



ARKANSAS  
ARTS CENTER

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*July 21, 2015*

**Media Contact:**

Angel Galloway, *Director of Marketing & Communications*

Arkansas Arts Center

agalloway@arkansasartscenter.org

501-372-4000

ArkansasArtsCenter.org

***Arkansas Arts Center receives major grant from Henry Luce Foundation***

***290 John Marin works to be preserved***

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark.** – The Henry Luce Foundation has awarded a \$350,000 grant to the Arkansas Arts Center, the state’s leader in international, visual and performing arts. The grant will support the complete research, conservation and integration of the Art Center’s John Marin drawings into the AAC collection.

290 drawings and watercolors by American modern artist John Marin (1870-1953) were donated to the Arkansas Arts Center in February of 2014 by the artist’s daughter-in-law, Norma Marin. The earliest drawings in the collection are architectural renderings and drawings of the artist’s native New Jersey and of Philadelphia, where he studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. The collection then follows Marin through his years in Paris just after the turn of the century and his return to America as a modernist. Many of these works have never been exhibited and are largely unknown to both scholars and the public.

The purpose of The Marin Project is to execute the conservation of all 290 works on paper and the digitization of the complete holdings to be made available to scholars and the public, as well as research and production of a catalog featuring the Marin collection at the Arkansas Arts Center. The research and conservation will also yield an exhibition highlighting the gift which will originate at the Arts Center before traveling to a select number of venues in the United States.

Marin is best known for luminous watercolors of urban structures, landscapes and seascapes. He stands as one of the leading innovators of American modernism in the first half of the twentieth century and his work continues to be celebrated in publications and exhibitions around the world.

“We are incredibly grateful to the Henry Luce Foundation,” said Arkansas Arts Center Executive Director Todd Herman. “This grant will allow us to research, conserve and present this important collection of works by one of America’s greatest artists and share them with the public.

“The Arkansas Arts Center possesses a very fine and nationally recognized collection of drawings from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to today, with a particular concentration in American Modernism,” Herman said. “This gift of 290 works by John Marin adds considerable strength to our already impressive collection of drawings by Stieglitz Circle artists.”

The Arkansas Arts Center holds the second largest collection of Marin works in the world, spanning the entirety of his career and including simple gestural and movement drawings, sketches from nature and finished watercolors. “In addition to the beautiful finished watercolors, the collection includes many working drawings,” said Curator of Drawings, Ann Prentice Wagner, Ph.D.

Wagner, whose doctoral dissertation was titled “‘Living on Paper:’ Georgia O’Keeffe and the Culture of Drawing and Watercolor in the Stieglitz Circle,” will head up The Marin Project.

“The working drawings give us valuable insight into Marin’s creative process. The on-the-spot sketches are priceless. They capture the artist’s initial ideas about subjects he went on to paint and depict in prints, like the Brooklyn Bridge and the New York skyline. Rarer topics, like the marvelous zoo animals and circus scenes, open doors to lesser-known aspects of the artist.”

The Arkansas Arts Center, founded in 1960, is the oldest and largest cultural institution in central Arkansas. Today, the mission of the Arts Center is to ensure that learning, inspiration and creative expression in the arts flourish throughout Arkansas by preserving and exhibiting its permanent collection, offering a rich variety of art from other collections and presenting programs for the education and cultural benefit of the public.

The Henry Luce Foundation was established in 1936 by Henry R. Luce, the co-founder and editor-in-chief of Time Inc. The foundation seeks to bring important ideas to the center of American life, strengthen international understanding, and foster innovation and leadership in academic, policy, religious and art communities. Since the inception of the foundation’s American Art Program in 1982, more than \$160 million has been disseminated to some 250 museums, universities and service organizations in 48 states and internationally.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Contact:** 501-372-4000

**Location:** Arkansas Arts Center – 9<sup>th</sup> and Commerce, Little Rock, AR 72202

**Cost:** Free Admission

**Gallery Hours:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday - Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday  
Closed Monday & Major Holidays

**Arkansas Arts Center programs are supported in part by: the City of Little Rock; the Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau; the City of North Little Rock; and the Arkansas Arts Council, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage and the National Endowment for the Arts.**