



The Preservation Society of Newport County
with
National Trust Insurance Services, LLC.,
U.S. Trust, Bank of America Private Wealth Management,
and Christie's
presents

MASTERPIECE

Preliminary Program

Monday, April 30 through Wednesday, May 2, 2012

The Newport Symposium Committee

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The Preservation Society of Newport County

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The Newport Symposium

What makes a work of art a masterpiece? What painting, chair, interior, ceramic, or dress is the finest in the world? The 20th annual Newport Symposium celebrates two decades of looking at art, architecture, the decorative arts, and landscapes. The lecturers will examine and challenge the status of iconic works of art and design through the ages. Prepare for brilliant images of great buildings, interiors, furniture, and textiles, and lively discussion of the social and cultural history behind these artistic creations.

Sunday, April 29

12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Symposium Registration: Hotel Viking

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Pre-Symposium Tour: Masterful Houses of Worship

Trinity Church (1726) and Touro Synagogue (1763) are two architectural masterpieces from Newport's colonial era. Richard Munday's Trinity Church was modeled after the hall churches of the English architects Christopher Wren and James Gibbs, while Peter Harrison, armed with the finest architectural library in the colonies, used the works of Andrea Palladio to create his innovative design for Touro Synagogue.

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Opening Reception at Redwood Library and Athenaeum (1748)

Dinner on one's own

Monday, April 30

8:00 a.m. Symposium Registration: Hotel Viking

9:00 a.m. Welcome

Donald O. Ross, *Chairman of the Board*

The Preservation Society of Newport County, Newport, Rhode Island

9:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Lectures at Hotel Viking Conference Center

The Exotic in the Masterwork: Alien Arts and the Isaac Bell House

Jerrilynn D. Dodds, *Dean of the College*

Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York

What are the qualities that make a work of architecture a masterpiece? Many say that it must possess qualities that capture the values of its time while transcending them as well, in order to reach out to viewers in other times and places. It also must be transcendent for its creator, must portray risk taking, and demonstrate the willingness to breach frontiers of cultural comfort and predictability. This lecture will explore some of the ways that forms and principles considered exotic in their time became the catalysts for the buildings we see as masterworks.

Sèvres Porcelain Masterpieces: From French Royal Patrons to English and American Collectors

Dame Rosalind Savill, *Curator Emerita*

The Wallace Collection, London, England

In the 18th century the Sèvres factory intentionally created masterpieces for its royal patrons. These useful or ornamental wares were technically innovative, visually brilliant, vastly expensive and sought after by, among others, Louis XV, Madame de Pompadour, Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. When, following the French Revolution, these pieces came onto the market, they achieved a new status as unsurpassed and rare masterpieces which reflected the former splendor of court life at Versailles—an irresistible combination for 19th and 20th century collectors and connoisseurs.

12:00 p.m. Lunch at Hotel Viking. Optional. Fee.

2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Concurrent lectures and tours

Three Fabergé Masterpieces

Dr. Géza von Habsburg

Bronxville, New York

Carl Fabergé, the eminent Court Jeweler to Tsar Nicholas II, is considered by many to be the greatest artist-jeweler of all time. This talk dwells on three of his most celebrated masterpieces, all issuing from the jewelry workshop of the Holmströms, father and son: the 1896 Lilies of the Valley Basket, the 1900 miniature replicas of the Russian Crown Jewels, and the 1913 Winter Egg, all major examples of the incredible genius and superlative craftsmanship of the House of Fabergé.

***Masterpieces of Chinese Art from the Saint Louis Art Museum:
Continuing a Century of Collecting***

Philip K. Hu, *Associate Curator of Asian Art*

Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis, Missouri

Since 1909, the Saint Louis Art Museum has been collecting Chinese art across all major media. Recent acquisitions have continued the tradition of adding only the finest or most unusual objects of their kind, thereby raising the overall quality of the collection. A selection of the best Chinese bronzes, paintings, sculpture, ceramics, decorative art, and textiles from the collection will be highlighted to show why they are masterpieces in their respective categories.

