

The  Museum

For Immediate Release

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**David Rockefeller Supports
The Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design
With A One Million Dollar Gift**

–Rockefeller Gift Honors Family’s Legacy in Rhode Island–

December 15, 2005–Providence, RI–The Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design (The RISD Museum), today announces a significant and generous pledge of one million dollars to the Museum from David Rockefeller, philanthropist, banker, and chairman emeritus of the Museum of Modern Art. The gift is for the restoration, reinstallation, and reinterpretation of the Museum’s Asian galleries named for Mr. Rockefeller’s mother and aunt. Mr. Rockefeller credits both his mother and his aunt for the cultivation and development of his aesthetic sense and collecting.

Mr. Rockefeller’s mother, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, and his aunt, Lucy Truman Aldrich, were both remarkable collectors, who gave outstanding collections to The RISD Museum. The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Gallery, designed by architect Philip Johnson and opened in 1953, showcases Japanese woodblock prints from the permanent collection on a revolving basis. Mrs. Rockefeller gave around 700 of these to the Museum between 1934 and 1941; half of the total number of 1400 works in this area. The Lucy Truman Aldrich Gallery presents regular rotations from the Museum’s superb collection of about 3500 Asian textiles. Many of these were gifted to the Museum between 1935 and 1955 by Miss Aldrich, including perhaps the finest assemblage of Noh theater robes outside Japan.

According to Hope Alswang, Director of The RISD Museum, “Mr. Rockefeller’s generosity will honor the legacy of Mrs. Rockefeller and Miss Aldrich and allow us to show our fine Asian collections in appropriate and beautiful new galleries.”

The David Rockefeller gift, the first significant sum to be earmarked for the reinstallation of the Museum’s permanent collection allows the Museum to reinterpret the sixth floor Asian collections with new cases, lighting and increased visitor amenities. This gift brings the RISD campaign to \$80 million dollars with \$30 million of that total dedicated to the Chace Center and Radeke renovations.

Miss Aldrich and Mrs. Rockefeller were the daughters of the prominent and influential Rhode Island Senator Nelson W. Aldrich. Miss Aldrich continued to call Providence her home throughout her life although her travels and her avid collecting would carry her around the globe. In 1934, Mrs. Rockefeller gave 623 Japanese color woodblock prints of birds and flowers to The RISD Museum. It was her intention to have the prints shown in groups and rotated.

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Miss Aldrich gave a total of 786 gifts of costume and textiles from her first gift in 1934 to 1956 when the Museum received additional complementary objects by bequest. The objects given include 47 Japanese Noh robes and textiles from Europe, America, and Asia from Turkey to Japan. Significant works include objects from Turkey, Persia, Azerbaijan, Caucasus, India, Central Asia, mainland southeast Asia, Indonesia, China, and Japan. When the robes and textiles from the “Lucy Truman Aldrich Collection” were first shown in the Museum, Miss Aldrich was personally involved in the installation. She and Mrs. Rockefeller remained active supporters of the Museum throughout their lives.

In 1935, Miss Aldrich also presented to the Museum her collection of 18th-century European porcelain figures, which was formally catalogued in 1965 with the assistance of David Rockefeller. Today, this collection is displayed in a third floor gallery that Mrs. Rockefeller, Miss Aldrich, and Helen Danforth helped to create. They contributed an 18th-century pine-paneled room from an English manor house as the setting for the porcelain collection, transforming a corridor gallery.

The RISD Museum of Art is lending ten Japanese prints and two Nō robes to an exhibition titled “The Rockefeller Family Collects,” scheduled to open at Asia Society in New York on February 23, 2006.

A world-class museum in Providence, RI, The Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design was founded as part of Rhode Island School of Design in 1877. Its permanent collection of nearly 80,000 objects includes paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, costume, furniture, and other works of art from every part of the world, including objects from Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and art of all periods from Asia, Europe, and the Americas, up to the latest in contemporary art. In addition, the Museum offers a wide array of educational and public programs.

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