

Class Gift – *Inner Sanctum: Memory and Meaning in Princeton’s Faculty Room at Nassau Hall*

Inner Sanctum: Memory and Meaning in Princeton’s Faculty Room at Nassau Hall is a multifaceted project of the Princeton University Art Museum made possible by the support of members of the Class of 1970 in celebration of its 40th Reunion.

Through an exhibition and related book, *Inner Sanctum* examines the history and role of Nassau Hall’s venerable Faculty Room and the portraits within it as the symbolic center of the University, and explores the function of each in shaping Princeton’s institutional identity. An affiliated international symposium and Freshman Seminar will more generally address the ways in which art and spatial environment reinforce and otherwise influence each other in creating meaning.

A special feature of the exhibition will be the unveiling of the historically important frame surrounding the University’s iconic painting, *George Washington at the Battle of Princeton* by Charles Willson Peale, following a painstaking, yearlong restoration of the frame. It will join more than thirty other portraits of Princeton’s founders, leaders, and distinguished alumni, many displayed in the Faculty Room since its completion more than a century ago and also restored on the occasion of the exhibition.

The book will include essays by some of Princeton’s most illustrious faculty, among them Nobel laureate Toni Morrison and distinguished historians Sean Wilentz and Eddie S. Glaude Jr., as well as Art Museum curator and project organizer Karl Kusserow. President Tilghman will provide the introduction, and Pulitzer Prize-winner Paul Muldoon will conclude the volume with a poem.

In recognition of the Class’s support, the *in situ* exhibition will open in the Faculty Room during Reunions on Friday, May 28, 2010, following a Thursday evening lecture, preview, and reception for Class members. Art Museum curator and project organizer Karl Kusserow will present the lecture at 5 p.m. in McCormick Hall (the Art Museum), adjacent to the Class’s reunion headquarters. The private preview at Nassau Hall, from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m., will be followed by a cocktail reception, also in McCormick Hall, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

The exhibition will remain open to the public throughout the summer and into the Fall 2010 semester, when the symposium and seminar will take place. A reading in Richardson Auditorium by the book’s contributors is planned for Parents Weekend in mid-October, and a student concert in the Faculty Room is also envisioned, a re-performance of an event first staged by students in the same space 248 years ago in 1762.

Inner Sanctum has been entirely funded by individuals with Class of 1970 affiliations, including via the Kathleen C. Sherrerd Fund for Programs in American Art, established by Jay Sherrerd '52, an honorary Class of 1970 member.