

Katonah Museum of Art

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***Katonah Museum of Art Announces Exhibition
Exploring the Domestic Worlds of America's Founding Generation***

***Diplomacy at Home: The Domestic Lives of the Founding Families* Marks the 250th
Anniversary of the Nation's Founding Through Objects That
Illuminate the Origins of American Democracy**

Katonah, NY — On view from June 28 – October 4, 2026, the Katonah Museum of Art (KMA) will present *Diplomacy at Home: The Domestic Lives of the Founding Families*, an exhibition organized in collaboration with the Friends of John Jay Homestead (FoJJH) and the Richard Hampton Jenrette Foundation. Bringing together furniture, fine art, decorative objects, and personal possessions from the homes of the Founding generation, the exhibition offers a rare perspective on the private lives that unfolded alongside the public work of nation-building. Presented as the United States marks the 250th anniversary of its founding, the exhibition highlights how the values, relationships, and daily practices within these households shaped the early culture of American democracy.



Michelle Yun Mapplethorpe, KMA Director and Chief Curator notes: “Material culture—the objects that surround us in our daily lives—reflects the behaviors, norms, and rituals of a society and can inform us about the times we live in. The objects included in this exhibition are particularly revealing in this regard, as their design and function provide a fresh perspective around the founding of our republic.”

Special emphasis will be placed on individuals from New York who played important roles in the formation and early administration of the national government, including John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and the brothers Robert and Edward Livingston, among others. The exhibition also foregrounds the essential role of women, including Abigail Adams, Martha Washington, and

Sarah Jay, whose influence within the home and across social and diplomatic networks helped shape the political culture of the early republic.

Through both exceptional and everyday objects, *Diplomacy at Home* considers how material culture can illuminate larger historical forces. Seen together, these works reveal how the domestic sphere functioned as a site where ideas about governance, identity, and civic life took shape, offering visitors a deeper understanding of the origins of American democracy and its evolution over the past 250 years. Works on view will include:

- a side chair by the American cabinetmaker Thomas Burling, made for Thomas Jefferson's New York City home
- John Jay's travelling Barrister Bookcase
- a dinner plate from George Washington's Society of the Cincinnati service
- a letter from Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, and more



"This exhibition presents both exquisite and everyday objects from the lives of this country's Founders, allowing visitors to experience a physical manifestation of America's history. Every single plate, chair, desk, or portrait tells a story about their personal conflicts and triumphs—just as our possessions today do the same for us—bringing their accomplishments into focus. At the heart of the exhibition is both the extraordinary and ordinary evidence of lives lived with purpose, establishing a nation against the backdrop of

running a home," said Grant S. Quertermous, Guest Curator of *Diplomacy at Home: The Domestic Lives of the Founding Families* and Curator & Director of Collections for the Richard Hampton Jenrette Foundation.

A robust roster of public programs and special events will be organized in collaboration with FoJJH, the Jenrette Foundation, and other organizations in Bedford and across Westchester County as part of the country's semiquincentennial celebrations.

"This exhibition arrives at a meaningful moment, as the United States marks 250 years since its founding. By bringing together objects from the homes of the founding generation, *Diplomacy at Home* highlights how the domestic sphere informed the values and relationships that shaped the early United States," said Cecilia Wolfson, Trustee at Friends of John Jay Homestead. "Preserving objects such as these ensures that the material history of the founding era remains accessible, offering tangible connections to the past. As the John Jay Homestead undergoes vital restoration work, helping to ensure this historic home remains a singular

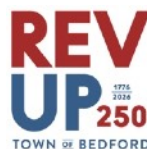


resource for understanding the nation's early history, we are thrilled to be collaborating with the Katonah Museum of Art, allowing us to share works from Jay's personal collection with the public during this milestone anniversary."

Diplomacy at Home: The Domestic Lives of the Founding Families is organized by the KMA in collaboration with the FoJJH and the Richard Hampton Jenrette Foundation in conjunction with the town of Bedford's REV UP 250 initiative. The exhibition is curated by Grant S. Quertermous, Curator & Director of Collections for the Richard Hampton Jenrette Foundation.

EXHIBITION SPONSORSHIP

Diplomacy at Home: The Domestic Lives of the Founding Families is made possible with generous funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Friends of John Jay Homestead through a programmatic gift from the Ford Foundation, the Richard Hampton Jenrette Foundation, the Wolfson Family Charitable Foundation, the Katherine C. and David E. Moore Exhibition Fund, Carla Shen, and The Director's Circle of the Katonah Museum of Art: Paul Bird and Amy Parsons, Lisa Byala, Mike Davies, Isabelle Harnoncourt Feigen, Linda Nordberg, Yvonne S. Pollack, Rebecca Samberg, and Richard and Audrey Zinman. In kind support is provided by The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Katonah Museum of Art is proud to be supported by The Leir Foundation, by ArtsWestchester and Westchester County Government, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.



PUBLIC PROGRAM SCHEDULE

First Look

June 27, 4:00–7:00 PM

Curator's Circle Members and above.

Members Preview and Breakfast

June 28, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

All Members welcome.

Curators in Conversation: Grant Quertermous, Curator & Director of Collections, the Richard Jenrette Foundation

June 28, 12:30–1:30 PM

Join guest curator Grant Quertermous for an insightful discussion about the material culture and domestic spaces that shaped the lives of the U.S. Founding Families.

Independence Day

July 4, 10:00-5:00 PM

The KMA is open. Celebrate the holiday exploring the history, stories, and objects of America's Founding Families.

