



For Immediate Release:

DECORATIVE ARTS TRUST LAUNCHES COLLECTING250

**– New Online Resource Commemorates the Semiquincentennial Through
250 Objects from Across America –**

Media, PA - The Decorative Arts Trust is pleased to share Collecting250.org, an interactive online resource that celebrates the importance of objects in narrating the history and evolution of the United States and the communities contained within.

To commemorate America's 250th, the United States Semiquincentennial, the Trust asked museums and historical societies to submit images and information about objects in their collections that tell powerful stories about national, state, or local identity. Collecting250 showcases 250 objects from over 140 institutions, and the release is timed in conjunction with the commencement of festivities honoring the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution's first salvos in Massachusetts in 1775.

"We sought objects that are attached to a specific place, time, and people," shares Trust Executive Director **Matthew A. Thurlow**. "Our aim was to present 250 objects from public collections across the country, thereby drawing attention to the broad swath of institutions that steward decorative arts of historical significance. This project aligns beautifully with the Trust's mission to promote and foster an interest in decorative arts and material culture through our role as a community foundation elevating curatorial efforts to steward and study objects."

All 50 states and the District of Columbia are represented, and each record contains an image, tombstone information, and a description of the object's importance. The ability to search for entries based on location, category, and keyword provides the chance to make



Collecting250 logo.



This 1840–60 bed covering from the New Mexico History Museum is featured on Collecting250.org.



This 1779 kleiderschrank from the Philadelphia Museum of Art is featured on Collecting250.org.



Mary Jackson's 2007 work *Never Again* from the Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, SC, is featured on Collecting250.org.
Photo by Rick Rhodes Photography.

– More –

exciting and enlightening discoveries in unexpected places. The Trust developed connections with museums and historical societies beyond our traditional network, allowing them to highlight extraordinary artistic achievements in the west, including a mid-19th-century bed covering (New Mexico History Museum) featuring churro wool yarn and colcha embroidery introduced by early Spanish settlers.

There is an interplay between objects that are isolated from one another by time, location, maker, and function. For example, two disparate entries associated with the care and storage of textiles: a humble, late-19th-century pressing iron (Illinois State Museum) that Mississippian Bettye Kelly brought to Joliet, IL, in the 1960s; and a stunning sulfur-inlaid kleiderschrank (Philadelphia Museum of Art) made in Manheim, PA, in 1779 for Georg Huber. The former speaks to the Great Migration of African Americans northward in the 20th century; the latter to the Germanic communities that were thriving on the eastern seaboard during the American Revolution.

The tradition of basket weaving has been practiced and perfected by various cultures over the past 10,000 years. Two entries separated by a century and the entire continent of North America illustrate the cultural convergences and impulses behind the production of basketry. In 1905, Aleksandra Kudrin Reinken, the daughter of a Unanga (Aleut) mother and Russian father used her community's traditional weaving techniques to create a basket (Hood Museum of Art) for a tourist clientele that incorporates ornamentation from prints, magazines, and perhaps even a Whitman's Chocolate Sampler box. In 2007, Mary Jackson, an internationally recognized master of sweetgrass basketry, completed *Never Again* (Gibbes Museum of Art), inspired by the traditional Gullah rice fanner baskets that she learned to create from her mother and grandmother and that were once made and used on Lowcountry plantations.

Collecting250 is free and open to the public. Visit Collecting250.org to start exploring.

The Decorative Arts Trust, founded in 1977, is a nonprofit organization that promotes and fosters the appreciation and study of the decorative arts through programs, partnerships, and grants. Learn more at decorativeartstrust.org.

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