



# PRESS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### DELAWARE ART MUSEUM ANNOUNCES *THE RETURN OF THE PRE-RAPHAELITES*

Wilmington, DE—(AUGUST 30, 2007) The Delaware Art Museum is pleased to announce *The Return of the Pre-Raphaelites*, as America’s largest collection of Pre-Raphaelite art comes home to Wilmington following an international tour. A series of celebrations will herald the return, including a Gala on September 20, a Homecoming Party on September 22, and a Family Festival on September 23, which is when the Pre-Raphaelite collection goes on view to the public.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (P.R.B.) was the name chosen by seven young men who gathered together in London in 1848, united by a shared distrust for the Royal Academy, the sanctioned art institution of the day. They disagreed with the style of loose or “painterly” brushwork that was taught at the Royal Academy schools and which found favor with the juries at their annual exhibitions. The Pre-Raphaelites took as inspiration for their paintings subjects drawn primarily from literature, including the Bible, Shakespeare, and the poets of their own age, such as Alfred, Lord Tennyson (*Lancelot and Guinevere*) and John Keats (*Isabella and the Pot of Basil*).

Occasionally, the Pre-Raphaelites’ works reflected the concerns raised by the changes experienced during the age of the Industrial Revolution in which they lived. In some cases, they painted scenes of modern life with a moral message, as in Rossetti’s *Found*, showing a young country woman who has fallen into prostitution, being unable to find suitable work in the city. In other cases, these concerns were reflected in scenes of fantasy and escape, such as Edward Burne-Jones’ *The Council Chamber*, inspired by the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty.

“The Victorian period during which the Pre-Raphaelites worked bears so many similarities to our own time, including rapid advances in technology, significant changes in the world political map, and uncommon growth and movement of populations,” said Margaretta Frederick, Curator of the Bancroft

Collection of Pre-Raphaelite Art. “I am continually amazed and inspired by the lives and works of these painters, which offer fresh perspectives on the present.”

The Pre-Raphaelites were particularly attracted to a type of feminine beauty, characterized by strong facial features and brilliant red hair. They often found their models—whom they called “stunners” — while walking the streets of London. In later works from the 1870s, an area in which the Museum’s collection is quite strong, women become the central subject. Rossetti’s images from this period are dreamy, sensual, and provocative.

As the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood gradually dispersed, new inspiration appeared when William Morris and Rossetti became close friends. In 1861, Morris founded the firm that would become Morris and Company, designing hand-crafted household objects. Morris and his Pre-Raphaelite associates deeply believed that beautiful objects would improve individual lives adversely affected by the harsh industrial world. The Museum’s collection features a wide range of Arts and Crafts objects including furniture, glass, metalwork, pottery, and jewelry.

In 1935, the family of Samuel Bancroft, Jr. (1840-1915), a Wilmington textile mill owner, bequeathed his Pre-Raphaelite collection to the Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts, an early incarnation of the Delaware Art Museum. The Bancroft Collection of Pre-Raphaelite Art consists of over 150 works, including paintings, drawings, photographs, decorative arts, and illustrated books. The Museum collaborated with Trellist, Inc., of Wilmington, Delaware, to launch a website devoted to the Bancroft Collection: [www.preraph.org](http://www.preraph.org).

Reinstallation of the Bancroft Collection of Pre-Raphaelite Art is sponsored by DuPont, with additional support provided by the The Getty Foundation, a program of The J. Paul Getty Trust in Los Angeles. The following have generously donated products or services to the reinstallation: Calico Corners, John Alexander Ltd., Material Culture / Woven Legends, Morris & Co. through Sanderson & Sons, and Trellist, Inc.

The Gala and Homecoming Party are supported, in part, by Sotheby’s MasterCard®, Sodexo, Bouchaine Vineyards, and Corporation Service Company. The *News Journal* is the Media Sponsor.

*The Return of the Pre-Raphaelites* is made possible, in part, by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency committed to promoting and supporting the arts in Delaware.

## **Pre-Raphaelite Celebrations**

### **Pre-Raphaelite Gala**

*September 20, 2007, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.*

*Call for price*

This black-tie event, which is co-chaired by Tatiana Copeland and Peggy Woolard, offers the earliest opportunity to see the newly installed collection. The evening will include a ribbon-cutting ceremony, champagne, and dinner. Attendees will include His Excellency Sir David Manning, Her Majesty's Ambassador from the United Kingdom to the United States, and Stephen Wildman, guest curator of *Waking Dreams* (the traveling exhibition of the Museum's Pre-Raphaelite collection) and editor of its catalog.

### **Homecoming Party**

*September 22, 2007, 8:00 p.m. – midnight*

*Call for price*

This late-evening celebration offers cocktails, delicious cuisine, live music, and fireworks to herald the Pre-Raphaelites' return.

### **Family Festival**

*September 23, 2007, noon – 3:00 p.m.*

*Free admission every Sunday thanks to AstraZeneca*

Children and their family members will create art projects inspired by the art of the Pre-Raphaelites, enjoy tours of the collection, and participate in a fun and interactive children's theater with *Middle-earth Studios*, an organization focused on enriching children's imagination through costume storytelling.

## **IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

### **About the Museum**

The Delaware Art Museum, located at 2301 Kentmere Parkway, Wilmington, DE 19806, is open Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. and Sunday noon–4:00 p.m. Regular admission prices are as follows: adults (18–59) \$10, seniors (60+) \$8, college students \$5, and youth (7–17) \$3, with children 6 and under entering for free, and admission free to all visitors on Sundays. For more information, call 302-571-9590 or 866-232-3714 (toll-free), or visit the website at <http://www.delart.org>.

Founded in 1912, the Delaware Art Museum holds a world-renowned collection that focuses on American art and illustration from the 19th to the 21st century as well as the British Pre-Raphaelite movement of the mid-19th century. The Museum offers the outdoor Copeland Sculpture Garden, the Helen Farr Sloan

Library & Archives, studio art classes, the interactive Kids' Corner learning area, the delART Café featuring free Wi-Fi access, and the Museum Store with distinctive books and gifts.