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**ELLIOT BOSTWICK DAVIS  
JOHN MOORS CABOT CHAIR  
MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON**

**BIOGRAPHY**

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Elliot Bostwick Davis

Elliot Bostwick Davis joined the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), in January 2001 as John Moors Cabot Chair of the Art of the Americas Department. In her position, she has led the department's curatorial staff in the planning and installation of the Museum's new wing for the Art of the Americas, which offers a broader definition of "American" art by including more than 5,000 works from North, Central, and South America. In addition to masterpieces from the MFA's collection ranging from Paul Revere's silver *Sons of Liberty Bowl* (1768) to John Singer Sargent's painting *The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit* (1882), the wing houses many new acquisitions representing ancient American art of the first millennium AD through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These works include Louis Comfort Tiffany's stained glass window, *Parakeets and Goldfish Bowl* (1893); selections from the collection of Daphne Farago jewelry; early 20<sup>th</sup>-century art deco furniture, silver, and decorative arts from the John Axelrod Collection; and a variety of works by ancient American, Native American, and African-American artists such as Henry Ossawa Tanner, Norman Lewis, Lois Maillou Jones, and Al Loving.

As Department Chair, Davis is responsible for the MFA's extensive Art of the Americas collection of approximately 15,000 works, which includes one of the world's pre-eminent assemblages of American paintings, decorative arts, and sculpture. She has mounted a variety of installations and exhibitions during her tenure at the Museum, including, *Sargent's Seven Sisters* (2001); *Things I Love: The Many Collections of William I. Koch* (2005); *Sargent, Chase, Cassatt: Master Paintings from a Private Collection* (2006);

*“AMERICA!”* (2007), the first major exhibition of 19<sup>th</sup>-century American painting to appear in Italy; *Winslow Homer: American Scenes* (2008); and *John Singer Sargent and Mural Decoration* (2009). Davis also oversees the organization of numerous other exhibitions, as well as important acquisitions and research related to the Art of the Americas collection. She has lectured widely and has co-authored and edited a range of publications: for the MFA, co-author of *American Paintings Highlights* (2003); co-author of *Edward Hopper* (2007); and co-author and editor for *A New World Imagined: Art of the Americas* (MFA Publications, 2010), the new publication that highlights the MFA’s Art of the Americas collection.

Prior to joining the MFA, Davis was responsible for American, British, and contemporary art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in its Department of Drawings and Prints from 1992–1999. She curated numerous exhibitions ranging in subject matter from Winslow Homer and Mary Cassatt to W.P.A. color prints and the installations of baseball cards from the Burdick Collection. Davis also helped organize *Art and the Empire City* (2000), and co-authored the accompanying catalogue. In addition, she taught a graduate seminar on American prints and drawings at Princeton University (1997), and served as a teaching assistant at Harvard University.

Davis has served as a trustee at numerous non-profit and educational institutions. She has been a member of the Board of Trustees at the Shelburne Museum in Vermont, where she served as chair of the Curatorial Committee; a trustee of the New York Academy of Art; completed 14 years of service as a trustee of the Groton School in Massachusetts; served as a trustee of the Association of Art Museum Curators; and is currently a councilor for the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, MA, and a trustee of the North Bennet Street School in Boston.

Born to a family of collectors, including Louisine Waldron Havemeyer, a bold collector of French painting; Electra Havemeyer Webb, a pioneering collector of Americana; and Aileen Osborn Webb, the founder of the American Craft Council and Museum, Davis has been immersed in art for her entire life. She received her M.A., M.Phil, and Ph.D. in art history and archaeology from Columbia University, where she received her M.Phil. in European painting and sculpture before choosing a dissertation topic in American art. She has also studied studio art and printmaking extensively at the Arts Students League of New York. Before attending Columbia, Davis earned a Masters of Art in liberal studies from New York University and is a cum laude graduate of the Department of Art History and Archaeology, Princeton University.