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**MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON, OPENS ART OF THE AMERICAS WING
DESIGNED BY FOSTER + PARTNERS**

Expansive Initiative Broadens the Definition of American Art and Culture

BOSTON, MA (November 12, 2010)—The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), is opening the doors of its new wing for the Art of the Americas on Saturday, November 20. The Art of the Americas Wing, as well as the Ruth and Carl J. Shapiro Family Courtyard, are the focal points of the MFA’s transformational expansion and renovation project, planned and designed by architects Foster + Partners (London). The Art of the Americas Wing allows for the display of more than 5,000 works from the Museum’s American collections, more than doubling the number previously on view. It represents the most expansive initiative focused on American art and culture happening in the world today, broadening the definition to include works from North, Central, and South America that span the course of three millennia, up to the late 20th century. Adjoining the wing is the Shapiro Family Courtyard, one of the most distinctive architectural spaces in Boston, which serves as a dynamic gathering place for MFA visitors and as a venue for special events. The Museum will celebrate the opening with a free Community Day on Saturday, November 20, sponsored by Bank of America.

“With the opening of the new wing for the Art of the Americas, visitors will be able to appreciate the MFA’s extraordinary collections in new and exciting ways. These beautifully designed spaces enrich the visitor experience and set a dramatic stage for the Museum’s Art of the Americas collections in a unique setting—Boston—where much of this country’s history took shape,” said Malcolm Rogers, Ann and Graham Gund Director of the Museum. “The MFA chose to collaborate with Foster + Partners because of the firm’s unparalleled reputation for space planning and its deep understanding of how to best present the Museum’s great works of art. Foster + Partners has succeeded in not only designing a magnificent contemporary addition that is innovative and functional, but also in enhancing the character of our grand, historic building.”

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The additions to the MFA, designed by Foster + Partners, elegantly incorporate a modernist aesthetic into the Museum's 1909 Beaux Arts building. Foster + Partners, the Pritzker prize-winning international studio for architecture, planning, and design, is led by its founder and chairman, Lord Foster, who supervised the design of the MFA's expansion and renovation with Spencer de Grey, Senior Partner and Head of Design, and Michael Jones, Partner.

"The MFA is more than a great cultural institution—it is the catalyst for the rejuvenation of an entire neighbourhood in Boston. Over time the Museum had lost its connection to the Back Bay Fens and the beautiful landscape of Frederick Law Olmsted's 'Emerald Necklace'. In restoring Lowell's original plan and in opening up and reasserting the grand Fenway entrance, we have rediscovered this link. At the same time, we have drawn the landscape deep into the heart of the building and along Huntington Avenue. The result is a more legible museum that will create new connections between the park, the Museum and the local community," said Lord Foster.

The MFA's project development team, led by Foster + Partners, included CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares Inc., Boston, executive architect; John Moriarty & Associates, Winchester, construction manager; Skanska USA Building Inc., Boston, enabling contractor; and George B.H. Macomber Company, Boston, pre-construction services. The Museum's \$345 million building project, which broke ground in 2005, was supported by a fundraising campaign that raised \$504 million for new construction and renovations, endowment of programs and positions, and annual operations. More than 25,000 people contributed to the campaign, which concluded in 2008.

This ambitious expansion and renovation underscores the MFA's mission, to make more of its collections accessible to the approximately one million families, school children, college students and adults who come to the Museum each year for inspiration and education, and who value it as a vital community resource. The first day that the new wing will be open to the general public will be Saturday, November 20, during a free Community Day. Those who would like to preview the wing are encouraged to support the MFA by becoming a Member and visit during Members' Preview Days, November 14–19.

The MFA's expansion and renovation project provides additional space for the Museum's collections, exhibitions, and educational programs. It increases the building's total square footage by 28 percent, from 483,447 to 616,937 square feet. The design by Foster + Partners reestablishes the MFA's important north-

south axis envisioned by Guy Lowell, the Museum's original architect (1870–1927), which brings visitors to the heart of the MFA and improves navigation throughout the building.