***The Belles Heures of Jean de France, Duc de Berry: A Masterpiece
in Miniature***

Timothy Husband, *Curator, Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters*

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York

One of the most lavishly illustrated codices to come down from the Middle Ages, the *Belles Heures* (ca. 1405-1408/09) is the only manuscript to be fully executed by the famed Limbourg brothers. Commissioned by the duc de Berry, this luxury book of hours was intended for private devotion, but the royal patron saw it as a means to develop and display the extraordinary talents of these young Netherlandish painters. Initially begun as a relatively modest book, it developed into a complex and ambitious undertaking of unparalleled sumptuousness. One of the transcendent works in The Cloisters Collection, the *Belles Heures* is a compendium of masterpieces in miniature.

***Ralph Carpenter, Hunter House, and the Arts & Crafts of Newport,
Rhode Island***

Brock Jobe, *Professor of American Decorative Arts*

Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, Winterthur, Delaware

This lecture will focus on the many outstanding pieces at Hunter House (c.1748) that were assembled for Ralph Carpenter's landmark exhibition in 1953 and featured in his publication *The Arts & Crafts of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1820* (1954). In addition, a number of newer acquisitions in the house will provide further evidence of Newport's importance as a center of colonial cabinet making. For anyone interested in American furniture, this lecture and viewing of selected 18th century furniture from the Preservation Society's collection will be a tour de force.

Recovered Splendor: The Context and Conservation of the Tapestry Room in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

Oliver Tostmann, *William and Lia Poorvu Curator of the Collection*

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, Massachusetts

After a comprehensive restoration project completed in the winter of 2011, visitors can now experience the original splendor of the largest room in Isabella Stewart Gardner's palace. Built in 1914-15, this room was conceived as a showcase for two important Flemish Renaissance tapestry series. This lecture will investigate the conservation, history and function of a great space designed around masterpieces of the art of tapestry.

Special Viewing: Preserving Masterpieces: The Elms Lacquer Panels

Charles Jeffers Moore, *Chief Conservator*

The Preservation Society of Newport County, Newport, Rhode Island

As one of the most significant projects currently happening in the field of Chinese Export Art, the conservation of the 18th century K'ang Hsi lacquer panels from the Breakfast Room of The Elms (1901) has received international attention from scholars, curators and conservators. These monumental works of art are superb examples of lacquer that would have been destroyed when The Elms was threatened with demolition in the 1960s. Today, it is one of the few surviving lacquer rooms in the world. Visit the on-site workroom at The Elms, hear from the conservators who are stabilizing the panels, and get a rare, up-close view of the delicate decorative motifs.

Tour: Old Masters for Marble House

Charles J. Burns, *Associate Curator for Research*

The Preservation Society of Newport County, Newport, Rhode Island

Take a tour of the royal portraits and ceiling paintings acquired by Alva Vanderbilt Belmont for the decoration of the ground floor reception rooms of her Newport villa, Marble House (1892). Recalled in Mrs. Belmont's memoirs as works by Mignard, the portraits have been reattributed to Testelin and Rigaud, among others. The ceiling paintings were salvaged from 18th century Parisian townhouses demolished in the 1880s.

Tour: Victorian Masterpieces: The Frullini Rooms of Chateau-sur-Mer

Caitlin Emery, *Museum Programs Coordinator*

The Preservation Society of Newport County, Newport, Rhode Island

Nicole Nicas Rovner, *Independent Researcher*

Newport, Rhode Island

In 1884, the library and dining room of Chateau-sur-Mer (1852) were celebrated as two of the finest interiors in America when they were published in George Sheldon's

Artistic Houses. Today, these two masterpieces are the only surviving rooms in America created by the internationally renowned Italian sculptor Luigi Frullini. This tour will highlight the architectural details within these two spaces, as well as Frullini's background and his work in Europe and America.

Tour: *From Amsterdam to Venice, History Painting in The Elms*

Paul F. Miller, *Curator*

The Preservation Society of Newport County, Newport, Rhode Island

Elizabeth Nogrady, *Associate Specialist, Old Master Paintings*

Christie's, New York, New York

The Parisian decorator Jules Allard designed the main reception rooms of The Elms (1901) around 18th century paintings by European masters. These include a major work by Jacob de Witt, removed from a townhouse in Amsterdam and, most notably, a cycle of ten Venetian history paintings on the life of Scipio Africanus and the achievements of members of the Corner family. Of this Venetian series, eight works survive in The Elms by such masters as Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini and Antonio Molinari. At the turn of the century, this collection made Edward Berwind one of the most important collectors of Venetian art in America.

