

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Brooklyn Museum and Bard Graduate Center Collaborate on an American Decorative Arts Curatorial Course for MA and PhD Students

New York, March 27, 2017— The Brooklyn Museum and Bard Graduate Center announced today a collaborative, multi-phase project aimed at re-thinking the presentation and study of American decorative arts. Starting in fall 2017, Bard Graduate Center faculty and students and Brooklyn Museum curators will come together as a think tank to examine the collection, organization, display, and interpretation of the Brooklyn Museum’s extensive collection of American decorative arts. This will launch a series of courses on American Decorative Arts at the Brooklyn Museum, led by by Kevin Stayton, Curator Emeritus, along with Barry Harwood, Curator of Decorative Arts, among others. The course, open to all students enrolled in Bard Graduate Center’s MA and PhD programs in decorative arts, design history, material culture, will serially study parts of the museum’s collection and will have as its outcome the redesign of the display of the decorative arts collection.

The partnership will be an ongoing, collaborative project focusing on the Brooklyn Museum’s extensive, world-renowned collection of American decorative arts. In addition to the collaborative course, students and conservators will examine individual objects through the lens of BGC’s Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-supported “Cultures of Conservation” initiative. Students will continue their collections-based work through summer internships that further and expand on course research. The project will culminate in a full-scale exhibition, curated, in part, by students, at the Brooklyn Museum on the work of Brooklyn craftsmen, makers, artisans, and artists, and their place in the history of decorative arts and design.

Participating students will have an unparalleled opportunity to discover and study one of the country’s great American decorative arts collections. Ranging from the seventeenth century to the present, the collection includes silver, glass, ceramics, pewter, and furniture. An array of period rooms, installed on the Museum’s fourth floor, spanning from 1675 to 1929, provides context for the collection, offering visitors a window into American culture and domestic life. The Luce Center for American Art, on the fifth floor, displays additional treasures from the collection.

“It is an exciting opportunity to have fresh eyes and insights on our world-renowned decorative arts collections,” says Anne Pasternak, Brooklyn Museum Shelby White and

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Leon Levy Director. “We are looking forward to training the next generation of curators and art historians. “Bard Graduate Center Founder and Director Susan Weber adds, “The Brooklyn Museum is one of the great museums in the United States. Its collections of American decorative arts are deep and superb. It is a privilege for our students and faculty to have the opportunity to explore this vast and still under-studied landscape alongside the museum’s curators and conservators.”

About Kevin Stayton

Kevin Stayton joined the Brooklyn Museum in 1980, after graduate study at Yale University. He served for many years as Assistant Curator, Associate Curator and Curator of the Decorative Arts collection before becoming the Museum’s Chief Curator in 2001 and Deputy Director for Collections and History in 2016. Stayton frequently taught graduate students over the years, using the Museum’s collections as a focus, including many classes at Bard Graduate Center. Stayton is currently the Curator Emeritus at the Brooklyn Museum.

Stayton’s accomplished career includes the reinstallation of the Nicholas Schenck and Abraham Harrison period rooms in 1983 and co-curation of the exhibitions *Converging Cultures: Art and Identity in Spanish America* (1996) and *Vital Forms: American Art and Design in the Atomic Age, 1940–1960* (2001). He has contributed catalogue essays and authored scholarly articles, and is the author of *Treasures of the Brooklyn Museum* (2017) and *Dutch by Design: Tradition and Change in Two Historic Brooklyn Houses* (1990) and the editor for *Collecting for the Future: A Decade of Acquisition Highlights* (2012) and *Brooklyn Museum Highlights* (2014).

About Bard Graduate Center

Bard Graduate Center is a graduate research institute in New York City devoted to the study of decorative arts, design history, and material culture through research, advanced degrees, exhibitions, publications, and public programs. Our community encourages creative investigation of objects, from the everyday to the esoteric. We invite you to learn from things at Bard Graduate Center. Find more information about our MA and PhD degree programs, Gallery exhibitions, research initiatives, and public programs at www.bgc.bard.edu.

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