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## **Smithsonian American Art Museum Receives Major Grant for Five-Year Collaboration With Five Partner Museums Across the American West**

### ***Grant From Art Bridges + Terra Foundation Initiative Supports Sharing of Artworks With Audiences Throughout the United States***

The Smithsonian American Art Museum has received a nearly \$2 million grant from Art Bridges and the Terra Foundation of American Art to support a five-year exhibition partnership with five museums in some of the fastest growing cities and states in the western region of the United States. The partner museums, known collectively as the American West Consortium, are the Boise Art Museum; the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno; the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art in Eugene, Oregon; the Utah Museum of Fine Arts in Salt Lake City; and the Whatcom Museum in Bellingham, Washington.

The partnership includes a two-part exhibition program and professional development sessions. The project is the latest in a transformative effort, the Art Bridges + Terra Foundation Initiative, to expand access to outstanding works of American art nationwide. A joint program of Art Bridges and the Terra Foundation for American Art, the initiative supports multi-year, multi-institutional partnerships among groups that include a metropolitan museum working with institutions in primarily non-metropolitan areas. Sharing collections and resources, these collaborative partners create a series of exhibitions that engage local communities.

“As the national museum for American art, the Smithsonian American Art Museum believes it is our responsibility to share our most valuable resource—our collections—with the American people, including those who are not able to visit Washington, D.C.,” said Stephanie Stebich, the Margaret and Terry Stent Director at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. “In addition to the hundreds of individual artworks that we loan to exhibitions around the world, SAAM has a longstanding traveling exhibition program that widens our audience reach exponentially. The Art Bridges + Terra Foundation Initiative makes possible a unique exhibition partnership that complements this outreach. The generous support allows us to engage in a deep level of collaboration, learning and innovation.”

In the first set of exhibitions, partner museums will present artworks from the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s collection in focused installations that address interests particular to each museum. Selected works include paintings by David Hockney, Edward Hopper, Georgia O’Keeffe, Fritz Scholder, Alma Thomas and Domingo Ulloa. These exhibitions will be on view at the partner museums beginning in September 2019.

The second exhibition is organized jointly by all the partner museums and will feature artwork from all six museums. It will be presented at all six venues, opening at the Whatcom Museum in early 2021, with the Smithsonian American Art Museum as the final stop on the tour in 2023. The scope of the exhibition will be determined through collaborations between curators from the partner museums.

A related series of professional-growth opportunities with staff from all six museums will allow for the development of new interpretive strategies and best practices for community engagement, among other topics. Information and updates about the American West Consortium will be available on the museum’s website, [americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu).

“The partnership made possible by the Art Bridges + Terra Foundation Initiative funding opens opportunities for the museum to expand its engagement with young people, communities of color and immigrant and rural communities whose voices are intrinsic to the American experience,” said E. Carmen Ramos, deputy chief curator and curator of Latinx art at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and lead curator for the project. “Without these voices, the landscape of American art museums fails to truly reflect and respond to the multiple, sometimes conflicting, perspectives that make up the American story.”

“This innovative partnership creates opportunities to expand the dialogue and widen the lens through which exhibitions of American art are created,” said Margi Conrads, director of curatorial affairs and strategic art initiatives at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and curatorial consultant to Art Bridges. Created by arts patron and philanthropist Alice Walton in 2017, Art Bridges is dedicated to dramatically expanding access to American art across the country. “We are proud to support these outstanding museums and their efforts to explore the issues that matter to their communities,” Conrads added.

“This initiative was born of a desire to bring outstanding works of American art to communities nationwide in a manner that sparks engagement and dialogue—both in terms of creation of works of art, as well our contemporary reception of them,” said Elizabeth Glassman, president and CEO of the Terra Foundation of American Art. “Bringing together the Smithsonian American Art Museum with these five distinguished museums in western cities of robust population growth

exemplifies the rich collaboration that we envisioned and represents a new paradigm of partnership. Working together, these museums are creating thought-provoking exhibitions that will connect their diverse audiences with American art in dynamic new ways.”

### **About the Smithsonian American Art Museum**

The Smithsonian American Art Museum is the home to one of the largest and most inclusive collections of American art in the world. Its artworks reveal America’s rich artistic and cultural history from the colonial period to today. The museum’s main building is located at Eighth and F streets N.W., above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station. Museum hours are 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily (closed Dec. 25). Its Renwick Gallery, a branch museum dedicated to contemporary craft and decorative arts, is located on Pennsylvania Avenue at 17th Street N.W. The Renwick is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily (closed Dec. 25). Admission is free. Follow the museum on [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Smithsonian information: (202) 633-1000. Website: [americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu).

### **About Art Bridges**

Art Bridges is a pioneering new foundation dedicated to dramatically expanding access to American art across the country. Created by arts patron and philanthropist Alice Walton in 2017, Art Bridges strives to bring great works of American art out of storage and into communities across America. Through financial and planning support, Art Bridges helps organizations of all sizes build exhibitions and programs that deeply engage audiences. For more information, visit [artbridgesfoundation.org](http://artbridgesfoundation.org).

### **About the Terra Foundation for American Art**

Established in 1978, the Terra Foundation for American Art is a leading foundation focused on fostering exploration, understanding and enjoyment of historical American art among national and international audiences. To further cross-cultural dialogue, the foundation supports and collaborates on innovative exhibitions, research and educational programs worldwide, and also provides opportunities for interaction and study through the presentation of its own American art collection.

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