

FAIRMOUNT PARK ART ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ART ASSOCIATION RECEIVES AIC/HERITAGE PRESERVATION AWARD

The Fairmount Park Art Association is pleased to announce receipt of the year 2000 Award for Outstanding Commitment to the Preservation and Care of Collections given jointly by the American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) and Heritage Preservation. The Art Association is being honored with this prestigious national award for its pioneering outdoor sculpture conservation program. The AIC/Heritage Preservation award was created in recognition of organizations that have been exemplary in their commitment to conservation and the preservation of cultural property. In 1999 the Williamsburg Foundation, Inc. received the award, followed by a decision to distribute multiple awards in subsequent years. In addition to the Art Association, this year's award was also received by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto, Canada; and the Alden B. Dow Home and Studio in Midland, Michigan.

The Art Association will formally receive the award on Wednesday, November 8, 2000 at a ceremony held in conjunction with the opening of the *New•Land•Marks: public art, community, and the meaning of place* Community Exhibition which features four projects proposed for sites in Fairmount Park. Members of the press are invited to attend this private award ceremony and reception held at Memorial Hall (West Fairmount Park, 42nd Street and Parkside Avenue) from 5 – 7 PM.

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The Fairmount Park Art Association has a long history of conservation promotion and advocacy, taking a long-term view of public art and responsible stewardship. Concern for the condition of the city's bronze and stone sculptures led the Art Association to establish a pilot outdoor Sculpture Conservation and Maintenance Program in 1982 – one of the first in the nation. With generous support from the Mabel Pew Myrin Trusts, twenty-five sculptures of historic and artistic significance were identified (such as Frederic Remington's *Cowboy* [1908]) to receive initial conservation treatment by a professional conservator. Many of these works are now part of an ongoing annual conservation maintenance plan developed with conservator Steven Tatti to improve their appearance, arrest further deterioration, and raise public awareness regarding the need for ongoing care.

The Art Association works with other public and private agencies to encourage responsible care of public art in Philadelphia. As the coordinating agency in Philadelphia and surrounding counties for the national Save Outdoor Sculpture! (SOS!) program, the Art Association trained over 100 volunteers to survey outdoor sculpture. The Art Association maintains a computerized inventory of all the public art in Philadelphia (over 1,400 entries), which is available in print form through the Art Department of the main branch of the Free Library. Additionally, the Art Association serves as a conservation information resource, providing materials and advice ranging from distributing the AIC's tips on "How to Select a Conservator," to assistance with queries about conservation considerations for new commissions.

Chartered in 1872, the Fairmount Park Art Association is the nation's first private, non-profit organization integrating public art and urban planning. The Art Association works to promote the appreciation of public art through advocacy efforts and programs that commission, interpret, and preserve public art in Philadelphia.

For more information, please call Laura S. Griffith, Assistant Director at (215) 546-7550.

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