Joslyn Art Museum Publishes New Survey of European Collection; Announces Newly Endowed Curatorial Position

(Omaha, NE) – Joslyn Art Museum announces a new catalogue dedicated to its renowned European collection. *European Paintings and Sculpture from Joslyn Art Museum* is the first publication to reexamine the Museum’s permanent collection in over three decades, marking a significant milestone for the institution and drawing well-deserved attention to the artworks in its care. This new, richly illustrated volume presents 100 artworks from the collection, dating from the late thirteenth century to the early twentieth century and representing many of the most important artists, schools, and styles of European art history. Noted scholars and specialists in the field examine these works while considering artist biography, practice and technique, and cultural and historical contexts. Joslyn Art Museum executive director and CEO, Jack Becker, Ph.D., offers a foreword.

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*European Paintings and Sculpture from Joslyn Art Museum* is available for purchase in Joslyn’s Hitchcock Museum Shop: $45 hardcover (member price $40.50); $35 softcover (member price $31.50).

**European Position Endowed**

Lead author for *European Paintings and Sculpture from Joslyn Art Museum* is Taylor J. Acosta, Ph.D., (*pictured right*) curator of the European collection at Joslyn since January 2019. Dr. Acosta’s introductory catalogue essay offers an engaging history of the arts in Omaha and the formation of the Museum’s European collection. In conjunction with the release of this collection-focused publication, Joslyn is pleased to announce the endowment of Dr. Acosta’s post at the Museum. The newly named position of Willis A. Strauss Curator of European Art is a gift from Susan and Michael Lebens, in memory of Susan’s father, a great patron of the Museum. Becker noted, “This generous gift from Susan and Michael emphasizes a special commitment to our curators and the stewardship of our permanent collection. We are immensely grateful to them, and to Willis Strauss, without whom Joslyn would not be the institution it is today.”

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Joslyn Art Museum European Catalogue, Newly Endowed Curatorial Position.

About the couple’s gift, Susan Lebens noted, “Mike and I are delighted to recognize my father in this way, supporting an institution to which he was deeply committed for decades. His devotion to civic endeavors and the arts was well known, and through his leadership the Museum expanded its building and collections. We are proud to add his name to the support of the exceptional curatorial and collections work at Joslyn.” Ms. Lebens is a member of the Museum’s board of governors, currently serving on the development and campaign committees. Mr. Lebens is currently chairman of the building committee, formed after the October 2018 announcement of Joslyn’s planned expansion.

About Willis A. Strauss

Willis A. Strauss (1922–2004) was a long-time Omaha business leader, serving as a top executive with Northern Natural Gas Co. and its successor, InterNorth Inc., until his retirement in 1984. He worked tirelessly on behalf of the community, including years in support of Joslyn Art Museum. In 1986, he was instrumental in ensuring that the Maximilian-Bodmer Collection, the gem of Joslyn’s collection of art of the American West, found a permanent home at the Museum. As InterNorth Inc. acquired Houston Natural Gas and became Enron Corp., moving its headquarters from Omaha to Houston, Strauss was pivotal in securing the donation from the Enron Art Foundation of the more than 1,000 art objects and archival materials comprising the collection before the move to Texas. Generations of visitors and scholars have benefited from viewing works from this extraordinary collection at Joslyn Art Museum.

Strauss and his wife, Janet, were patron members and generous Museum donors for decades (since Willis’ passing, Janet remains a steadfast supporter). From the 1970s through the mid-1990s, he served a total of nearly 20 years on the Museum’s board of governors. He was chairman of the building committee for Joslyn’s 1994 capital project that added the Walter and Suzanne Scott Pavilion to the Museum’s campus, and a key space inside the addition’s atrium was named for the couple—the Willis A. & Janet S. Strauss Bridge. In 2009, as the Museum opened its Peter Kiewit Foundation Sculpture Garden, guests were treated to a stroll through the Willis A. Strauss Family Garden Gallery to the east of the Museum entrance. The space is now home to Tom Otterness’s (American, born 1952) Large Covered Wagon (2004), a gift to Joslyn from Janet Strauss. Lovable for kids and satirical for adults, the seven-foot-tall, over two-ton bronze depicts a pipe-puffing pioneer woman steering a bull-drawn Conestoga wagon with two children hanging out the back.

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Joslyn Art Museum

Our Mission — Joslyn Art Museum collects, preserves, and interprets the visual arts of the highest quality, fostering appreciation and enjoyment of art for the benefit of a diverse audience.

Our Vision — To be cherished and respected as a premier art museum.

Joslyn Art Museum showcases art from ancient times to the present. The Museum was a gift to the people of Omaha from Sarah Joslyn in memory of her husband, George, who made his fortune as president of the Western Newspaper Union. The Museum’s original 1931 building is one of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture in the nation, with 38 types of marble from seven countries. The Walter and Suzanne Scott Pavilion, a 58,000-square-foot addition built in 1994, was designed by renowned British architect Norman Foster as his first U.S. commission. The Museum features galleries, a 1,000-seat concert hall, fountain court, education technology gallery, lecture hall, classrooms, sculpture garden, café, shop, and Art Works, an interactive space for art exploration. In response to the Covid-19 global pandemic, many areas of the Museum are currently closed. Visit https://bit.ly/JoslynVisitorInfo for complete details.

Current General Museum Admission: Free with advance timed ticket reservation (paid ticketed admission for select exhibitions; exhibition tickets, when applicable, may be added to your visit reservation online).
Current Temporary Museum Hours: Wednesday through Sunday, 10 am–4 pm; closed Monday, Tuesday, and major holidays.

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