

# Initiatives in Art and Culture

## AMERICAN ICONS

Thursday – Saturday, May 15– 17, 2008

The New-York Historical Society

**SAVE THE DATE AND REGISTER NOW**



Emanuel Leutze, *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1851. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of John Stewart Kennedy, 1897 (97.34)

What makes a painting iconic? How does it come to be defined as much by its cultural (or other) associations as by its artistic merits? Exploring American art from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present, “American Icons” considers these questions, examining how canons are constructed and how emblems, both artistic and cultural, come to be. We discuss established icons, raise new candidates for the “Hall of Fame,” consider why one work is—and another isn’t—iconic, and discuss what happens to an image after it becomes iconic. The role of collectors and salons in creating icons and shaping taste are a major focus; we consider cases in which an individual or relationship has achieved iconic or emblematic status. Exhibitions that were watersheds for American art, either in defining its importance or changing its direction, are also addressed.

Among the works we consider are Gilbert Stuart’s portraits of Washington, Asher B. Durand’s *Kindred Spirits*, John Singer Sargent’s *Madame X*, Jackson Pollock’s *Full Fathom Five*, and Robert Rauschenberg’s *Spiral Jetty*. We explore the impact of the Philadelphia Centennial and discuss the history and sale of Thomas Eakins’ *The Gross Clinic*. Shifts in taste, the rise of the spiritual and the change in formal aspects of painting used to convey it anchor an examination of Inness and Whistler. Framing continues to be a central focus, and the importance of understanding process is at the core of a talk on the impact of silk screening on art of the 1960s.

Complementing formal sessions are evening receptions and exhibition viewing at Spanierman Gallery, LLC and at Gerald Peters Gallery which is mounting “John Sloan: An American View.”

Leadership funding for this conference has been provided by Adelson Galleries and Eli Wilner & Company Period Frames.

We also gratefully acknowledge the generous support of Babcock Galleries, Christie’s, Gerald Peters Gallery, Godel Fine Art, Rutgers University Press Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of George Inness funded by the Katherine and Frank Martucci Endowment, Sotheby’s, Spanierman Gallery, LLC, The Exeter Group, The New-York Historical Society, and The Louis and Lena Minkoff Foundation. Anonymous donors have also supported this effort.

Among the speakers are: **William Agee**, Evelyn Kranes Kossak Professor of Art History, Hunter College, CUNY and founding editor, contributing editor and co-author of the essays in *Stuart Davis: A Catalogue Raisonné* (3 vols; 2007); **Carrie Reborá Barratt**, curator, American Paintings and Sculpture, and manager, The Henry R. Luce Center for the Study of American Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; **Chuck Close**, artist, celebrated for his monumental portrait paintings in which he focuses on his working procedures; **Linda S. Ferber**, vice president and Director of the Museum, The New-York Historical Society; **Richard S. Field**, curator emeritus of prints, drawings and photographs, Yale University Art Gallery; **Kathleen A. Foster**, *Robert L. McNeil, Jr. Senior Curator of American Art* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Director of the Museum’s Center for American Art; **William H. Gerdt**, professor emeritus of art history, Graduate School,



John Singer Sargent, *Madame X (Madame Pierre Gautreau)*, 1883 – 1888. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Arthur Hoppock Hearn Fund, 1916 (16.53)

CUNY and senior advisor in American Art, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; **Roger Kennedy**, author of *When Art Worked* (2008) and Director Emeritus, National Museum of American History and Former Director, National Park Service; **Ellen G. Landau**, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities, Department of Art History and Art, Case Western Reserve University; **Glenn D. Lowry**, director, The Museum of Modern Art; **Kimberly Orcutt**, associate curator of American Art, The New-York Historical Society; **Jennifer L. Roberts**, Gardner Cowles Associate Professor of History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University, where she teaches American art; **Barbara Rose**, art critic and historian; **Marc Simpson**, associate director and lecturer, Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art, and Curator of American Art, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute; **Suzanne Smeaton**, frame historian and gallery director, Eli Wilner & Company Period Frames; **Thayer Tolles**, Associate Curator, American Paintings and Sculpture, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; **H. Barbara Weinberg**, Alice Pratt Brown Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; **John Yerger**, artist, who began his series of *trompe l'oeil* tributes to America's most legendary artists 10 years ago. **Lisa Koenigsberg**, conference director; is president, Initiatives in Art and Culture and launched the series of annual conferences on American art in 1996.

### To Register

Registration confirmations are sent via email.

**To register on-line:** go to: [www.acteva.com/go/icons](http://www.acteva.com/go/icons)

**By e-mail:** Fill in the registration form and send to: <mailto:lisa.koenigsberg@artinitiatives.com>

**Fax:** Fill in the registration form, including credit card information, and dial (212) 935-6911.

**By mail:** Return form at least 10 days before the conference start date with a check or money order payable to **Initiatives in Art and Culture** or complete the credit card information on the form, and mail to Initiatives in Art and Culture, 333 East 57<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 13B, New York, NY 10022

**By phone:** Using American Express®, Visa® Card, or MasterCard®, call (646) 485-1952.

**Fee:** The conference fee is \$350. A discounted rate of \$100 is available for full-time students with ID. To receive the discounted rate you must provide proof of ID.

**Withdrawal and Refunds:** Notice of withdrawal must be made in writing to: Initiatives in Art and Culture, 333 East 57<sup>th</sup> Street, 13B, New York, NY 10022 or to the Program Office via email at [lisa.koenigsberg@artinitiatives.com](mailto:lisa.koenigsberg@artinitiatives.com). No refunds will be made after May 1, 2008.



George Inness, *The Home at Montclair*, 1892, oil on canvas, 76.5 x 114.3 cm. The Sterling and Francine Clark Museum, acquired by Sterling and Francine Clark, 1955, 1955.10. For more information on this work, see: *George Inness: A Catalogue Raisonné* by Michael Quick; 2 vols, published by Rutgers University Press, 2007; [http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu/acatalog/\\_George\\_Inness\\_2564.html](http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu/acatalog/_George_Inness_2564.html)

### Conference Location

This conference is held at The New-York Historical Society, 11 West 77<sup>th</sup> Street (enter on Central Park West at 77<sup>th</sup> Street), with evening events at various locations.

*Program subject to change.*

### REGISTRATION FORM

**Please register me** for American Icons (\$350); a discounted rate of \$100 is available for full-time students with ID, *you must call (646) 485-1952 and present your ID at the registration desk.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day-time Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Check or money order payable to Initiatives in Art and Culture**

**I authorize you to charge my credit card** \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Visa®     American Express®     Mastercard

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_