

Wunsch Americana Foundation



CHRISTIE'S
THE ART PEOPLE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE WUNSCH AMERICANA FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE FOURTH ANNUAL ERIC M. WUNSCH
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE AMERICAN ARTS HONORING**

MORRISON H. HECKSCHER AND PETER M. KENNY

HOSTED BY CHRISTIE'S

*The award ceremony to be held Wednesday, January 20, 2016 from 5:30-7:30 pm at Christie's, 20
Rockefeller Plaza, New York City*

NEW YORK—December 17, 2015—The Wunsch Americana Foundation has named Peter M. Kenny and Morrison H. Heckscher the 2016 *Eric M. Wunsch Award for Excellence in the American Arts* honorees, recognizing their dedication and contribution towards preserving American Decorative Arts. The award was created by the Foundation to continue the legacy of renowned collector Martin Wunsch and to encourage greater scholarship and appreciation of American Decorative Arts. Christie's will host the award ceremony on January 20, 2016 at their Rockefeller Center Galleries.

Heckscher and Kenny are recognized for their contributions to the expansion and modernization of the American Wing at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. They oversaw renovations to the American Wing from 2003 to 2012, which modernized the existing building—comprised of the original 1924 structure and its 1980 expansion—adding galleries for American paintings, sculpture and 18th century decorative arts. They spent much of their careers at The Met acquiring architectural elements, whole rooms and fragments, all for this ultimate installation and update, carrying on the museum's history of collecting interiors.

"It's an honor to know these two accomplished scholars and leaders in the field, who consistently delivered the best of the best for The Met with such grace and academic rigor," said Wunsch Americana Foundation President Peter Wunsch. "The exhibitions Morrie curated on John Townsend and American Rococo were simply paradigm-shifting. And Peter's exhibitions on Charles Honore Lannuier and Duncan Phyfe told the story of America in an earlier time—all in the context of the extraordinary galleries of The American Wing he helped to create."

"Christie's is honored to once again be the host for the prestigious 2016 Wunsch Americana Award. I cannot think of two more deserving individuals that Peter Kenny and Morrie Heckscher—each of whom have contributed so much to our understanding in the field of American furniture.

We celebrate their extraordinary accomplishments and friendship to all in the field," said John Hays, Deputy Chairman, Christie's.

In honor of the award recipients, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's American Wing will be offering a MetFridays tour focusing on the fruits of Heckscher and Kenny's labors. **Please join Alyce Englund, Assistant Curator of American Decorative Arts, for *The Thrill of Discovery: Building the Met's American Furniture Collection*, a discussion of major acquisitions of 18th- and 19th-century American furniture, on Friday, January 15, 2016, at 6pm.**

Morrison H. Heckscher

Morrison H. Heckscher held curatorial positions in The American Wing of The Metropolitan Museum of Art for over 30 years, and in 2001, was named the Lawrence A. Fleischman Chairman of The American Wing.

His career at The Met began in 1966 where he worked in the prints department before starting his career in the American Wing in 1968, hired by under Berry B. Tracy, as assistant curator of American Decorative Arts. From 1978 to 1998, Heckscher served as Curator of American Decorative Arts and from 1998 as Anthony W. and Lulu C. Wang Curator, Department of American Decorative Arts. He originally joined the Metropolitan Museum as a Chester Dale Fellow in the Print Department in 1966 and became a Curator in the American Wing in 1968, serving in that capacity for the next 10 years.

Mr. Heckscher received his B. A. in American History from Wesleyan University, an M. A. from the University of Delaware's Winterthur Program in Early American Culture, and the Ph.D. in Art History from Columbia University.

Over the years, Mr. Heckscher has served as curator for a number of special exhibitions, including *An Architect and His Client: Frank Lloyd Wright and Francis W. Little* (1973); *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt* (1986); *American Rococo: Elegance in Ornament, 1750-1775* (1992); *The Architecture of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (1996); *American Furniture and the Art of Connoisseurship* (1998); and *John Townsend, Newport Cabinetmaker* (2005).

