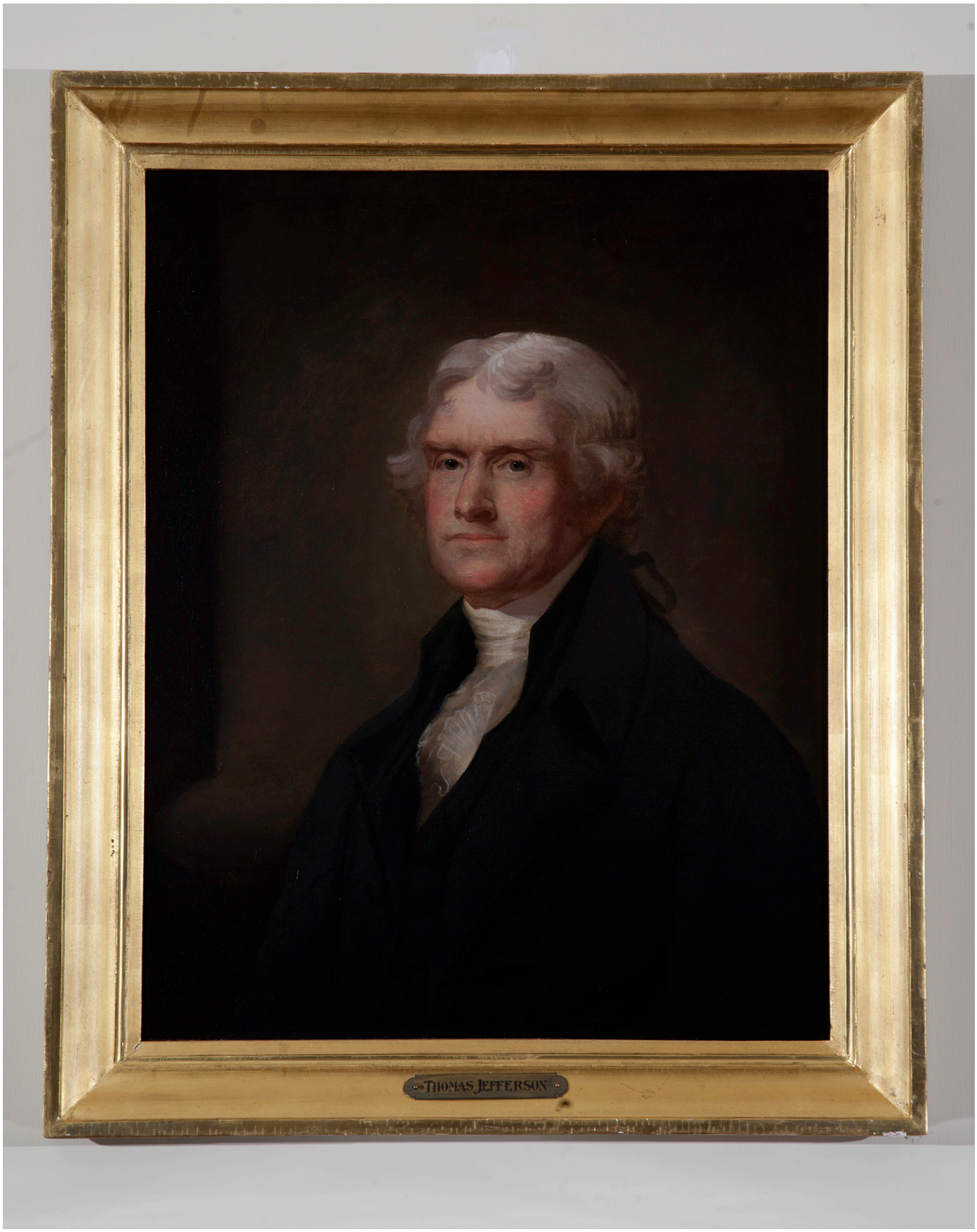
The Magazine ANTIQUES
100 YEARS 1922–2022

Museums: Founding Home Fronts

GRANT S. QUERTERMOUS / AUGUST 25, 2026 /

The loan of a legendary Jefferson portrait to the Katonah Museum of Art anchors an exhibition exploring how founding families' domestic lives shaped early American politics.



Thomas Jefferson by Ezra Ames (1768–1836) after Gilbert Stuart's Thomas Jefferson, after 1821. *Richard Hampton Jenrette Foundation*.

In 1842 Judge William Jay purchased a portrait of Thomas Jefferson by artist Ezra Ames, which he hung in the home he inherited from his father, Chief Justice John Jay, in the company of portraits of Washington, Adams, and Madison painted by Stuart and Trumbull. The portrait was an important piece in the Jay family home for multiple generations, making it ideal for inclusion in an exhibition this summer that offers a fresh perspective on how we look at the everyday lives of the nation's founding families. The plates, chairs, desks, and portraits they owned tell important stories about personal conflict and triumph and the challenges of building a nation—the basis of *Diplomacy at Home: The Domestic Lives of the Founding Families,* on view at the Katonah Museum of Art in Katonah, New York, until October 4. The exhibition, a collaboration between the Friends of John Jay Homestead, the Katonah Museum of Art, and the Richard Hampton Jenrette Foundation–of which I serve as curator and director of collections–with loans from a wide variety of museum collections, examines the private worlds of the founders through fine and decorative arts and personal objects, revealing how the domestic spaces occupied by founding families influenced political life and diplomacy.

The Jefferson portrait remained in the Jay family until it was acquired by Jenrette at a 1986 Christie's sale, making it a natural candidate to inaugurate the Jenrette Foundation's recently launched Collection Loan Network—a program designed to increase the visibility of Jenrette's notable collection and enrich exhibitions at partnering institutions across the country. The John Jay Homestead is currently closed for a large-scale preservation project of this National Historic Landmark, and initial conversations about a loan of the portrait evolved into the fruitful partnership presenting *Diplomacy at Home* as part of the nationwide celebration of the country's Semiquincentennial.

The exhibition and the Collection Loan Network are two examples of how the Jenrette Foundation supports public engagement and stewardship through its grants, programs, historic properties, and collection of fine and decorative arts. Named for philanthropist and Wall Street financier Richard Hampton Jenrette, the organization provides opportunities for emerging and established professionals in the decorative

arts, historic preservation, and historic landscapes. Helping the next generation of curators build their investigatory skills, the Jenrette Foundation launched the William L. Thompson Collections Fellowship in 2022, a short-term residential fellowship for emerging professionals and graduate students with a focus on connoisseurship of American decorative arts and collections care. *Diplomacy at Home* provides an opportunity for museumgoers to experience the significant collection that Jenrette spent half a century building, now stewarded by the foundation, along with equally important objects from a variety of institutional lenders.

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GUEST EDITOR *ADAM CHARLAP HYMAN* GHOST CHASING

"Ghost chasing is, as I see it, the act of hunting down objects that once belonged to people with whom you desire a kind of spiritual and energetic contact, across time, via the material world."

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