



## NEWS RELEASE

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### Joslyn Art Museum Announces Opening of Reinstalled European Galleries; Four New Acquisitions Unveiled

(Omaha, NE) – A new presentation of Joslyn Art Museum's renowned collection of European art awaits visitors. Debuting today, the reinstallation of the Memorial Building's five south galleries offers a renewed perspective on the museum's significant holdings of European art for both long-time patrons and new audiences.

The galleries begin with Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque artists, continue with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works by French and British painters, and conclude with Impressionism and the beginnings of modernism. The reinstallation addresses several objectives, including renovating the physical gallery spaces for the first time since 2000; treating paintings and sculpture in need of conservation; and providing up-to-date interpretive content, including new wall labels and in-gallery technology. Most significantly, the Museum has recently acquired four new works for the European collection, all of which are now on view.

Dana E. Cowen, Ph.D., associate curator of European art, said the acquisitions are a highlight of the project. "The four acquisitions, all paintings, are major works that strengthen the permanent collection by enhancing key areas of our European holdings. Additionally, they provide added context for other works in the collection and help us achieve our goal of displaying the artwork in a more cogent, art historical narrative. These acquisitions, joined with familiar favorites, assure new, thoughtful experiences for visitors to the galleries."

This reinstallation has been supported by the Gilbert M. and Martha H. Hitchcock Foundation, Iowa West Foundation, The Sunderland Foundation, and Humanities Nebraska and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

#### New Acquisitions

To augment the European collection and fill important historical gaps, the Museum has acquired four significant paintings:

**Hans Pleydenwurff (ca. 1425–1472) or his workshop, *The Crucifixion*, ca. 1460–70, oil on panel, 51-3/4 x 31 inches, Museum purchase with funds from the Berchel H. and Alice Dale Harper Estate, 2017.1 (pictured page 2)**

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The acquisition of a large gold-ground devotional panel of the Crucifixion by German artist Hans Pleydenwurff, one of the most significant artists active in Germany around the turn of the fifteenth century, provides a transformative addition to gallery one, a space dedicated to religious objects of the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries from Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands.

The abstract composition depicts Christ on the cross accompanied by the Virgin Mary, Saint John the Evangelist, and the female donor of the painting. The painting's donor is small in scale compared to the other figures, and she kneels at the foot of the cross. The panel was likely intended as an epitaph commissioned by the donor prior to her death, which was to be hung near her future burial site on a column in her parish church or in a religious house. The devotional subject and likely high expense of the panel would have demonstrated both her social status and religious piety to the community.

**Angelica Kauffmann (Swiss, 1741–1807), *A Portrait of Mary Tisdal Reading*, ca. 1771–72, oil on canvas, 24-3/4 x 29-3/4 inches, Museum purchase with funds from the Drew Acquisitions Fund, 2016.9 (pictured right)**

Swiss-born, Italian-trained artist Angelica Kauffmann is considered among the most successful female artists prior to the late nineteenth century. In 1771, Kauffman spent six months in Ireland, during which time she painted Joslyn's newly acquired *A Portrait of Mary Tisdal Reading*. The painting depicts Mary Tisdal, the daughter of the Irish Attorney General Philip Tisdal, reclining outdoors with a book accompanied by three sheep. Kauffmann likely portrays the sitter as a character from the book she is reading: the shepherdess Erminia from Torquato Tasso's sixteenth century epic poem "Gerusalemme Liberata."



The painting complements the Museum's current eighteenth-century portraiture, but also provides a link to an earlier painting in the collection that depicts a scene from the same poem – Italian artist Bernardo Strozzi's *Erminia and the Shepherds* of around 1620. Finally, this acquisition is an inaugural step in expanding the presence of female artists in the European galleries.

**Jan van Goyen (Dutch, 1596–1656), *Landscape with a Mill*, 1634, oil on panel, 11-3/4 x 14 inches, Museum purchase with funds from the Berchel H. and Alice Dale Harper Estate, 2017.3 (pictured right)**

Jan van Goyen is considered a pioneer of the naturalistic landscape painting style that emerged in Holland during the seventeenth century. A contemporary of Rembrandt, Van Goyen was largely active in The Hague, but traveled frequently throughout the Netherlands, recording topographic views of the countryside that he later made into finished paintings. This painting exemplifies his 'tonal' landscapes of the 1630s that employ soft outlines and gentle, harmoniously interlinked colors to evoke atmosphere, depth, and the



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interrelationship between human life and nature. The mill and church symbolize the flourishing agriculture of the northern Netherlands and the steadfast religious faith of the people in the United Provinces during their struggle for independence against the Spanish.

The picture brings attention to the Museum's seventeenth-century Dutch holdings, illustrating the secularization of subject matter in the Dutch Republic, and provides added context for Joslyn's *Portrait of Dirck van Os* by Rembrandt.

**Gerard Donck (born before 1610–died after 1640), *Portrait of Nicolaes Willemsz. Lossy and his wife Marritgen Pieters*, 1633, oil on panel, 18-3/4 x 24-3/4 inches, Museum purchase with funds from the Berchel H. and Alice Dale Harper Estate and bequest of Rose Marie Baumgarten, 2017.2 (pictured left)**



Active in Amsterdam alongside Rembrandt, Gerard Donck painted market and genre scenes, street vendors, and portraits set in interiors and landscapes. His small-scale portrait of Nicolaes Willemsz. Lossy (ca. 1604–1664), city organist of the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam, and his wife, Marritgen Pieters, combines earlier conventions of court portraiture with everyday settings and objects. This new approach to the subject was popular among members of the rising Dutch merchant class because it offered both prestige and an opportunity to display their interests and individuality.

