

DRIEHAUS MUSEUM

The Driehaus Museum Fall 2018 Exhibitions Focus on Late 19th Century Chicago and Gilded Age Portraits

CHICAGO (July 19, 2018) – From September 8, 2018 – January 6, 2018 the Richard H. Driehaus Museum presents three exhibitions focusing on portraits from the Gilded Age and late 19th-century Chicago.

The focal exhibition of the Driehaus Museum’s fall season, *Beauty’s Legacy: Gilded Age Portraits in America*, organized by the New-York Historical Society, looks at the popular revival of formal portraiture in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During this time the established elite and the newly wealthy of the Gilded Age sought to commemorate their social status and personal affluence by commissioning the most sought-after and well-known artists of their time to paint elaborate portraits of themselves and their families.

Displayed in the Museum’s second floor galleries, the exhibition will feature nearly sixty artworks, including oil paintings, miniatures, and bronzes. *Beauty’s Legacy* contains works by artists such as Gilbert Stuart, Rembrandt Peale, John Singer Sargent, Eastman Johnson, and William Adolphe Bouguereau. It features portraits of members of socially prominent families such as Washington, Bonaparte, Livingston, Vanderbilt, and Astor, names that left a lasting impression on the cultural and financial legacies of our nation.

“This fall, in addition to *Beauty’s Legacy*, we are excited to be presenting two of our own exhibitions,” said Executive Director Richard P. Townsend, “*Gilded Chicago: Portraits of an Era* and *Treasures from the White City: The Chicago World’s Fair of 1893* each tell their own story of how, after the Great Fire, Chicago established itself as a major metropolitan city. Of course, that storytelling is even more vibrant within the walls of the palatial Nickerson Mansion, completed in 1883 after the Fire and the backdrop for many Gilded Age Chicago celebrations, including one honoring the World’s Fair of 1893.”

Gilded Chicago: Portraits of an Era explores how the resurgence of portraiture manifested itself in Chicago. The exhibition includes ten paintings of Gilded Age Chicagoans—with familiar last names such as McCormick, Field, Pullman, and Nickerson. “I find of particular interest the contrast of the portraits of the plainly dressed men hanging next to the fashionable and brightly attired women,” said exhibition guest curator, Jeannine Falino, “It allows us to consider the role these women played as leaders of Gilded Age Chicago’s social society in a whole new light.”

One of the most striking portraits, by famed American artist William Merritt Chase, features a name that may not be as familiar to visitors. Myra Reynolds became one of the University of Chicago’s first English fellows in 1892, she earned her PhD and eventually became a full professor, making her career at the Hyde Park institution for over 30 years. Chase’s commission came from members of the university women’s residence, Nancy Foster Hall, which Reynolds led for decades. The portraits will hang in the Gallery on the Museum’s first floor, the same room where the Nickerson family originally displayed their art collection which was donated to the Art Institute of Chicago in 1900.

In addition to the two Gilded Age portrait exhibitions, *Treasures from the White City: The Chicago World's Fair of 1893* will be on display in the Museum's third floor galleries. Objects are drawn from the Museum's permanent collection, as well as the collection of Richard H. Driehaus, featuring original works and memorabilia designed for and exhibited at the fair. The exhibition will include objects by Louis Comfort Tiffany created for his magnificent World's Fair chapel, a selection of substantial silver pieces designed by both Gorham Manufacturing Company and Tiffany & Company, and relics from the exposition such as tickets, maps and programs. *Treasures from the White City: The Chicago World's Fair of 1893* is presented in celebration of the fair's 125th anniversary.

Gilded Chicago: Portraits of an Era and *Treasures from the White City: The Chicago World's Fair of 1893* are organized by the Richard H. Driehaus Museum and are part of Art Design Chicago, an initiative of the Terra Foundation for American Art exploring Chicago's art and design legacy, with presenting partner The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation.

When: September 8, 2018 – January 6, 2019
Where: The Richard H. Driehaus Museum, 40 East Erie Street, Chicago
Images available: <http://driehausmuseum.org/press>

About the Richard H. Driehaus Museum

The Richard H. Driehaus Museum explores art, architecture, and design with an emphasis on the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its permanent collection of period decorative arts is presented in an immersive experience within the restored Nickerson Mansion—Chicago's "Marble Palace," located just steps from the Magnificent Mile—and features objects drawn from the collection of Richard H. Driehaus, its founder. Temporary exhibitions organized by the Driehaus and its partners place the Gilded Age in context, as do vibrant educational and cultural programs designed to appeal to diverse audiences and illuminate the history, culture, and urban fabric of Chicago.

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