



MEMORIAL ART GALLERY OPENS NEW GALLERIES OF ANCIENT ART Major Reinstallation is Made Possible by Gift from Long-Time Supporter Helen H. Berkeley

ROCHESTER, NY, December 1, 2009 — Two new galleries showcasing the Memorial Art Gallery's ancient art collections will open December 16. Renovation and reinstallation of the second-floor galleries, which began this summer, was made possible by one of the largest gifts in Gallery history—a \$1 million donation from long-time MAG friend and supporter Helen H. Berkeley.

The **Helen H. Berkeley Gallery of Ancient Art** will bring together works from ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, including objects never before on view. Among its highlights are two of the most important acquisitions of recent years—the rare pair of fourth-century Egyptian coffins that were until recently in MAG's Gill Discovery Center. A few steps away, **At the Crossroads** features works from the ancient Middle East and the Islamic world, among them a medieval *Qur'an*, a large architectural frieze from northern India and ceramics on loan from the Buffalo Museum of Science.



installing the coffins, November 2009

“The Berkeley gift put into motion a project that has been in the planning process for a number of years: the reinstallation of the oldest objects in the Gallery's collection in the most up-to-date museum environment,” says Nancy Norwood, curator of European art. “The opportunity to present these significant works of art within the context of new research and interpretation continues the Gallery's mission of bringing the world within reach of our visitors—a group that includes the many students and teachers who make extensive use of this part of the collection.”

Additional support for the project was received from the National Endowment for the Arts and through State funds secured by New York State Senator Joseph E. Robach.

About the donor

RICHARD P. WERSINGER



Helen Berkeley served as president of the Gallery Council, an all-volunteer fund-raising organization, from 1990 to 1992. She has been a member of the Gallery for more than 30 years, most recently as a member of the Director's Circle, and was a donor to “Let the Art Live On,” the MAG endowment campaign that concluded in 1997.

In 2008, Mrs. Berkeley was a sponsor of the major traveling exhibition *American Impressionism: Paintings from the Phillips Collection*.

She is a member of the Board of Directors at Graham Corporation, where her late husband, Frederick D. Berkeley III, served as CEO.

“Helen's magnificent and visionary gift honors the Gallery's collection, mission and near 100-year legacy,” says director Grant Holcomb. “Her generosity and personal commitment underscore the community-based support that has made the Gallery one of the finest regional art museums in the country.” Adds Andrew Gallina, president of the Gallery's Board of Managers, “We are pleased and fortunate to receive this level of support, which will help the Gallery to further its mission in our community.”

About the Memorial Art Gallery

The Memorial Art Gallery is considered one of the finest regional art museums in the country. Its permanent collection of 11,000 works spans 50 centuries of world art and includes important works by Monet, Cezanne, Matisse, Homer and Cassatt. The Gallery was founded in 1913 by Emily Sibley Watson as a memorial to her son, architect James Averell. Given in trust to the University of Rochester, it is one of the few university-affiliated art museums in the country that also serves as a public art museum.

The Gallery is supported primarily by its members, the University of Rochester, and public funds from Monroe County and the New York State Council on the Arts.

To learn more visit mag.rochester.edu.

Press contacts:

Patti Giordano, 585-276-8932 pgiordano@mag.rochester.edu

Shirley Wersinger, 585-276-8935 swersinger@mag.rochester.edu

#