Fact Sheet

Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery

Director: Martin Sullivan
Total Full-time Employees: 66
Annual Budget (federal and trust) FY 2008: $7 million
Approximate Number of Artworks: 20,370
Visitors (2008): 1,005,328 (the museum shares a building with the Smithsonian American Art Museum)

Background
The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery was established by an Act of Congress in 1962 and opened to the public in 1968. Its mission is to collect and display images of “men and women who have made significant contributions to the history, development and culture of the people of the United States.”

The Portrait Gallery is the only museum of its kind in the United States to present American history, biography and art. It tells the stories of America through the individuals who have shaped its culture. Through the visual arts, performing arts and new media, the Portrait Gallery portrays poets and presidents, visionaries and villains, actors and activists who speak American history.

Collections and Exhibitions
The museum’s collection includes a wide range of paintings, sculpture, photographs drawings and new media. Prominent works include the following:

- “Lansdowne” portrait of George Washington a by Gilbert Stuart, oil on canvas (1796)
- Benjamin Franklin by Joseph Duplessis (the image on the $100 bill), oil on canvas (c. 1785)
- John Brown by Augustus Washington, daguerreotype (c. 1846-1847)
- Frederick Douglass by an unknown artist, daguerreotype (c. 1850)
- Abraham Lincoln by Alexander Gardner (cracked-plate portrait), albumen silver print (1865)
- Mary Cassatt by Edgar Degas, oil on canvas (c. 1880-1884)
- Gertrude Stein by Jo Davidson, terra cotta (1922-1923)
- Charlie Chaplin by Edward Steichen, gelatin silver print (1925)
- Jackson Pollock by Hans Namuth, gelatin silver print (1950)
- Maxine Singer by Jon Friedman, charcoal on paper (2001)
- Eunice Kennedy Shriver, oil on canvas (2009)
Additionally, the National Portrait Gallery’s collections hold portraits of the U.S. presidents, more than 5,400 glass-plate negatives from the studios of Mathew Brady and original artwork from more than 1,600 TIME magazine covers.

While the museum has an ongoing program to commission portraits of presidents and first ladies, recently, it has begun an initiative to commission portraits of prominent living people. The first portrait commissioned of a private citizen was of Eunice Kennedy Shriver presented in 2009 as a part of the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition.

**Educational Programs**
The museum offers a wide range of programming that includes free lectures, performances and films that take place in the museum and the Nan Tucker McEvoy Auditorium. Additionally, the museum presents teacher workshops, family days and guided tours. School children and educators are treated to interactive tours tailored to school curricula; families and young artists can participate in hands-on programming with the monthly Facing History program and the weekly highlights tour. Adults can learn more about the museum and the collection by attending a weekly highlights tour. The popular Face-to-Face program takes place every Thursday at 6 p.m. The half-hour talks, lead by a museum curator or leader in the field, offer visitors an intimate look into the life of a sitter featured in the work.

**Lunder Conservation Center**
This is the first art conservation facility in the United States that allows the public permanent behind-the-scenes views of the museums’ preservation work. Conservation staff members from both museums are visible to the public through floor-to-ceiling glass walls.

**The Robert and Arlene Kogod Courtyard**
The recently opened Robert and Arlene Kogod Courtyard, designed by Foster + Partners, is a dynamic, year-round public gathering space enclosed by a curving glass roof. Foster + Partners was assisted by landscape designer Kathryn Gustafson of Seattle-based Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd. in the creation of the courtyard’s interior. Free public wireless Internet access (Wi-Fi) is available in the courtyard. The Courtyard Café offers casual dining from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture**
The Portrait Gallery’s National Historic Landmark building has been praised by Walt Whitman as the “noblest of Washington buildings,” this landmark is considered one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in the United States. The recent $283 million renovation (2000-2006) revealed the full magnificence of the building’s architectural features, including porticos modeled after the Parthenon in Athens, a curving double staircase, vaulted galleries, large windows and skylights as long as a city block. The museum shares its building and entrances with the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Collectively, the two museums and their activities are known as the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture.

**About the Museum**
The National Portrait Gallery is located at Eighth and F streets N.W., above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station. The museum is open from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Smithsonian information: (202) 633-1000; TTY (202) 633-5285. Web site: npg.si.edu.