
Foreword

It's happened to both of us many times. We'll be walking through the Capitol building with a group of visitors who appear awestruck by the incredible works of art all around them. Invariably, someone will ask, "How long did it take for you to stop being stunned by all of this?" We tell them the truth: No matter how many times you walk through the Capitol, you never stop being amazed by its beauty and awed by its grandeur.

The United States Capitol—"the People's House"—is many things. It is an internationally recognized symbol of freedom and democracy, a major tourist attraction, and a hectic workplace bustling with senators and their constituents, staffers, visiting dignitaries, children on field trips, journalists, and an amazing assortment of others. What some people don't realize is that the Capitol is also a remarkable national museum. Painted on its walls and ceilings, carved into marble, molded from metal, and hung along its walls are extraordinary works of art by many of America's greatest artists—from Gilbert Stuart, the renowned 18th century painter whose portraits of George Washington have become American icons, to Alexander Calder, the 20th century artist famous for his massive kinetic sculptures. It is also home to works by many other famous artists—from portraitists Thomas Sully and Rembrandt Peale, to sculptors Thomas Crawford, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and Walter Hancock.

This catalogue marks the first time in its more than 200-year history that the United States Senate has showcased its entire art collection in a publication. As senators, members of the Senate Commission on Art, and as Americans, we are proud to share it with you. We are also grateful to the dedicated Senate staff who worked for years to produce it. Our hope is that, through this catalogue, we can share the Senate's treasures with citizens of America and the world who cherish the values of freedom and democracy that are depicted so powerfully in the works of art on these pages and seen throughout the Capitol. If you visit the Senate, we urge you to use this catalogue as your guide to the priceless and beautiful symbols of our national heritage that you will see. If you are unable to visit the Capitol, we hope this book will enable you to enjoy the art of the Senate on your own.

In 1855 a brilliant, 56-year-old painter named Constantino Brumidi—an Italian immigrant who has been called "America's Michelangelo"—began decorating the walls and ceilings of the Capitol. He was still at work on the project 25 years later when he died. He is reported to have

said, “My one ambition and my daily prayer is that I may live long enough to make beautiful the Capitol of the one country on earth in which there is liberty.” As diverse as the works in the Senate art collection are, they are all creations of men and women who love America and the principles for which this nation stands. Their love, combined with their stunning artistic mastery, is why we have never stopped being in awe of the beauty of this building—and likely never will.

We are proud to share these works with you. We hope you will enjoy them and be inspired by them, as are the millions of people who visit the Capitol each year.

The Honorable Tom Daschle
Majority Leader, United States Senate
Chairman, Senate Commission on Art

The Honorable Trent Lott
Republican Leader, United States Senate
Vice Chairman, Senate Commission on Art