“This has been one of the most fascinating projects. We have sought to combine the constraints of history with a new intervention that will show off the Museum's extraordinary collection of American art in a way that will excite, entrance and educate. We have designed a major new Wing, inside and out, with 53 new galleries to complement the Museum's other four collections which are clearly articulated along the original main axis. This re-addresses the balance of the Museum—at its heart the old courtyard is enclosed in glass to create new links and connections,” said Spencer de Grey.

The 121,307-square-foot wing for the Art of the Americas, located on the east side of the Museum along Forsyth Way, features a central glass building flanked by two pavilions of glass and granite, one north and one south. Foster + Partners developed a state-of-the-art glazing system for the glass with Seele, Inc. of Gersthofen, Germany, and incorporated Deer Isle granite from Maine—the same stone used in the MFA's original building. The extensive use of glass allows passersby to see inside and Museum visitors to see outside the building. From the top floors, there are sweeping vistas of Boston from Fenway Park to the Back Bay skyline.

The MFA's wing expands the context for American art. For the first time since the Museum's founding in 1870, magnificent works representing all of the Americas are presented together in a wide range of media, including paintings, sculpture, works on paper, furniture, decorative arts, and musical instruments, as well as textiles, fashions, and jewelry. The Art of the Americas Wing contains 53 galleries—totaling 51,338 square feet—which include nine period rooms and four Behind the Scenes galleries. Galleries are arranged chronologically on four floors, allowing visitors to travel through time as they ascend. They begin on Level LG (Lower Ground), which is dedicated to ancient American, Native American, 17th-century and maritime arts; Level 1 features 18th-century art of the colonial Americas and early 19th-century art; Level 2 examines 19th-century and early 20th-century art; and Level 3 focuses on 20th-century art. In the center of each level, large-scale core galleries form a central spine where iconic works of art highlight elements of each period. Complementary galleries run along each side as well as in adjacent north and south pavilions.

“The new galleries allow us to present our collections in a variety of ways that highlight different periods, cultures, styles, artists, and themes,” said Elliot Bostwick Davis, the John Moors Cabot Chair of the Art of the Americas Department at the MFA, who led the department's curatorial staff in the planning and

installation of the Museum's new wing. "We hope visitors will discover a range of objects—whether familiar or entirely new to them—that speak to the breadth, richness, and diversity of artistic expression emanating from the United States and, more broadly, from the Americas."

Art of the Americas Wing

The wing was specifically designed for the Art of the Americas collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Many galleries feature walls adorned in rich period colors, sumptuous brocades, and carpeting and wallpapers inspired by 18th- and 19th-century designs. Light oak floors from the Pacific Northwest have been used in most of the galleries. The more than 200 climate-controlled display cases were made by Goppion Museum Workshop, Inc. of Milan, Italy.

Accommodations have been made for works large and small. On Level 1, where the ceiling height is 15 ½ feet, a special niche was created above one wall of the Arts of the New Nation: 1800–1830 gallery for *The Passage of the Delaware* (1819), Thomas Sully's monumental painting. Allowances had to be made for both the canvas (measuring 12 feet high and 17 feet wide) and its massive frame. While the height of most galleries is nearly 16 feet, Level 3 core galleries have a nearly 22-foot-high glass ceiling (with louvered panels to filter light), which allows for the display of large-scale works.

Many masterpieces from the Art of the Americas collection are on view in the galleries, including 500 new acquisitions (many on view for the first time):

- The MFA's collection of Maya ceramics in the Ancient Mesoamerican Gallery, stunning gold work in the Pre-Columbian Gold and Andean Civilizations gallery; and the Museum's extensive collection of pottery from the Puebloan peoples of Arizona and New Mexico in the Native North American Art gallery (Level LG)
- Fitz Henry Lane's painting *New York Harbor* (about 1855) and intricately constructed 18th- and 19th-century ship models in the Ship Models and Maritime Arts gallery (Level LG)
- Paul Revere's historic silver *Sons of Liberty Bowl* (1768), paired with John Singleton Copley's portrait (1768) of the silversmith and patriot in the 18th-Century Boston gallery (Level 1)
- Benjamin West's monumental painting, *King Lear* (1788) in the American Artists Abroad around 1800 gallery and *Don Manuel Jose Rubio y Salinas, Archbishop of Mexico* (1754), a painting by Miguel Cabrera in the Latin America before 1900 gallery (Level 1)