He is the author of dozens of articles, on subjects ranging from rustic furniture design to upholstery techniques to Philadelphia Chippendale, which he has contributed to scholarly journals and magazines, including *Antiques*, *The Burlington Magazine*, *Furniture History*, and *Apollo*. Mr. Heckscher has also written a number of exhibition and collections catalogues, including *American Furniture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art: The Late Colonial Period—Queen Anne and Chippendale Styles* (1985), which won the Charles F. Montgomery Award of The Decorative Arts Society, and *John Townsend, Newport Cabinetmaker* (2005). He has written often for The Metropolitan Museum of Art *Bulletins*, notably the summer 1995 edition, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: An Architectural History*. In 2008, Heckscher published *Creating Central Park*, a history of the public space designed by Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted.

From 1973 to 1975, Mr. Heckscher served as President of the New York Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. He was President of the Society of Winterthur Fellows from 1987 to 1991.

Mr. Heckscher has been a Trustee of the Winterthur Museum since 1993, and since 1995 a Trustee of the Samuel F. B. Morse Historic Site. He is also a Director of Scenic Hudson, Inc., and in the 1970s

served as a Director of the Society of Architectural Historians and an Overseer of Strawberry Banke in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Peter Kenny

A 30-year veteran of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Peter Kenny is considered one of the nation's foremost authorities on American furniture, writing and lecturing extensively on American colonial and federal period furniture and craftsmen. He was the Ruth Bigelow Wriston Curator of American Arts and Administrator of the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum and worked closely with Morrison Heckscher, Chairman (Emeritus) of the American Wing, on the renovation of its unsurpassed collection of period rooms and galleries for the fine and decorative arts.

A member of The Met's curatorial staff since 1989, Kenny joined Classical American Homes Preservation Trust in 2015 as Co-President with Margize Howell, the foundation's current Executive Director. Classical American Homes is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) foundation whose primary focus is the preservation of classical residential architecture, period furnishings, and landscapes in America, primarily of the early 19th century.

Kenny is a noted lecturer and the author of various award-winning books on American furniture, including, most recently, *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York* and *Honoré Lannuier, Cabinet Maker from Paris: The Life and Work of a French Ébéniste in Federal New York*.

Kenny is on the Board of Directors of the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which publishes annually *American Furniture and Ceramics in America*, the journals of record in their fields, Boscobel Restorations, Inc., the Decorative Arts Trust, and the Classical Institute of the South. He is a graduate of Montclair State University (BA) and the State University of New York,

PRESS CONTACTS:

Jennifer Cuminale | Christie's | jcuminale@christies.com | +1 212 636 2680
Shayna McClelland | The Wunsch Americana Foundation | +1 347 744 5991 | shayna@mcclellandco.com

About The Wunsch Americana Foundation

The Wunsch Americana Foundation (WAF) was founded in 1946. The late Martin Wunsch drove the Foundation to focus on American Decorative Arts in the 1970s. He was an accomplished mechanical engineer and inventor by profession, as well as one of the foremost collectors of American furniture and Old Masters paintings by avocation. A distinguished scholar, he inspired many like-minded collectors, dealers, and curators to join him in preserving America's art history.

Now overseen by Peter, Eric, and Noah Wunsch, WAF continues its investment in American antiquities through education and preservation initiatives.

The Foundation operates out of New York City, where it manages its lending, sharing, and gifting relationships with a host of institutions throughout the United States. In 2012, the Foundation established the Eric M. Wunsch Award for Excellence in the American Arts, which is presented annually to individuals, institutions, and causes that embrace the spirit of collegial efforts to support the field of American Decorative Arts.

The inaugural Eric M. Wunsch Award was given to Patricia E. Kane, the Friends of American Arts Curator of American Decorative Arts at the Yale University Art Gallery. Linda H. Kaufman and the late George M. Kaufman, private collectors and philanthropists, and Richard H. Jenrette of Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette and his foundation, the Classical American Homes Preservation Trust were the 2014 recipients; and in 2015, WAF honored the Chipstone Foundation and Brooklyn Museum director Arnold Lehman. For more information, visit www.wunschcollection.com.

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2014 that totalled £5.1 billion / \$8.4 billion, making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers around 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totalled £916.1 million (\$1.5 billion).

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, New Delhi, Mumbai and Dubai.

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, third-party financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

###

Images available on request

FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:

