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National Gallery of Art Selected as a 2019 Bank of America Art Conservation Project Grant Recipient -Grant Supports In Situ Conservation of Several 18th-Century French Marble Sculptures-



The East Sculpture Hall of the West Building at the National Gallery of Art, Washington—a stately passageway between the Rotunda and the East Garden Court—lined with marble works by some of the greatest French sculptors of the 17th to 19th centuries.

Washington, DC—The National Gallery of Art, Washington, has been selected as a 2019 Bank of America Art Conservation Project grant recipient. This grant will fund in situ conservation treatment of six exquisite 18th-century French marble sculptures installed in the East Sculpture Hall of the West Building. The treatments will provide critical care to two works and dramatically improve the appearance of all six. For the first time, sculpture treatment will be carried out in the galleries during public hours, allowing visitors to observe and learn about the Gallery's renowned conservation, research, and scientific programs. Work will begin the first week of December 2019 and will be completed in early 2021.

The grant enables the Gallery's division of conservation to clean over 200 years of embedded dirt and hand oils; reduce staining and reveal original surfaces; remove aged restorations without

harming original stone; prepare appropriate and harmonious fills that mimic the translucency of marble; and integrate or inpaint new materials to blend with the original modulation of the Carrara marbles.

Throughout the 15-month treatment program, a live video feed displayed adjacent to the sculpture will provide a close-up view of the conservation work in progress. Gallery Talks delivered by curators, educators, and conservators will bring the conservation to life, including several scheduled discussions with conservator Robert Price while he is working in the East Sculpture Hall. Further details on the video feed and Gallery Talks schedule will be provided at a later date.

"Collection care of this type, taking place under the watchful eye of the public, provides a fascinating opportunity for our visitors to appreciate the science of conservation, traditionally only visible in a behind-the-scenes laboratory," said Kaywin Feldman, director, National Gallery of Art, Washington. "We are so grateful to Bank of America for their continued generosity towards the Gallery, funding our mission-critical work from conservation treatment to the presentation of traveling exhibitions."

"Once the work is complete, scholars will have a new and improved view of the details of the carving and surfaces, making it possible for greater comparisons of techniques across an artist's oeuvre or among period sculptures in other collections," said Shelley Sturman, senior conservator and head of object conservation, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

"At Bank of America, we know art has the power to enrich every community we serve," said Larry Di Rita, Market President for Greater Washington DC, Bank of America. "We are privileged to help ensure these beautiful marble statues are enjoyed by many generations to come."

The grant to support conservation treatment of the Gallery's 18th-century French marbles is one of 22 Art Conservation Projects announced at an event hosted by Bank of America on October 16, 2019, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Recipients of the 2019 Bank of America Art Conservation Project grants represent 9 countries and 12 U.S. cities and territories. Other works benefiting from the grants include *The Starry Night* by Vincent van Gogh and *The Bather* by Paul Cézanne (The Museum of Modern Art, New York); Georgia O'Keeffe's *Spring* (Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe); ten large-scale assemblage paintings by Thornton Dial Sr. (High Museum of Art, Atlanta); *Portrait of Madame Josette Gris* by Juan Gris (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid); a diverse selection of works at the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico; and *Scènes des massacres de Scio (The Massacre at Chios)*, Eugène Delacroix (Musée du Louvre, Paris).

The Works of Art

The East Sculpture Hall—a stately passageway between the Rotunda and the East Garden Court—is lined with marble works by some of the greatest French sculptors of the 17th to 19th centuries,

including Barthélemy Prieur, Clodion, Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, and Jean-Louis Lemoyne. The sculptures in this space are part of the bequests of three of the Gallery's founding donors: Samuel H. Kress, Andrew W. Mellon, and Joseph E. Widener. The elegant, white sculptures were part of the original West Building installations, and they have been on view almost continuously since they were first acquired.