- More than 25 paintings, watercolors, and drawings by John Singer Sargent, including his iconic work, *The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit* (1882), paired with the two large Japanese-style vases pictured in the painting, in the John Singer Sargent gallery (Level 2)
- Winslow Homer’s charming canvas, *Boys in a Pasture* (1874), in the Winslow Homer and Thomas Eakins gallery (Level 2)
- A brilliant stained-glass window by Louis Comfort Tiffany, *Parakeets and Gold Fish Bowl* (about 1893), on view for the first time and showcased with two John LaFarge stained-glass windows in The Aesthetic Movement gallery (Level 2)
- A Folk Art *Pictorial quilt* (1895–98) sewn by former slave Harriet Powers and a wall of whimsical weathervanes in the Life in 19th-Century America: Folk Art gallery (Level 2)
- The elegant rooms from the Roswell Gleason House in Dorchester, Massachusetts, installed in the Museum for the first time (Level 2)
- Argentinean artist César Paternosto’s recently acquired bold and vibrant oil *Staccato* (1965) in the Abstraction: 1940–1970 gallery (Level 3)
- Joseph Stella’s spectacular *Old Brooklyn Bridge* (about 1941), Charles Sheeler’s *View of New York* (1931), Edward Hopper’s *Drug Store* (1927), and Arthur Dove’s *George Gershwin—I’ll Build a Stairway to Paradise* (1927), along with Viktor Schreckengost’s bright blue ceramic *Jazz Bowl* (1931) in the 1920s and 1930s gallery. (Level 3)

Four Behind the Scenes galleries located on Levels 1 and 2 give visitors a hands-on, insider’s view of the work done by Museum curators and conservators. Digital displays and interactive touch screens in many of the galleries enhance the appreciation of works of art and stylistic periods. In addition, three rotating galleries showcase light-sensitive works—photographs, prints, and textiles—such as photography by Edward Weston and Alfred Stieglitz, prints by Mary Cassatt and James Abbott McNeill Whistler, and colonial Boston embroideries and samplers. Also featured in the wing is the 150-seat Barbara and Theodore Alford Auditorium—measuring 2,128 square feet—for films, concerts, and lectures, located on Level G. Adjacent to it are two studio art classrooms and a seminar room. Additionally, the wing incorporates administrative offices and meeting rooms on the top two levels of the pavilions.

Shapiro Family Courtyard

The Ruth and Carl J. Shapiro Family Courtyard, a soaring glass structure enclosing one of the Museum’s two courtyards, adjoins the Art of the Americas Wing. This spectacular light-filled space is a gathering

place where friends can meet and visitors can plan their day at the Museum. It is also home to the *New American Café*, the MFA's casually elegant new dining venue featuring regional cuisine from the Americas, including a prix fixe menu created by internationally renowned chef Ken Oringer. The courtyard affords year-round views of the outdoors and also serves as a venue for special events. Measuring more than 12,000 square feet and 63 feet high, it is almost entirely composed of double- and triple-glazed glass—504 large panels, totaling nearly 30,000 square feet—supported by a steel frame. Inside the courtyard, ivory Crema Luna limestone from France lines the eastern wall where it meets the Art of the Americas Wing and frames the wing's "floating" staircase. Kuru Grey granite from Finland is used for the floor. The courtyard also showcases two sculptures, *Artificial Rock #85* (2005) by Zhan Wang, and *Zig VIII* (1964) by David Smith. The courtyard offers a link between the Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Visitor Center in the heart of the Museum's historic building, and the new wing for the Art of the Americas to the east. Because of its location within the Museum's original building, the design for the courtyard incorporates landscaped areas along its north and south perimeters featuring sculpture and plantings.

