shield with two swords. In addition, for the first time at the Art Institute, a knight on a fully armored horse will also be on display—something never before possible due to the low ceilings in the collection’s previous home in Gunsaulus Hall. The new installation space in Gallery 236 also allows for the inclusion of grand Renaissance and Baroque tapestries, along with several paintings and a piece of sculpture, objects that suggest the variety of settings—military combat, tournaments, jousts, and parades—in which arms and armor were originally viewed.

In addition to the return of these two Art Institute highlights, this year the museum begins a new holiday tradition: six of the Thorne Miniature Rooms will be decorated, for the first time, with period-appropriate holiday trimmings. Keeping to Mrs. Thorne’s exacting standards of craftsmanship, several renowned artists from across the country and around the world have been engaged to create pieces for the rooms. Tiny toys have arrived from Germany, diminutive delicacies from
Italy, and petite plants from South Africa, while several pieces were made here at the museum. Among the most elaborate of the decorated rooms is the English Drawing Room of the Victorian Period, the only room with a Christmas tree. Now a ubiquitous feature of the season, the Christmas tree, or tannenbaum, was only brought to England from Germany in 1840 with the marriage of Prince Albert to Queen Victoria. The Thorne Room tree and accoutrements are based on a famous engraving of the royal couple and their children surrounding a trimmed and toy-bedecked tree, an image that would forever popularize this holiday fixture. Other ornamented rooms include the English Great Hall of the Tudor period with a wassailing bowl, yule log, and an essential part of the costuming for that period’s singing and dancing revelers—a mummer’s mask; the Virginia Entrance Hall with mistletoe, wreath, and garland; the French Provincial Bedroom with shoes, or sabots, lined up before the fireplace, a crèche, and puzzle; and the modern-era California Hallway with an Otto Natzler mid-century menorah. A Chinese New Year-inspired Thorne Room will be installed later during the season.

The holiday celebration at the Art Institute continues with the 19th Annual “Wreathing of the Lions” the day after Thanksgiving, Friday, November 26, at 10:00 am, on the museum’s front steps at Michigan Avenue and Adams Street. Music and performers will entertain visitors while they watch the wreathing of the Art Institute’s iconic lions. **The first 50 people to arrive and attend the event will receive free admission to the museum.** After the success of last year’s bright and bold Yves Behar-designed wreaths, the museum has once again invited a contemporary design team to reinterpret this joyful symbol of the holiday season. This year, Materious, the Chicago-based husband-and-wife firm of Stephanie and Bruce Tharp, has combined the look of traditional North American cranberry wreaths with the hopeful spirit of Buddhist and Taoist wishing trees. Each wreath will be composed of approximately 1,500 spheres in various shades of red, while inside each sphere will be “a wish for the world in 2011” written by Chicago area schoolchildren. Aided by solar power, the wreaths will glow at night, bringing the festive and optimistic feel into the evening hours.

A full day of holiday activities will be taking place inside the museum after the wreathing ceremony. **Hubbard Street Dance Chicago/Hubbard Street 2** will perform “Favorite Things”
in the Modern Wing’s Griffin Court at 11:00 am, and from 10:30 am to 3:30 pm, families are invited to visit the Ryan Education Center in the Modern Wing to make their own wreaths inspired by favorite Art Institute treasures. The Art Institute will remain open until 8:00 pm for visitors on Friday, November 26.

Continuing through December, holiday offerings are scheduled throughout the museum:

Enjoy a family-oriented afternoon filled with seasonal music sing-a-longs at Caroling Tea in the Stock Exchange Trading Room (Saturdays and Sundays, November 27–December 19, except December 5, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm). The cost is $25 per person; children 12 and under $12 per person; Art Institute Member $20 per person. Tax and gratuity not included, cash bar available. Call (312) 443–9675 for reservations.

Feeling creative? Why not gather up the whole crew and construct an edible dream home with the Build Your Own Gingerbread House workshop in the Millennium Park Room (Saturdays and Sundays, November 27–December 19, except December 5, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm). The cost is $35 per family of four, $5 each additional person; Art Institute Members $25 per family of four. Tax and gratuity not included. Box lunches are available at an additional charge. Call (312) 443–9675 for reservations.

Masterpiece of the Day returns for this year’s holiday celebration. Each day at noon from December 20 to 31 (except December 25), visitors can take a 30-minute special tour that focuses on a different jewel in the Art Institute’s crown. Including Grant Wood’s American Gothic and Marc Chagall’s America Windows, these engaging, brief talks give viewers the chance to learn more about their favorite works—and the objects that make the Art Institute’s collection world-renowned.

Family Programs for the holidays include workshops and gallery walks on selected weekends in December. The popular Holly Days festival takes place annually just before the New Year. Beginning Monday, December 27, and continuing through Thursday, December 30, programs are held daily from 10:30 am to 3:00 pm in the Ryan Education Center. This year,
families are invited to visit the holiday Thorne Miniature Rooms and create a miniature scene of family celebrations. Holly Days festival also includes Story Time, a special activity for younger children, gallery walks through the exhibition, and a visit by the Art Institute mascot, Artie the Lion! All children must be accompanied by adults.

The Art Institute’s Museum Shop is joining in the festivities as well, offering holiday trunk shows on **November 4–7 and December 4, from 12:00 to 4:00 pm**. Both the main Museum Shop (Michigan Avenue entrance) and the Modern Shop (Monroe Street Modern Wing entrance) stock a wide array of merchandise, including jewelry, home décor, clothing, stationery, gift books, and much more. Then, after art, entertainment, and shopping at the Art Institute, take a break at **Terzo Piano** in the Modern Wing or the **Café** in the lower level of the Rubloff Building for treats and more.

For general museum information, please call **(312) 443-3600** or visit online at [www.artinstituteofchicago.org](http://www.artinstituteofchicago.org). For information about specific lectures and family programs, please call the Department of Museum Education at **(312) 443-3680**. Exhibitions and programs are free with museum admission unless otherwise noted. **The Art Institute will be closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day.**

Major funding for the **America Windows** was originally provided by The City of Chicago, with a substantial supplementary sum also given by the Auxiliary Board of the Art Institute. Acquisition of the windows was a project of The City of Chicago and the Auxiliary Board of the Art Institute. The reinstallation of Marc Chagall’s **America Windows** is generously sponsored by a grant from the Walter E. Heller Foundation in memory of Alyce DeCosta.

The Thorne Miniature Rooms are made possible by the Narcissa Niblack Thorne Fund and the Chicago Community Trust.

**IMAGES:**


Miniature China doll and Christmas tree ornament.

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MUSEUM HOURS
10:30 am–5:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
10:30 am–8:00 pm Thursday, Friday
10:30 am–5:00 pm Saturday, Sunday

TARGET FREE THURSDAY EVENINGS AFTER 5:00 pm
Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

ADMISSION
Adults $18.00 Includes all special exhibitions
Children 14 and over, students, and seniors $12.00 Includes all special exhibitions
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.