Tour: *The Isaac Bell House: An American Masterpiece*

John Tschirch, *Director of Museum Affairs and Architectural Historian*

The Preservation Society of Newport County, Newport, Rhode Island

The Isaac Bell House (1883), designed by the legendary architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White, is a masterpiece of American architecture. It is one of a small group of innovative Shingle Style summer houses built in Newport in the early 1880s. The open plan and fusion of Colonial, European and Asian design motifs in the Isaac Bell House made it a seminal work when it first appeared, laying the groundwork for later developments in modernism by Frank Lloyd Wright and others.

Tour: *Highlights from the Costume Collection, 1840-1900*

Jessica Urick, *Textile Conservator*

The Preservation Society of Newport County, Newport, Rhode Island

Take a behind-the-scenes tour of costumes from the 2012 exhibition *The Victorian Wardrobe Revealed*, which showcases highlights from the Preservation Society's collection, including several pieces never before displayed. Dating from 1840 to 1900, the garments include a dress with buttons depicting the ruins of Machu Picchu and a walking suit designed by the great Parisian couturier Charles Frederick Worth. This talk will explore the history and construction of the objects and highlight the conservation efforts required to prepare them for display.

Tuesday, May 1

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Lectures at Hotel Viking Conference Center

The Rebirth of a Forgotten Masterpiece: The Chancellerie d'Orléans

Bertrand du Vignaud, *President*

World Monuments Fund Europe, Paris, France

The creation, dismantling and restoration of some of the finest interiors in France forms the story of the Hotel de la Chancellerie. In 1707, the duc d'Orléans commissioned the architect Germain Boffrand and artist Antoine Coypel to design his Paris townhouse. The Marquis de Voyer d'Argenson redecorated the hotel in the 1760s with such celebrated artists as Charles de Wailly and Fragonard. The Banque de France purchased the hotel in 1923 and placed its renowned interiors in storage in order to expand its headquarters. This lecture examines the exceptional quality of this architectural and artistic masterpiece and summarizes World Monuments Fund Europe's campaign to reconstruct these once famous rooms.

Newport Furniture: Late-Breaking News from New York

Morrison H. Heckscher, *Lawrence A. Fleischman Curator of the American Wing*

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York

Newport is synonymous with fine furniture by the Townsends and Goddards, and the Metropolitan Museum has been assiduous in collecting and studying that work since the 1920s. In this lecture Mr. Heckscher will discuss exciting new discoveries, and some major recent acquisitions, that can only further burnish Newport's reputation as the cabinet making capital of colonial New England.

12:00 p.m. Lunch at Hotel Viking. Optional. Fee.

2:00 - 4:30 p.m. The series of Monday afternoon sessions will be repeated on Tuesday afternoon

7:00 p.m. Dinner at The Breakers (1895)

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Wednesday, May 2

9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Lectures at Hotel Viking Conference Center

Parade of Kings? The Prince Regent's Grand Design

Dr. Steven Parissien, *Director*

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, England

The scale and ambition of London's Regent's Park-Regent Street development, created in 1812 by architect John Nash for George, Prince of Wales (later King George IV), was unmatched in Britain. The entire ensemble of parks, terraced houses and streets was devised to eclipse the soaring boulevards of Napoleon's Paris, while at the same time constituting a commercially viable investment. Dr. Parissien examines the stuccoed grandeur, the urban theatricality and the successes and disappointments of this masterpiece of Regency urban planning.

Modern Masterpieces

George Shackelford, *Senior Deputy Director*

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

The Kimbell Art Museum's original building, designed by the great Louis Kahn, opened in 1972 and has become a mecca of modern architecture. Though thoroughly modern in its lack of ornament or historic detail, the building suggests the grand arches and vaults of Roman architecture, a source of inspiration that Kahn himself acknowledged.

12:00 p.m. Lunch at Hotel Viking. Optional. Fee.

Schedule subject to change.

For more information call 1-401-847-1000 ext. 154 or

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