



Smithsonian
***Donald W. Reynolds Center for
American Art and Portraiture***

***National Portrait Gallery
Smithsonian American Art Museum***

News

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“Temple of Invention: History of a National Landmark” Exhibition Fact Sheet

Exhibition:

“Temple of Invention: History of a National Landmark”
July 1, 2006 – July 8, 2007

Where:

Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery, Eighth and F streets N.W.

Description:

This exhibition honors the completion of the building’s glorious renovation and marks the 170th anniversary of President Andrew Jackson signing legislation that authorized the building’s construction. Begun in 1836 and completed in 1868, it is one of the oldest public buildings constructed in early Washington, D.C. This landmark was praised by Walt Whitman as the “noblest of Washington buildings” and is considered to be one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in the United States. Charles Robertson, former deputy director at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and specialist in American decorative arts, is the guest curator of the exhibition.

Credit: “Temple of Invention: History of a National Landmark” is co-organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Portrait Gallery. The exhibition and publication are made possible by generous support from Allan J. and Reda R. Riley. Additional support for the publication was provided by Furthermore: a program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund.

Publication: Charles Robertson is the author of the accompanying book, “Temple of Invention: History of a National Landmark,” which details the historical and cultural significance of the building. The book, co-published by the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Scala Publishers, features more than 80 images, including historic photographs, engravings and other archival materials.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum collection began with gifts of art donated to the federal government in 1829 and has evolved into one of the world’s most important American art holdings, with approximately 41,000 artworks in all media spanning more than three centuries.

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery was established by an Act of Congress in 1962 and opened to the public in 1968. It is the only museum of its kind in the United States to combine the aspects of American history, biography and art. For more information visit www.reynoldscenter.org.

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