



THE DECORATIVE ARTS TRUST

For Immediate Release
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Decorative Arts Trust Announces Finalists for Inaugural \$100,000 Prize for Excellence and Innovation

Cincinnati Art Museum, Craft in America, The Huntington, and Monticello



Fine arts, decorative arts, architecture, and landscape design are the focus of the Prize for Excellence and Innovation awarded by the Decorative Arts Trust. Images courtesy of Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts.

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As part of the Decorative Arts Trust's dedication to nurturing scholarly and educational programs, **Executive Director Matthew A. Thurlow** announces the finalists for the inaugural Prize for Excellence and Innovation. The finalists include the Cincinnati Art Museum; Craft in America; The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens; and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. The recipient of the inaugural \$100,000 award will be announced in December.

Established in 2020, the Prize for Excellence and Innovation recognizes scholarly endeavors undertaken by a

non-profit organization to advance the public's appreciation of decorative arts, fine arts, architecture, or landscape design. Projects can extend 1–5 years for completion after the Prize is awarded. Collaborative endeavors that unite multiple institutions, as well as ongoing projects, were encouraged to submit

nominations. Projects submitted for consideration this year included special exhibitions, print publications, gallery renovations, online databases, and collection surveys.

The Decorative Arts Trust has a long tradition of providing international support to the next generation of museum curators and decorative arts historians via its generous grants, scholarships, and internships. "The Prize for Excellence and Innovation is a new award that advances the work of our talented mid- and late-career colleagues as a complement to our efforts to support young scholars through the Emerging Scholars Program," **Mr. Thurlow shared.**

The inaugural 2020-2021 Prize for Excellence and Innovation finalists are:

- *Unlocking an Art Deco Bedroom by Joseph Urban* is an exhibition project from Amy Dehan, Curator of Decorative Arts, **Cincinnati Art Museum (CAM)**. CAM is mounting a special exhibition in 2021-2022 that recreates a bedroom designed by prominent Modernist Joseph Urban. The project was commissioned for 16-year-old Elaine Wormser by her parents for their apartment in Chicago's Drake Tower. CAM will draw from extant objects, sketches, photographs, and invoices to offer an engaging and immersive experience. The exhibition includes digital interactives to extend the Art Deco bedroom beyond the physical display.
- **Craft in America** is preparing a free online video dictionary of tools, techniques, and materials spanning all decorative arts media, a project led by Director Emily Zaiden. This free resource for researchers, art historians, students, and the public will serve as an evergreen and widely accessible tool to demonstrate the production of handmade crafts. Each dictionary "entry" will consist of a short video of a professional artist-maker explaining and documenting a specific process.
- **The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens** is planning an innovative reinstallation of its American Art galleries and surrounding landscape in 2021-2022. Titled *Borderlands* and led by Dennis Carr, Virginia Steele Scott Chief Curator of American Art, the project expands the reach, relevance, and impact of The Huntington's

collections by enhancing the visitor experience and placing cross-cultural exchange at the center of interpretation.

- Diane Ehrenpreis, Associate Curator of Decorative Arts, **Monticello**, is undertaking a comprehensive reassessment of Thomas Jefferson's Tea Room in preparation for a restoration and reinterpretation project. In addition to harnessing new digital technologies in a holistic approach to the physical presentation of the space and its interpretation to in-person and virtual visitors, the Tea Room offers one of the most vivid and dramatic opportunities to share the stories of Jefferson's enslaved household staff.

The Trust welcomes additional financial support to endow the Prize beyond this inaugural year. For more information about the Decorative Arts Trust Prize for Excellence and Innovation, visit decorativeartstrust.org/prize, email thetrust@decorativeartstrust.org, or call 610.627.4970.



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ABOUT THE DECORATIVE ARTS TRUST

Incorporated on May 16, 1977, the Decorative Arts Trust has a long history of promoting and fostering appreciation and study of material culture by exchanging information through domestic and international programming, collaborating and partnering with museums and preservation organizations, and underwriting internships, research grants, and scholarships for graduate students and young professionals. The Decorative Arts Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. To learn more or to become a member, please visit decorativeartstrust.org.

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