This stunning double portrait communicates multiple aspects of seventeenth-century Dutch society, including how the emerging merchant class fashioned identity through portraiture. Through specific elements such as furniture, costumes, musical instruments, and books, the painting also reveals the importance of trade and manufacturing, the current fashions of the 1630s, and the significance of music as both a profession and as a symbol for family unity. Moreover, the painting illustrates a popular portrait style during the 1630s when Rembrandt arrived in Amsterdam and speaks to how Rembrandt altered the course of the genre, as seen in our recently reattributed *Portrait of Dirck van Os*, painted around 1658.

### Interpretation and iPad Interactives

The reinstallation process provided a valuable opportunity for Joslyn staff to reassess the educational content presented in the galleries to better suit the Joslyn community. The Museum conducted visitor engagement studies that featured surveys and focus groups of college & university faculty, docents, adult program participants, and Museum members. Through questions and discussion two key points emerged: visitors wanted to receive information in new ways while also observing in the galleries a traditional, chronological flow of artwork.

In addition to clear and focused text panels for each gallery and informative labels for individual objects, the reinstallation of the European galleries includes opportunities for more contemporary learning situations at three iPad stations. Each focuses on a specific object and delivers additional content beyond wall labels to explore the artist and subject of the work, pertinent historical context, and related scientific investigation.

This layered approach to content allows visitors to delve more deeply into a specific object and provides the viewer with numerous avenues to access information in an accessible, engaging fashion. The three objects featuring an iPad station are:

- the Netherlandish altarpiece *Madonna and Child with Saints Catherine and Agnes*, 1520s, painted by a follower of Jan Gossaert (gallery 1)
  - Highlight: teaches visitors more about the underdrawings hidden beneath the work's layers of paint.
- Rembrandt van Rijn's *Portrait of Dirck van Os*, ca. 1658 (Scott Gallery; gallery 2)
  - Highlight: allows visitors to see generations of changes to the original painting, including elements added by other hands that have since been removed by conservators
- Edgar Degas's *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen*, 1920–21 (Drew Gallery; gallery 5)
  - Highlight: offers information about the sculpture's model, Marie van Goethem, and the significance of Joslyn's plaster cast

The iPad station interactives are a partnership between Joslyn Art Museum and Earprint Productions.

### Conservation & Reframing

Early in the reinstallation project, a number of works were selected for conservation treatment, including objects that had been on view in the galleries and works that had remained in storage, some for many years, but that can now be displayed. In total, two sculptures and four paintings received conservation treatments, including a work that had been on view in the galleries for many years: Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg's *The Smugglers Return* (1801). A conservator removed and replaced varnish that had yellowed over time, brightening the work and restoring it to its original vibrancy. Additionally, areas that had been damaged during previous cleaning were carefully retouched.

Another work selected for conservation was Elizabeth Jane Gardner Bouguereau's *By the Seashore* (ca. 1912). A conservator removed and replaced discolored varnish to allow the work's rich colors to reemerge. Overpaint was removed and cracks in the paint were consolidated. This work by Gardner Bouguereau, American wife of French painter William-Adolphe Bouguereau, is on view for the first time in over 35 years.

In addition to conservation, the Museum reframed paintings by Giovanni Battista Ruoppolo (attributed) and Henri Matisse (joining Rembrandt's *Portrait of Dirck van Os*, reframed in November 2016). For Ruoppolo's *Still Life* (1650s–60s), one of fourteen objects from storage now on view in the reinstallation, a reproduction frame after an original seventeenth-century Italian example was chosen to emphasize the dramatic use of light and shadow in the painting. Matisse's *Head of Woman* (1917) was fitted with a black frame with gilded sight edge and exterior that better accentuates the stark linear quality of the artist's brushwork.

## Reattributions

Through curatorial research during the reinstallation process, two works have been reattributed (declared the work of a different artist than previously named):

### *Young Man with a Red Cap* (1628–1630)

Former Attribution – Girolamo da Carpi (Italian, ca. 1501–1556)

**New Attribution** – Pietro Paolini (Italian, Lucchese, 1603–1681)

Reason: Past overpainting had obscured the original paint layer and the artist's primary intentions. After conservation, and based on the figure type, costume, and dramatic lighting, this painting was likely produced by Paolini during his early period when Caravaggio's influence was at its strongest. Similar works by Paolini dating from 1628 to 1630 suggest this time frame for Joslyn's painting. The red hat used in Joslyn's painting appears on figures in two other Paolini works. The subject of Joslyn's painting, a "head study," is also in keeping with Paolini's practice.

### *Still Life* (1650s–60s)

Former Attribution – Attributed to Jan Davidsz. de Heem (Dutch, 1606–1683 or 1684)

**New Attribution** – Claes Bergoij (Dutch, active before 1651–d. 1668)

Reason: A spurious De Heem signature and date appear on the painting, however comparisons to Joslyn's painting and those securely attributed to Bergoij show parallels in the compositional structure, the use of fabric, and in the repetition of the same objects and their placement. Bergoij emulated the Dutch still-life painter Willem Kalf, and Joslyn's painting demonstrates a closer relationship between it and Kalf's work.

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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.

**General Museum Admission:** Free, including European galleries (additional charge for select special exhibitions)

**Regular Museum Hours:** Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am–4 pm; late 'til 8 pm on Thursday; closed Monday and major holidays.

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