At the east end of the hall are two works flanking the entrance to the East Garden Court, allegories of poetry and music and painting and sculpture represented as lively, life-sized pairs of young children. *Painting and Sculpture* by Jean-Pierre-Antoine Tassaert and *Poetry and Music* by Clodion were both purchased in 1949 by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and were given to the National Gallery of Art in 1952. The Tassaert and Clodion sculptures will be the first to be treated as part of the Art Conservation Project grant. They belong to a set of four sculptures commissioned in 1774 by Finance Minister Abbé Joseph Terray for his home in Paris; the other two works are now in the Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon Manor in England. The commission is well documented, including a 1774 letter from Clodion to his marble supplier in Carrara, Italy requesting the acquisition of four blocks of marble.

The sculptures along the walls of the East Sculpture Hall include *Justice* by Barthélemy Prieur, for the tomb of the heart of King Henry IV; *Calliope* by Augustin Pajou; and *A Garden Allegory: The Dew and Zephyr Cultivating Flowers* by Benoît Massou, Anselme Flamen, and Nicolas Rebillé. All of these were gifts of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, the first in 1943 and the latter two in 1952. Another work in the hall, *A Companion of Diana* by Jean-Louis Lemoyne, was purchased by Peter A. B. Widener in 1908, was passed by inheritance to Joseph E. Widener, and was a gift of the Widener estate to the National Gallery of Art in 1942. The work was conceived for the gardens of Louis XIV's palace retreat at Marly.

The Conservation Treatments

Leaving the sculptures in place during treatment maintains the symmetry of the neoclassical East Sculpture Hall and allows visitors to observe conservation in progress and learn about marble deterioration, issues surrounding historical repairs, and conservation processes. Proximity to the entire group of ten marbles will allow the conservators to continually reference the other sculptures, ensuring that the treatment of individual works respects the aesthetic harmony of the entire hall. The treatments will improve not only the appearance, but also the longevity of these exquisite marble sculptures carved over 200 years ago.

Following their conservation, the six marble sculptures will remain on view in the East Sculpture Hall, accompanied by text panels describing the project.

The Conservators

Shelley Sturman, senior conservator and head of object conservation at the Gallery, will serve as project supervisor. Robert Price, former Andrew W. Mellon fellow in the Gallery's division of conservation, will carry out the treatments. He has conserved a variety of notable Gallery sculptures, including a glazed terracotta relief by Andrea della Robbia, a large-scale painted aluminum sculpture by Adolph Gottlieb, and numerous marble sculptures by Antonio Rossellino, Jean-Antoine Houdon, Robert Le Lorrain, and Etienne-Maurice Falconet.

Bank of America Art Conservation Project

The Bank of America Art Conservation Project provides grant funding to nonprofit cultural institutions throughout the world to conserve historically or culturally significant works of art that are in danger of deterioration. Since the Art Conservation Project began in 2010, Bank of America has provided grants for more than 170 projects in 33 countries on six continents to conserve paintings, sculptures, and archaeological and architectural pieces that are critically important to cultural heritage and the history of art. In 2012 the National Gallery of Art received an Art Conservation Project grant for work on a select group of 16 Federal-era paintings in its collection by American master Gilbert Stuart.

The Art Conservation Project is a key element of Bank of America's program of arts support worldwide and part of the company's environmental, social, and governance program. Bank of America believes in the power of the arts to help economies thrive, educate and enrich societies, and create greater cultural understanding. The program includes loans of its private art collection to museums at no cost, sponsorships, and grants to arts organizations for arts education, as well as the preservation of cultural treasures. For more information, please visit the [Art Conservation Project website](#).

Related Activities

Conservation Revealed: Chat with the Conservator

December 12, 13, 18–20, 1:30 p.m.

January 2, 3, 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday–Friday, January 8–31, 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday–Friday, February 5–28, 1:30 p.m.

West Building, Main Floor, East Sculpture Hall

For the first time, sculpture treatment will be carried out in the galleries during public hours, allowing visitors to observe and learn about the Gallery's renowned conservation, research, and scientific programs.

Press Contact:

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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Questions from members of the media may be directed to the Department of Communications at (202) 842-6353 or pressinfo@nga.gov

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