Ladies' Night Out

July 9, 5:00–7:00 PM

Michelle Yun Mapplethorpe, KMA's Director and Chief Curator, hosts an evening of festivities in the Marilyn M. Simpson Sculpture Garden. Celebrate summer with art and a well-deserved night out. Explore the current exhibition, connect with new friends, and enjoy plein air painting along with a glass of wine and light bites.

KMA Studio Series: Investigating Interiors

July 18, August 8, and September 26, 3:00–5:00 PM

Join KMAA artist Monique Ford for a series of art workshops for adults. Each session features different materials, techniques, and ideas inspired by our current exhibition. Sign up for one or all.

July 18: Unexpected Still Lives

August 8: Relief Woodcut Printing

September 26: Fiber Arts & Mixed Media Sculpture

Family Day: Design & Construct

July 19, 12:00–3:00 PM

From woodworking to weaving, play with decorative arts and explore historic craftsmanship in this afternoon of hands-on artmaking for the whole family. Enjoy special activities presented in collaboration with John Jay Homestead and the National Association for Miniatures Enthusiasts.

Senior Social Afternoon

July 31, 1:00–3:00 PM

Enjoy an inspiring afternoon immersed in art and community. Take part in exhibition tours, art demonstrations, and light refreshments as you mingle with others. Guests from the NYC Urban Sketchers will share favorite drawing techniques to spark your creativity.

Craft & Connect: Art in Miniature

Thursday, July 23, 5:30–7:30 PM

Members of the National Association for Miniatures Enthusiasts lead this spirited, hands-on workshop for adults to create small-scale furniture and home décor inspired by the historic decorative arts objects on view.

KMA Summer Art Camp: Building Miniature Worlds

August 10–14, 9:30–3:00 PM

Spend a full week at the KMA building in miniature! Kids will visit the galleries before hours, get crafty in our Learning Center, and enjoy the shade of the Marilyn M. Simpson Sculpture Garden. Join us to create small-scale constructions and learn about architecture and interior design in clay, wood, wire, and more. Space is limited, register early.

Curators in Conversation: A Panel Discussion with Lauren Brincat, Chief Curator and Director of Collections, Preservation Long Island, **and Emilie Johnson**, Curator of Arts & History, The Thomas Jefferson Foundation; **moderated by Grant Quertermous**, Curator & Director of Collections, the Richard Jenrette Foundation

September 19, 6:00–8:00 PM

In this conversation moderated by guest curator Grant Quertermous, Lauren Brincat and Emilie Johnson will discuss the challenges and rewards of telling the full stories of the historic houses they curate.

Open Studio:

Saturdays, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Drop-in for new art projects each week, from textile arts and portrait painting to clay creations and mini furniture. Stop by often to see what's new!
Perfect for all ages and abilities.

Independence Day: Special Open Studio

Saturday, July 4, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Join us to make red, white, and blue firework prints.

Docent-Led Tours at the KMA

Every Wednesday–Sunday, 2:30 – 3:30 PM

Take an in-depth tour of current exhibitions, guided by KMA docents.

For program registration and pricing, visit katonahmuseum.org

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ABOUT THE KATONAH MUSEUM OF ART

The Katonah Museum of Art champions art, artists, and ideas through exhibitions, educational initiatives, and outreach, to inspire meaningful engagement among communities and across

cultures. Housed in a modernist building in Katonah, NY, designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes, the KMA was established in 1954 with a mission to spotlight exceptional art, while also responding to the most critical issues of our time through a bold and vigorous lens.

ABOUT THE FRIENDS OF JOHN JAY HOMESTEAD

The Friends of John Jay Homestead (FoJJH) is a nonprofit educational organization based in Katonah, NY, and founded in 1977 with a mission to partner with New York State's Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) in preserving and interpreting the John Jay Homestead State Historic Site. For nearly five decades, FoJJH has served as a model of public-private partnership, working alongside the OPRHP to steward and enhance this nationally significant site through exhibitions, educational programs, and preservation projects.

ABOUT THE RICHARD HAMPTON JENRETTE FOUNDATION

The Richard Hampton Jenrette Foundation was originally founded in 1993 as the Classical American Homes Preservation Trust by American businessman and philanthropist Richard Hampton Jenrette. The Foundation's mission is to advance education, innovation, and stewardship in the fields of historic preservation, decorative arts, and historic landscapes.

PHOTO CREDITS

From top to bottom:

James Sharples (English, 1751-1811). *Sarah Jay and Her Children William and Sarah Louisa*, c. 1797-98. Pastel on paper, 28 3/4 x 23 1/8 in. (73 x 58.8 cm). New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, John Jay Homestead State Historic Site, Gift of Friends of John Jay Homestead, JJ.1987.9.a-b.

George Washington's Society of the Cincinnati Service Dinner Plate, (Jingdezhen, China) c. 1785. Hard-paste porcelain, enamel, and gilt, 9 3/4 x 9 3/4 x 11/16 in. (24.8 x 24.8 x 1.7 cm). George Washington's Mount Vernon. Courtesy of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, Purchase, 1944, W-1436/B. Photo: Edward Owen

Thomas Burling (American, 1746-1831). *Side Chair*, 1790. Mahogany, oak, leather, and brass, 38 x 20 1/8 x 18 in. (96.5 x 51.1 x 45.7 cm). Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello, Bequest of Ethel Patterson Randolph, 1958, 1958-16. Photo courtesy of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello