



MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

125 YEARS OF ART

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Milwaukee Art Museum celebrates 125 years of art
Public art gallery founded in 1888 by patron Frederick Layton

Milwaukee, Wis. – Something special happened in Milwaukee 125 years ago. British-born businessman Frederick Layton decided to build an art gallery near Cathedral Square for his adopted city. When the Layton Gallery opened in April 1888, it laid the foundation for what would become the Milwaukee Art Museum, an internationally recognized museum with a world-class collection, leading education programs, and history-making exhibitions.

In 2013, the Milwaukee Art Museum celebrates its founding and its years of growth and adventure. Three special exhibitions are planned to commemorate the occasion.

“I am honored to share this important anniversary celebration with our Members, visitors, docents, volunteers, staff, and the entire Milwaukee community,” said Daniel Keegan, director of the Milwaukee Art Museum.

The Layton Art Collection: 1888-2013 celebrates this history and the Layton Collection’s 125 years of contributions to the art and culture of Milwaukee in two galleries. In the Museum’s European galleries, the Layton Art Gallery’s pre-war splendor will be showcased through a dramatic, Salon-style installation of European and American art, drawn from works shown at the art gallery between 1888 and 1918. In the Decorative Arts Gallery on the Museum’s Lower Level, the rich history of the Layton Collection is examined in an exhibition co-organized with the Chipstone Foundation. The collection is explored from its origins within a purpose-built art gallery and its role in bringing Modernism to Milwaukee, to its contributions promoting American fine and decorative arts in the half-century it has shared space with the Museum.

“It is important to recognize the contribution of Mr. Layton, because without him, the Milwaukee Art Museum wouldn’t exist in this form today. We owe so much of our history and future to Mr. Layton’s idea for a public art gallery back in 1888,” said Keegan.

In Baumgartner Galleria, a selection of photographs, models, books, videos, and letters recall the full range of the Milwaukee Art Museum’s history. Drawn from the Museum’s institutional archives as well as the Milwaukee County Historical Society, these materials document the Museum’s 1888 founding, phases of growth and collaboration, deep community involvement, and the many world-class acquisitions. The exhibition

highlights architectural achievements, local media responses, and first-person accounts that express the important role of the Museum within the city.

Included in the 125th anniversary celebration events are special programs and lectures celebrating the Museum's history, as well as free admission days on the first Thursday of every month, thanks to Target.

The Museum will also celebrate the life and career of storied Chief Educator Barbara Brown Lee, who is retiring after fifty years of service to the Museum. A special "BBL Day" is planned for May 2, 2013.

"The Museum, and the entire community, owe a great deal to Mrs. Barbara Brown Lee for her years of service to this institution," said Keegan. "Wit, wisdom, and a passion for her craft are what define her, and she is without a doubt, the most precious work of art in this building."

ABOUT MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

Celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2013, the Milwaukee Art Museum collection houses over 30,000 works, with strengths in 19th- and 20th-century American and European art, contemporary art, American decorative arts, and folk and self-taught art. The Museum campus is located on the shores of Lake Michigan and spans three buildings, including the Santiago Calatrava-designed Quadracci Pavilion and the Eero Saarinen-designed Milwaukee County War Memorial Center. For more information, please visit www.mam.org.

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