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BMA COMPLETES MAJOR ARCHIVES INITIATIVE

More than 10,000 documents, photographs, and recordings are more easily accessible

BALTIMORE, MD (April 29, 2016)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) recently completed an ambitious multi-year initiative generously supported by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). A \$69,556 grant from NHPRC made it possible for the BMA’s Library & Archives to process five key collections: the museum archive’s photography collection, audiovisual collection, curatorial records for exhibitions and publications, juried and invitational exhibition records, and education department records. More than 10,000 photographs, audio/video recordings, and documents were evaluated, arranged, conserved, and described in-detail. Visit artbma.org/collections/finding.aids.html to explore these online resources.



During the project, BMA archivists uncovered noteworthy materials such as correspondence from children’s book illustrators Richard Scarry and Alice and Martin Provensen; audio recordings of lectures at the BMA in 1955; biographical data submitted by local artists in the 1940s for a “Who’s Who in Maryland Art”; curatorial research for over 200 BMA exhibitions; and photographs of works of art and installations from nearly 1000 exhibitions between 1923 and 2008.

This timely archives project furthers an ongoing initiative to process the museum’s entire archives about the BMA and its surrounding communities over the past century and make important research materials accessible to a wide audience. The museum’s previous efforts funded by NHPRC culminated in the creation of an advanced records management program and an extensive catalog of the museum’s archival records, as well as seven manuscript collections. Searchable with corresponding finding aids, the materials document the lives of art collectors, artists, archeologists, and historians as well as chronicle the BMA’s history from its inception in 1914 to today. Staff, volunteer, and trustee records revealed exhibition research, correspondence with artists, and photography and audio recordings of lectures and events.

National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)

NHPRC is the grantmaking affiliate of the National Archives and Records Administration. Congress established the NHPRC grants program to promote the preservation and use of America's documentary heritage. NHPRC supports a wide range of activities to preserve, publish, and encourage the use of documentary sources, created in every medium ranging from quill pen to computer, relating to the history of the United States.

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BMA E. Kirkbride Miller Art Research Library & Archives

The BMA's Archives holds the museum's institutional records as well as personal papers of collectors such as Claribel Cone and Etta Cone, Saidie A. May, and George A. Lucas, in addition to others with a close association to the BMA. Primary resources in the collection include letters, diaries, photographs, films, audio recordings, architectural plans, curatorial research, and financial documents. The Archives is open to the public free of charge from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. An appointment is requested to ensure that staff is available to offer assistance, but walk-in researchers are accommodated. Archives staff also provides reference assistance by telephone and email.

ABOUT THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

The Baltimore Museum of Art is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1914 with a single painting, the BMA today has 95,000 works of art—including the largest public holding of works by Henri Matisse in the world. Throughout the museum, visitors will find an outstanding selection of American and European painting, sculpture, and decorative arts; prints and drawings from the 15th century to the present; works by established and emerging contemporary artists; and exceptional objects from Africa and Asia. Two beautifully landscaped gardens display an array of 20th-century sculpture that is an oasis in the city. The 210,000-square-foot museum is distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope. A \$28 million multi-year renovation that began in 2010 has transformed galleries for contemporary, American, African, and Asian art, created innovative spaces for education and community programs, and improved visitor amenities and infrastructure. Since 2006, the BMA has provided free general admission so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

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