A new Ann and Graham Gund Gallery for special exhibitions is located below the Shapiro Family Courtyard on Level LG. The Gund Gallery measures 8,280 square feet and nearly 16 feet high. It incorporates a square, open plan and moveable walls, allowing maximum flexibility for the display of artwork, and has a state-of-the-art lighting system. A wide range of special exhibitions reflecting a variety of cultures and time periods will be presented in the new Gund Gallery. The first exhibition is ***Fresh Ink: Ten Takes on Chinese Tradition**** (on view November 20, 2010, through February 13, 2011), which offers a dynamic dialogue between masterpieces of the MFA's collection and newly created works of contemporary Chinese art. Adjacent to the gallery is the Gallery Shop.

In addition to new construction, the MFA's expansive building project incorporated significant renovations to the Museum's original building, including those at the State Street Corporation Fenway Entrance to the north and the Huntington Avenue Entrance on the Avenue of the Arts to the south, where the Bank of America Plaza on the Avenue of the Arts also is located. With the reopening of these entrances, visitors can now enjoy the full experience of entering through the historic Museum. Renovations established a coherent plan for navigation throughout the building by reinforcing the MFA's original north-south axis, enhancing the ways visitors encounter the Museum and its encyclopedic collections. In addition to the entrances, the building project included renovations to the Sharf Visitor Center, numerous galleries, and conservation labs. Surrounding the Museum, new landscaping strengthens the MFA's connection to

Olmsted's Emerald Necklace along the Back Bay Fens (to the north of the Museum). A plan devised by landscape architects Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd. (Seattle, WA), incorporates extensive new plantings including more than 1,000 holly bushes and 50 trees.

Art of the Americas Publication

In conjunction with the opening of the new wing, *A New World Imagined: Art of the Americas* has been produced by MFA Publications. It offers a new look at art of the Americas and its intersections with the world at large. Taking the vast geography and cultural diversity of the North and South American continents as its starting point, it introduces the ways in which American art, broadly defined, has been shaped both by its encounters with cultures around the globe and by its own past—from the ancient and native populations who first inhabited these territories to the European, Asian, Scandinavian, and Latino émigrés who settled here. Edited by Elliot Bostwick Davis, *A New World Imagined* presents essays by Museum curators who discuss more than 200 works of art from the MFA. The 350-page book, with approximately 300 color images, is available in hardcover for \$60 in the Museum Bookstore & Shop and online at mfa.org/publications. Support for *A New World Imagined: Art of the Americas* was provided by the Vance Wall Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Publications Fund.

Additional Information

For more information please visit www.mfa.org/press. To download architectural images, gallery installation views, and object photography for the Art of the Americas Wing, visit the MFA's FTP site at <http://extranet.mfa.org/pr/>. User name: sp\press5. Password: newmfa.

* *Fresh Ink: Ten Takes on Chinese Tradition* is presented in collaboration with The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation. Generous corporate sponsorship is provided by United Technologies Corporation. Additional support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. Artist residencies have been supported in part by the Asian Cultural Council.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), opened the doors of its red brick and terra-cotta building in Copley Square on July 4, 1876. Over time, the rapid growth of the collection made a new location necessary and the Museum hired architect Guy Lowell to develop a master plan for a grand, classical museum. In November 1909, the MFA opened the doors to its present Beaux Arts-designed granite structure on Huntington Avenue. Throughout the century, the Museum continued to expand with major additions such as its Evans Wing (designed by Lowell) in 1915, and its West Wing (designed by I.M. Pei) in 1981. In 1999, the MFA commissioned the architectural firm, Foster + Partners (London), to develop a master site plan that would reflect the strong north/south axis of Lowell's original design while addressing the MFA's growing collection as well as the visitor experience. The Museum's expansion and renovation will enrich the ways in which visitors encounter the Museum's great works of art, improve navigation through its galleries, as well as enhance and increase space for the MFA's encyclopedic collection, educational programs, conservation facilities, and special exhibitions. The Museum's \$345 million building project, which broke ground in 2005, was supported by a fundraising campaign that raised \$504 million for new construction and renovations, endowment of programs and positions, and annual operations. The MFA's new wing for the Art of the Americas and the Ruth and Carl J. Shapiro Courtyard, focal points of the building initiative, will open to the public on November 20, 2010. In September 2011, the MFA's new Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art will open.

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