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# \*Images Available Upon Request

# Cincinnati Art Museum to enhance visitor experience with Schmidlapp Gallery revitalization

 **CINCINNATI—** The Cincinnati Art Museum has been awarded a generous $1 million grant to transform the museum’s visitor experience through an innovative redesign of its Schmidlapp Gallery. The renovations, made possible by the grant from Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trusts, Fifth Third Bank, Trustee, along with additional financial support from the State of Ohio, will allow people to connect with art, engage in focused study of collections, and provide orientation and connection to the historic Bimel Courtyard.

The design for the renovated Schmidlapp Gallery focuses on its position as a central architectural artery essential to every museum visit. The renovation will invite visitors to pause, converse, linger and discover highlights of the museum’s collection.

The integral features of the plan include the addition of a courtyard wall of windows for natural light, seating to encourage congregation, individual looking lounges and detailed curatorial interpretation around singular artworks, and the installation of Saul Steinberg’s cherished large-scale “Mural of Cincinnati.” New floors, lighting and state-of-the-art temperature and humidity controls will be part of this revitalization.

Cameron Kitchin, the museum’s Louis and Louise Dieterle Nippert Director, notes that the plans incorporate new interpretive and visitor research and reflect the museum’s comprehensive 2016-2020 strategic plan. “The Schmidlapp Gallery will be welcoming and immediately embrace the needs of contemporary visitors. These changes will provide innovative modes of art learning incorporating our collections. The vibrant and accessible space will be modern and look to the future while honoring our past.”

Cincinnati companies emersion DESIGN and Monarch Construction have been contracted for this project. The renovation will be completed by the end of 2017. Installation of artworks, interactive technologies, and other features will be added in early 2018.

Although changes to the space will be significant, care is being taken to minimize visitor impact during the construction period. The Schmidlapp Gallery will be closed for one day, on Friday, March 3, to complete the final stages of removing the artwork from the gallery space. A selection of bronze sculptures will be temporarily relocated to the Great Hall.

Starting March 6, a temporary wall will be erected along the west side of the Schmidlapp Gallery and will remain until mid-June. During this time, the space will be open as a walkway and partial gallery. The space will remain ADA-compliant and allow room for wheelchair and stroller access. From mid-June through early September 2017, the museum plans to close the space and detour visitors through the Hanna Wing.

The Schmidlapp Gallery is one of the most used spaces within the museum. Nearly all of its visitors pass through the gallery between the lobby and the museum’s Great Hall. The Schmidlapp Gallery has recently been used to feature “icons” drawn from the museum’s permanent collection including Warhol, Monet and Degas. Prior to October 2011, it showcased the museum’s Antiquities collection.

The Cincinnati Art Museum first opened its doors to the public in 1886, making it one of the oldest art museum buildings in the country. The Emma Louise Schmidlapp Wing, which includes the Schmidlapp Gallery, opened in 1907. It was designed by Chicago architect Daniel H. Burnham in the Doric temple style.

The museum has experienced numerous expansions and renovations since its original construction. Many aspects of the most recent Cincinnati Wing and Make Room for Art renovation projects successfully drew on the same architectural principles to be used in the Schmidlapp Gallery renovation, putting visitor experience, inspiration and orientation at the center of the project.

The museum’s Great Hall was renovated in 1993 and the main lobby in 2014. The renovations in the Schmidlapp Gallery will connect these spaces and create more opportunities for learning, exhibition, congregation, conversation and comfort.

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**About Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trusts, Fifth Third Bank, Trustee**

Born in Piqua, Ohio in 1849 to German immigrants, Jacob G. Schmidlapp overcame poverty and great personal tragedy to become one of the most respected and successful men of his time. He founded the Union Savings Bank in 1876, which merged with Fifth Third Bank in 1919. In 1903, Schmidlapp established a trust to help improve lives by funding arts, health and human services, education, and community development initiatives. A second Schmidlapp Trust was established in 1919. The Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trusts support charitable or educational purposes; for relief in sickness, suffering and distress; for the care of young children, the aged or the helpless or afflicted; for the promotion of education, and to improve living conditions.

**About the Cincinnati Art Museum**

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as our members.

General admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum is always free. The museum is open Tuesday–Sunday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m. with extended Thursday hours until 8 p.m. [cincinnatiartmuseum.org](http://cincinnatiartmuseum.org).