

WINTERTHUR



Winterthur Press Release

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The National Endowment for the Humanities Awards Winterthur Two Major Grants

Funds support scholars of American material culture and aid in understanding decorative arts and objects made of natural materials.

Winterthur, DE, May 17, 2019—Two major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) will enable Winterthur Museum, Garden, & Library to increase scholarship on objects made from organic materials while improving resources about those objects, and provide financial support of scholars in its fellowship program. Both grants indicate the significance of the scholarship that occurs at Winterthur and its ongoing influence in the discipline of American material culture.

A \$268,172 grant from the NEH will allow Winterthur to identify, catalogue, and photograph 350 to 500 composite objects containing organic and animal materials such as bone, horn, ivory, shell, skin, or quill. Such objects are a significant subset of Winterthur’s collection of early American decorative arts. A \$75,000 grant to support fellowship programs at independent research institutions will provide four months of stipend support for one fellow a year over three years.

Both grants were among \$28.6 million in awards announced in April for 233 humanities projects across the country. “These new NEH-supported projects will help shore up the nation’s most valuable assets: its history, literature, historic sites, regional traditions, and cultural institutions,” said NEH Chairman Jon Parrish Peede. “NEH is proud to support the advancement of learning and sharing of knowledge nationwide.”

“Shoring up such assets includes Winterthur’s Natural Components in Decorative Arts Project, which will allow curators and scholars to identify decorative arts objects and practical implements fashioned from natural materials. The distinctions between “elk hide” and the more typical term “leather,” for example, or “African elephant tusk ivory” from the common “ivory” will enable the museum to better catalogue and care for objects with these components and to understand their cultural and industrial histories by exploring trade networks and practices engaging with these materials in early America. Such items make up a significant yet understudied portion of the 90,000 objects in the museum collection. “The curatorial and conservation scholarship has room to grow,” said Ann K. Wagner, curator of decorative arts in the Department of Museum Collections at Winterthur. “I think we can add to it significantly with this grant.”

Winterthur is uniquely positioned to conduct such study. The museum houses a state-of-the-art Scientific Research and Analysis Laboratory, and a partnership with the University of Delaware through the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture provides access to more analytical technology and knowledge in the field of organic materials. The project will continue through June 30, 2021. The funds also allow Winterthur to hire a new curatorial staff member and to host a special seminar to share identification techniques and findings with other professionals.

The grant for Long-Term Research Fellowships at Winterthur also allows the institution to share its knowledge and expertise by supporting the work of post-doctorate fellows, and it demonstrates Winterthur’s commitment to inter-disciplinary scholarship. Such fellows innovatively use Winterthur’s collection to make significant contributions in fields from anthropology and literature to history and art history.

“Our NEH fellows have been leading scholars in the humanities over the years,” said Catharine Dann Roeber, the Brock W. Jobe Associate Professor of Decorative Arts and Material Culture at Winterthur. “We are proud to continue that in an expanded way.”

Applications for the 2020–2021 research fellowships are due January 15, 2020. Learn more at winterthur.org/fellowship.

ABOUT WINTERTHUR

Winterthur—known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American decorative arts, naturalistic gardens, and research library for the study of American art and material culture—

offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. General admission includes a tour of some of the most notable spaces in Henry Francis du Pont's former home as well as access to the Winterthur Garden and Galleries, special exhibitions, a narrated tram tour (weather permitting), the Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens, and the Enchanted Woods children's garden.

Winterthur, located on Route 52, six miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, and five miles south of U.S. Route 1, is closed on Mondays (except during Yuletide), Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Museum hours are 10:00 am–5:00 pm, Tuesday–Sunday. \$20 for adults; \$18 for students and seniors; \$6 for ages 2–11. Winterthur is committed to accessible programming for all. For information, including special services, call 800.448.3883, 302.888.4600, or TTY 302.888.4907, or visit winterthur.org.

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