FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BMA RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS GRANTS FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES AND INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Grants will support new presentation and interpretation of the African art collection and a new initiative to catalogue more than 15,000 objects in the renowned George A. Lucas collection

BALTIMORE, MD (September 30, 2013)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) recently received three highly competitive federal grants totaling more than $500,000 that will improve the visitor experience of its acclaimed collection of African art and facilitate access to the Museum’s world-renowned George A. Lucas Collection of 19th-century French art.

A $275,000 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) implementation grant will support a dynamic new presentation of the BMA’s outstanding African art collection, scheduled to reopen in late spring 2015 as part of the BMA’s unprecedented $28 million renovation. The BMA is home to one of the earliest and most important African art collections in the United States. More than 100 objects representing the full scope of the collection from ancient Egypt to contemporary Zimbabwe will be presented in more engaging and expansive new displays. The renovated galleries, dedicated solely to the arts of Africa, will be three times the size of the previous space for African art.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is providing $147,000 toward BMA Go Mobile Africa, a website optimized for smartphones that provides rich content about the artwork on view, as well as video and audio interviews. The Museum introduced the first BMA Go Mobile with the reopening of the Contemporary Wing in 2012, and will debut BMA Go Mobile for the American collection in conjunction with its reopening in fall 2014.

A second IMLS grant of $106,555 will support the creation of a comprehensive catalogue that documents the more than 15,000 objects in the renowned George A. Lucas Collection, as well as related archival materials. The internationally significant Lucas Collection is one of the largest and most important collections of 19th-century French art to have remained intact after the death of its collector. Extraordinary prints and drawings by Édouard Manet and Charles-François Daubigny, as well as American expatriates like Mary Cassatt and James Abbott McNeill Whistler, are included among the works in the collection. The Lucas Collection was purchased from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 1996.

“We are very honored to have received these prestigious grants,” said BMA Director Doreen Bolger. “This extraordinary support is a testament to the BMA’s mission to provide more memorable educational experiences in the arts and humanities that are accessible to all,”

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This support comes at a critical time as the BMA enters the second phase of its $28 million renovation. This ambitious capital project encompasses reinstalling the Contemporary, American, African, and Asian art collections, developing a new learning and creativity center, renovating the East Lobby and Zamoiski Entrance, upgrading critical infrastructure, and improving visitor amenities. The first phase of the renovation was completed in November 2012 with the reopening of the Contemporary Wing. The Museum will reopen the historic American Wing and Merrick Entrance and the renovated East Lobby and Zamoiski Entrance in fall 2014 during the BMA’s 100th celebration. The African and Asian collections and learning and creativity center will reopen in late spring 2015. The BMA has currently raised $21.5 million, including a $11.25 million multi-year commitment from the State of Maryland and $2.95 million in bond support from the City of Baltimore.

National Endowment for the Humanities
The National Endowment for the Humanities provides grants for high-quality humanities projects in four funding areas: preserving and providing access to cultural resources, education, research, and public programs, with the goal of promoting excellence in the humanities and conveying the lessons of history to all Americans.

Previous NEH support for the BMA’s renovation includes a $300,000 grant to enhance the presentation of the Museum’s distinguished American art collection and a $308,000 grant to upgrade essential infrastructure. A $30,000 NEH planning grant was used to consult with a panel of scholars on content, design, and interpretive strategies for the African art collection.

The BMA is also in the final year of matching a $750,000 NEH Challenge Grant that will endow the position of the Museum’s Director of Conservation, as well as support important research projects and interpretation for exhibitions and other outreach efforts.

Institute of Museum and Library Services
The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Its mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Their grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART
The Baltimore Museum of Art is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1914 with a single painting, the BMA today has 90,000 works of art—including the largest holding of works by Henri Matisse in the world. The BMA has a long tradition of collecting art of the day, beginning with the Cone sisters, whose avid acquisitions from living artists signaled the museum’s commitment to collecting contemporary art. Throughout the museum, visitors will find an outstanding selection of European and American fine and decorative arts, 15th- through 19th-century prints and drawings, works by established and emerging contemporary artists, and objects from Africa, Asia, the Ancient Americas, and Pacific Islands. The museum is located in a park-like setting in the heart of Charles Village and adjacent to the main campus of The Johns Hopkins University. The BMA’s 10-building complex encompasses 210,000 square feet and is distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope. Two beautifully landscaped gardens display an array of 20th-century sculpture that is an oasis in the city. Since 2006, the BMA has eliminated general admission fees so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

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