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Smithsonian American Art Museum Presents Summer 2011 Programs to Accompany “The Great American Hall of Wonders”

“The Great American Hall of Wonders,” an exhibition that examines 19th-century American innovation through works of art, mechanical inventions and scientific discoveries, opens at the Smithsonian American Art Museum July 15 and runs through Jan. 8, 2012. Through a collaboration with the United States Patent and Trademark Office, the museum will present a robust series of public programs and educational outreach about today’s inventors and inventions as a contemporary complement to the exhibition. These programs will include webcast public lectures, an inventors’ symposium and hands-on activities for children and families, as well as college seminars and professional development workshops for educators.

The following programs are free and will take place at the museum’s flagship building, located at Eighth and F streets N.W. For more information the public may visit americanart.si.edu/calendar, call (202) 633-1000 or email AmericanArtPrograms@si.edu.

Free Public Programs

The Great American Experiment—Thursday, July 14; 6 p.m.

Exhibition curator Claire Perry discusses the idea of the United States as a “great experiment” and how inventive energies in art, science and technology shaped the nation during the 19th century. No tickets required. The program takes place in the museum’s McEvoy Auditorium; doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Spark!Labs—Fridays, July 22 – Aug. 26; 11 a.m.

Kids 8 to 12 are invited to explore innovation in the surrounding world through hands-on activities and science experiments. Limited space; pre-registration required. Email AmericanArtPrograms@si.edu or call (202) 633-8490. The program takes place in the museum’s Kogod Courtyard.

Art-stronaut Family Day—Saturday, Aug. 13; 11:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Kids of all ages will enjoy experiments and art activities illustrating the innovation that led to space travel, a scavenger hunt through the galleries and a visit from a NASA astronaut. The program takes place in the museum’s Kogod Courtyard.

Programs featuring 20th- and 21st-century inventors are planned for the fall 2011; details will be available online as the participants are confirmed. A lecture and book signing by Pulitzer

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Prize-winning author Daniel Walker Howe, presented in collaboration with The Smithsonian Associates, also is anticipated.

Credit

“The Great American Hall of Wonders” is organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum in collaboration with the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Battelle has provided important leadership support for the exhibition. Generous contributions also have been provided by Sheila Duignan and Mike Wilkins, the Raymond J. and Margaret Horowitz Endowment, Thelma and Melvin Lenkin, Betty and Whitney MacMillan, Jean Mahoney and Robin Martin.

About the Smithsonian American Art Museum

The Smithsonian American Art Museum celebrates the vision and creativity of Americans with artworks in all media spanning more than three centuries. Its National Historic Landmark building is located at Eighth and F streets N.W., above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station. Museum hours are 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. Admission is free. Follow the museum on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, ArtBabble, iTunes and YouTube. Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Website: americanart.si.edu.

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