



Fig. 1: The Port Royal Parlor at Winterthur is one of Henry Francis du Pont's masterpieces of architecture, antiques, and interior design. Courtesy, Winterthur. Photography by Gavin Ashworth.

A Lasting Legacy

Sixty Years
of Graduate
Programs
at Winterthur

by Nalleli Guillen and Kati Schmidt

When Henry Francis du Pont inherited his family's country estate, Winterthur, in 1926, his newfound passion for collecting the best in early American architecture, antiques, and fine art found its ultimate expression. His desire to share that passion led to the opening of Winterthur as a museum in 1951 (Fig. 1). In support of that venture, Charles Montgomery, hired to catalogue the collection, encouraged du Pont to endorse the creation of an onsite graduate program dedicated to the study of American antiques. With the support of the University of Delaware, two master's degree programs were subsequently designed. The first five students began their studies in early American material culture in 1952 (Fig. 2); presently, eight students participate in the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture. The program in art conservation—now the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation—was added in 1974 (Fig. 3), and currently accepts ten students annually.

Graduates have gone on to curate distinguished collections, organize blockbuster exhibitions, treat some of the nation's most famous objects—from the Star-Spangled Banner and Declaration of Independence to a space suit from Apollo 11—and educate the next generation of museum and conservation professionals. Both programs make extensive use of the museum's decorative arts collections to teach the fundamental

skills of connoisseurship, but also help students to develop specialized skills unique to their individual pursuits. Culture students learn to read an object from several different perspectives: use, manufacture, style, and materials. Conservation students are trained extensively in scientific procedure, to aid in the examination, documentation, analysis, treatment, and preventive care of cultural property.



Fig. 2: The first graduating class of the Winterthur Culture program in HF du Pont's private library. Courtesy, Winterthur Archives, P194.



Fig. 3: The first graduating class of the Art Conservation Program in 1977. Courtesy, Winterthur Archives.

Reaching and Teaching Through Material Culture:

A Winterthur Graduate Program 60th Anniversary Symposium

September 28-29, 2012

For information or to register, visit www.winterthur.org or call 800.448.3883

This groundbreaking symposium brings together more than thirty nationally recognized speakers, both from the Winterthur graduate programs and colleagues in their associated fields. On Friday afternoon attendees will hear the presidents of the American Association of Museums and of the American Institute for Conservation; a keynote presentation by William Hosley; and Brock Jobe speaking on the exhibition in the associated article. The following day will present stellar talks covering topics ranging from revitalizing interpretation and display; the relevance of the market, shifts in audience interest, and the associated influences on collecting; conservation issues relating to modern materials; the role of technology; balancing intellectual relevance and popular interest; rethinking professional training; and the role of cultural heritage professionals in world events, from surviving natural disasters to the role of governmental organizations and the stopping of the illicit art and antiques trade. Pre-symposium activities include informal roundtable discussions and during the program there are optional activities including curatorial and conservation tours and object discussions. Family activities are also available.



A Lasting Legacy: Sixty Years of Graduate Programs at Winterthur, currently on view in the museum's East Gallery, celebrates the educational partnership between the museum and the university as well as the accomplishments of many of the more than 800 graduates. A short film and case studies present the range of graduates' pursuits and contributions, as well as the global impact of the programs. Through this exhibition, visitors will be able to explore the work of some of the remarkable people responsible for preserving our cultural heritage and for guiding institutions that share our arts, history, and culture.

The graduate programs, started decades ago by du Pont and Montgomery, with Charles Hummel and University of Delaware Professor Peter Sparks instrumental in

structuring the curriculum, continue to grow and flourish.

Although methods have changed with the times, the Winterthur culture and conservation programs retain their commitment to higher education and in-depth object study in the twenty-first century. As Henry Francis du Pont once commented, "Years after all the books on the Museum have been written...the training and education of these young people at Winterthur will make the Museum a living force through the ages." **AEA**

A LASTING LEGACY: SIXTY YEARS OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS AT WINTERTHUR runs through June 16, 2013. A video documenting the history of the programs will be on view in the exhibition and online at: www.winterthur.org/lastinglegacy

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