

March 2, 2009

AMAM Awarded \$1.25 million grant from Mellon Foundation

Oberlin College's **Allen Memorial Art Museum** (AMAM) has received a \$1.25 million endowment challenge grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to expand and enhance the use of the Museum's collections in teaching, learning, and research at the College of Arts and Sciences and the Conservatory of Music. The AMAM's Office of Academic Programs receives \$1,000,000 in endowment funds to conduct a broad range of programming for Oberlin faculty and students, as well as a spendable grant of \$250,000 in support of new program development and staffing for the Office over the next four years, during which time matching funds for the endowment will be raised. The grant-supported initiative will provide new opportunities for faculty to develop courses that draw on AMAM's outstanding art collections, and for faculty and students to collaborate with Museum staff on teaching exhibitions and research.

"This extraordinary support from the Mellon Foundation allows Oberlin to use its important art collections to foster serious curricular engagement at the College," said Stephanie Wiles, the John G.W. Cowles Director. "The Museum has always passionately believed that exposing undergraduate students in all fields to high-quality original works of art is critical to their education, and this Mellon grant supports creative interdisciplinary learning on a remarkable scale."

Faculty and students in departments such as African-American Studies, Anthropology, Biology, Cinema Studies, Classics, East Asian Studies, History, Mathematics, Music Composition, Musicology, Neuroscience, and Religion enthusiastically engage with objects from the societies of the ancient Mediterranean to Renaissance paintings and sculpture to modern and contemporary art. Oberlin faculty are committed to further developing students' visual literacy and critical thinking skills through a broad examination of the museum's strong art collections.

Mellon Foundation funding will also support new collaborations, including connections between science and art with a new art conservation course to be offered in fall 2009. Current faculty collaborations include the exhibition "*To Make Things Visible*": *Art in the Shadow of World War I*, organized with the History department to coincide with a major international conference "The Unfinished Business of War and Revolution: Europe, 1918-1919," and *Imaging Rome through Artists' Eyes, 1600-1800*, organized to support courses in Classics and Art History.

For more than a century, Oberlin has been committed to promoting direct study of original works of art to foster visual literacy and a deeper understanding of the diversity of the world's cultures. Today the AMAM houses an encyclopedic collection of more than 13,000 objects selected to provide a comprehensive overview of the history of art from virtually every culture and is recognized as one of the five best academic museums in the country. The AMAM serves a broad regional audience and operates on the premise

that learning about art is important for everyone, a principle demonstrated by free public admission, offered since its inception.

The Allen Memorial Art Museum is open to the public. Admission is free. Hours: Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and major holidays. Free educational or group guided tours may be arranged by calling the museum's Education Office at (440) 775-8671.