

PRESS RELEASE

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CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON SEATTLE ASIAN ART MUSEUM RENOVATION AND EXPANSION

Public groundbreaking ceremony commemorates start of work on major project to preserve and expand museum's historic Art Deco building in Seattle's Volunteer Park



L to R: Seattle Asian Art Museum campaign co-chairs Gursharan Sidhu (SAM Trustee) and Mimi Gardner Gates (SAM Director Emerita); Winnie Stratton (SAM Board of Trustees President); Kimerly Rorschach (SAM's Illsley Ball Nordstrom Director and CEO); Michael Shiosaki (Director of Planning and Development at Seattle Parks and Recreation); and Stewart Landefeld (SAM Board of Trustees Chair).

SEATTLE, WA – Seattle Art Museum (SAM) executives, joined by City of Seattle leaders, project donors and supporters, and members of the community, gathered at the Seattle Asian Art Museum on Tuesday, March 13, for an official groundbreaking ceremony to mark the start of the renovation and expansion of the museum's landmark building. After years of design planning with the City, parks groups, and community stakeholders, followed by months of preparation, work on the building has begun and will conclude with the anticipated reopening of the museum in fall 2019.

In her remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony, Kimerly Rorschach, SAM's Illsley Ball Nordstrom Director and CEO, thanked attendees and supporters and reiterated the need to preserve and update the Seattle Asian Art Museum's building—gifted to the city by SAM's founder in 1933. "For the last 20 years, we've known the day would arrive when we needed to restore this building, a museum that houses one of the most important Asian art collections in the country," Rorschach noted. "That day has come."

The Seattle Asian Art Museum renovation and expansion project takes an early 20th-century building and brings it up to 21st-century standards. The \$54 million project not only ensures for years to come the Seattle Asian Art Museum's role as a world-class cultural resource and park amenity for residents and visitors, but it also enhances SAM's ability to share its significant Asian art collection and better serve a growing and increasingly diverse audience. The renovation and expansion preserves the 1933 historic building and its Art Deco façade, improves the museum's infrastructure, protects the collection with climate control and seismic system upgrades, enhances ADA accessibility, and improves the museum's connection to Volunteer Park, including the restoration

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of historic pathways in the park. An expansion of the historic building provides approximately 13,900 square feet of much-needed new space, but changes the museum's footprint in the park by only 3,290 square feet (less than one quarter of one percent of the park's 48-acre total). The project adds a new exhibition gallery, a dedicated education space, and a new conservation center.

The project design team includes Seattle-based project architect LMN Architects (2016 AIA National Architecture Firm of the Year), landscape architect Walker Macy, general contractor/construction manager BNBuilders, Inc., and OAC Services, Inc., providing construction and project management services. The Seattle Art Museum continues to work closely with Seattle Parks & Recreation, which owns the building and maintains Volunteer Park.

The renovation and expansion of the Seattle Asian Art Museum is funded by a mixture of public and private funds. More than \$51 million of the estimated \$54 million has been secured, with funds committed from the City of Seattle, King County, and Washington State, as well as significant gifts and pledges from individuals and foundations. The public fundraising campaign continues.

ASIAN ART MUSEUM - HISTORY

The Asian Art Museum is the original home of SAM. Set in the bucolic surroundings of the Olmsted-designed Volunteer Park in Capitol Hill, the Art Deco building was designed by Charles Bebb and Paris-trained architect Carl Gould in 1933. In the same year, museum founder Dr. Richard E. Fuller donated the building to the city. It opened its doors on June 23, 1933, presenting its founding collection of Asian art to the citizens of Seattle.

Following the opening of the Seattle Art Museum in downtown Seattle in 1991, the museum reopened as SAM's center for Asian art and cultural activities in 1994. Its collection now features Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian art. Its offerings include popular public programming by the Gardner Center for Asian Art and Ideas, and the McCaw Foundation Library,

The museum's landmark building is included in the Washington Heritage Register of Historic Places. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in July 2016, joining Volunteer Park which was previously listed in 1976.

For more information on the Seattle Asian Art Museum renovation and expansion project, please visit seattleartmuseum.org/inspire. For construction updates, please visit saamconstruction.com.

Photo credit: Natali Wiseman

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum in 1994. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture-designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.