



**Addison Gallery to present “Defining American Art: Then and Now”
as part of a Lunder Institute initiative
examining the state of American art**

**Two-part symposium will include perspectives
from curators, artists, and scholars**

ANDOVER, MA (March 21, 2024)—On Sunday, April 7, the Addison Gallery of American Art, located on the campus of Phillips Academy, Andover, will host a two-part symposium, “Defining American Art: Then and Now.” The program will take the Addison’s own formation as a case study to track evolving notions of American art over the last century, with special attention to questions of citizenship and national identity as they inform the field today. Part of the [Lunder Institute @](#) initiative organized by Colby College Museum of Art’s Lunder Institute for American Art, the Addison is one of six museums invited to publicly engage with a single question: What is the state of American art? Other participating museums include the de Young Museum, San Francisco; The Broad, Los Angeles; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City.

“Practice and methodology are core interests to the Lunder Institute, and that interest extends beyond individuals within the field of American art; it also extends to institutional practices,” said Erica Wall, Director of the Lunder Institute. “As a think tank for the field and part of the Colby Museum—one of the leading academic art museums—the Lunder Institute seeks to provide opportunities and resources for institutions to engage with questions related to American art.”

Jacqueline Terrassa, Carolyn Muzzy Director of the Colby Museum, added, “These convenings will promote discourse in an open and fertile space leading toward innovation, new areas of exploration, and possible answers to questions that continue to arise around what American art is and what impacts its production, its scholarship, and its research.”

Each museum has been asked to respond to the question about the state of American art by having internal conversations across departments and sharing what emerged from these through a public program. This initiative offers space and time for institutions to consider, discuss, and innovatively respond to some of the pressing issues, opportunities, and challenges within the field of American art in relation to their own institution, collection, and location

within the United States. Importantly, this work also fosters necessary dialogue within and between institutions.

A primary goal of this initiative is to promote transparency in the field of American art, beyond public-facing exhibitions and scholarship, and to extend that process across each organization, and share a product of that engagement with the public.

“We are honored to have been chosen by the Lunder Institute to join the esteemed institutions that are exploring this topic,” said Allison Kemmerer, the Mary Stripp and R. Crosby Kemper Director of the Addison Gallery. “We look forward to sharing the perspectives of scholars, artists, and curators as we probe the challenges, considerations, and complexities of defining and exhibiting American art today.”

The Addison’s program consists of two panels. The first will take up questions prompted by the Addison’s founding collection and terms of trust. In particular, panelists will reflect on the specification that only works of art “produced by a native-born or naturalized citizen of the United States” can be acquired for the collection: What was the context of and intention behind this definition of American art? How was citizenship defined in this moment, and who was excluded? What exceptions were or have been made to this provision, and why? What is the relationship between nationality, national identity, and American art? Speakers include Hardeep Dhillon, Assistant Professor of History, University of Pennsylvania; Andrew McClellan, Professor, History of Art and Architecture, Tufts University; and Gordon Wilkins, Robert M. Walker Curator of American Art, Addison Gallery of American Art.

In the second panel, Rachel Vogel, Assistant Curator, Addison Gallery of American Art; Miguel Luciano, artist; Marina Tyquiengco (CHamoru), Elynn McColgan Associate Curator of Native American Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and Stephanie Sparling Williams, Andrew W. Mellon Curator of American Art, Brooklyn Museum, will explore issues around the characterization of American art in our present moment. Data collected from a survey of American art museum collection practices will reveal trends in how institutions delimit the category of “American art,” and panelists will probe the challenges, considerations, and complexities of defining—and exhibiting—American art today.

Leading up to the program, Phillips Academy students in a variety of courses have explored and produced work centered around the key themes of the symposium, to be shared during intermission.

“Defining American Art: Then and Now” will be presented on April 7 from 12:30 to 4:30 pm in Kemper Auditorium, adjacent to the Addison. A reception will follow at the Addison from 4:30 to 5:30 pm. The program is free and open to the public; [registration](#) is required. Additional information is available at addisongallery.org/lunder.

About the Lunder Institute for American Art

Founded in 2017 with support from the Lunder Foundation, the Lunder Institute for American Art supports innovative research and creative production that expands the boundaries of American art. A collaborative initiative of the Colby College Museum of Art located in central Maine, the Lunder Institute invites visiting artists, scholars, and museum professionals to engage across disciplines with Colby faculty and students, the College's network of institutional partners, leading experts, and other creative collaborators. Through fellowships, workshops, symposia, and incubator grants, the Lunder Institute amplifies marginalized voices, challenges convention, and provides a platform for generative dialogue through art and scholarship.

About the Addison Gallery of American Art

Devoted exclusively to American art, the Addison opened in 1931 and holds one of the most important American art collections in the country. Its collection includes more than 26,000 works by artists such as John Singleton Copley, Thomas Eakins, Winslow Homer, George Bellows, Georgia O'Keeffe, Jackson Pollock, Jennifer Bartlet, Kara Walker, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Kerry James Marshall, and Mark Bradford, as well as photographers Eadweard Muybridge, Walker Evans, Robert Frank, Cindy Sherman, Laurie Simmons, Sally Mann, Dawoud Bey, Lorna Simpson, Carrie Mae Weems, and many others. The Addison Gallery, located in a stand-alone building on the campus of Phillips Academy—a residential school of grades 9–12 in Andover, Massachusetts—offers a continually rotating series of exhibitions and programs, all of which are free and open to the public. For more information on the Addison, visit addisongallery.org.

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