

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shaker
Museum



SHAKER MUSEUM AWARDED TWO-YEAR GRANT OF \$230,000 FROM THE HENRY LUCE FOUNDATION

Grant Will Support the Inaugural Permanent Collection Installation, *Shaker Belief, Shaker Life, Shaker Community*, in the Museum's New Facility in Chatham, NY

CHATHAM, NEW YORK, April 06, 2021 – Shaker Museum, which stewards the most comprehensive collection of Shaker material culture and archives, announced today that it has been awarded a two-year grant of \$230,000 from the Henry Luce Foundation. The grant is for the inaugural permanent collection installation, *Shaker Belief, Shaker Life, Shaker Community*, which will be presented at the launch of the museum's new facility in downtown Chatham, NY, currently in development.

Curated by Maggie Taft, *Shaker Belief, Shaker Life, Shaker Community* will offer a kaleidoscopic view of American Shakerism from the religion's founding in the late 18th century to its flourishing in the 19th century and decline during the 20th. Using selections from Shaker Museum's collection, the exhibition will explore how Shakerism's radical foundational values of equality, inclusion, and accessibility were pursued and experienced by members of Shaker communities. The exhibition underscores the many ways in which Shakers sought to forge equitable and inclusive communal bonds, and the difficulty of making good on those efforts in everyday life.

Shaker Museum Executive Director Lacy Schutz commented, "Shaker Museum is tremendously grateful to the Henry Luce Foundation for this generous support of our inaugural permanent collection installation. Through material histories, spiritual practices, and labor practices illustrated in *Shaker Belief, Shaker Life, Shaker Community*, we will be able to share the beautiful story of Shakerism with broader audiences. This exhibit is not only important because it is the first and foundational story of the Shakers

that we as an institution will tell, but because it provides salient lessons about creating equitable communities in the present and future, while celebrating the materiality and spirituality of the past."

Dr. Teresa A. Carbone, Program Director for American Art, at the Henry Luce Foundation said: "The Luce Foundation's American Art Program is very pleased to continue its support of the Shaker Museum's leadership and staff in their energetic efforts to share the museum's remarkable collections and the legacy of Shaker beliefs with the audiences who will be drawn to a vibrant new museum in Chatham, NY. In doing so, the Foundation recognizes the museum's commitment to centering works of Shaker art and design in pressing conversations about equity and representation, and to engaging local and regional communities in the museum's growth and progress."

In 2016, the Henry Luce Foundation generously supported Shaker Museum with a \$750,000 grant to catalog, digitize, and put the collection online. That critical grant has enabled the institution to engage audiences with Shaker material while it does not have physical home. Moreover, the project was also a critical step in preserving the entire collection for future generations and readying it for its new permanent facility in Chatham.

After being closed to the public for more than ten years, Shaker Museum has purchased a 19th century industrial building in Chatham, NY and is in the process of renovating and building an expansive addition to the facility designed by Selldorf Architects. The new facility is essential to the museum's ability to deliver humanities programming to local, national, and international audiences, allowing it to share and preserve its unparalleled collection. The museum's ambition is to tell the complete story of the Shakers, including their material culture as seen through furniture, clothing, archives, and photographs; their social legacy of communalism, inclusion, and pacifism; and their technological innovations in manufacturing, architecture, agriculture, and engineering.

About the Curator

Maggie Taft teaches writing in the Master of the Arts Program in the Humanities at the University of Chicago and is founding director of the Haddon Avenue Writing Institute, a community-based writing center in Chicago. Before establishing the Institute, she earned a PhD in art history from the University of Chicago, where her dissertation "Making Danish Modern, 1945–1960" received the 2015 Dean's Distinguished Dissertation Award in the Humanities. From 2014–16 she served as the Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Modeling Interdisciplinary Inquiry at Washington University in St. Louis. Taft's writing and reviews have appeared in many magazines and journals including *Artforum*, *The Point*, *Texte Zur Kunst*, *Design and Culture*, and *The Journal of Design History*. She is coeditor of *Art in Chicago: From the Fire to Now* (University of Chicago Press, 2018), the first single volume history of art in Chicago from the nineteenth century through the present day. Her book, *The Chieftain and the Chair:*

Danish Design in Postwar America, is under contract with the University of Chicago Press. She curated Shaker Museum's 2020 summer pop-up exhibition *Shakers: In Community*.

About Shaker Museum

With more than 18,000 objects, Shaker Museum stewards the most comprehensive collection of Shaker material culture and archives. It is the leader nationwide among organizations devoted to Shaker history. Its permanent new facility in Chatham, NY designed by Selldorf Architects is estimated for completion in 2023. The museum also stewards the historic site in New Lebanon, NY and has a campus in Old Chatham, NY, which is open year-round by appointment, where the administrative offices, collections, library, and archives are housed. The museum's collection can be viewed online at <http://shakermuseum.us>.

About the Henry Luce Foundation

The Henry Luce Foundation seeks to enrich public discourse by promoting innovative scholarship, cultivating new leaders, and fostering international understanding. Established in 1936 by Henry R. Luce, the co-founder and editor-in-chief of Time, Inc., the Luce Foundation advances its mission through grantmaking and leadership programs in the fields of Asia, higher education, religion and theology, art, and public policy. A leader in arts funding in the United States, the Luce Foundation's American Art Program was established in 1982 to support museums, universities, and arts organizations in their efforts to advance the understanding and experience of American and Native American visual arts through research, exhibitions, publications, and collection projects. Visit: www.hluce.org.

Photos: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1is3encpo735k65/AAArqElehA0FnVlkVA6GxHEga?dl=0>

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