



LEFT, TOP: Renzo Piano, Judith Dimon, Mayor Richard M. Daley, Chairman John H. Bryan, Maggie Daley, James M. Wood, and James Cuno celebrated the groundbreaking for the new north wing.

RIGHT, TOP: A large crowd of Art Institute benefactors and supporters joined with civic and corporate leaders to launch the new building.

LEFT, MIDDLE: Detail of the Monroe Street elevation of the Art Institute's new north wing designed by Renzo Piano.

RIGHT, BELOW: Architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable appeared with Renzo Piano and Frank Gehry in a live taping with television host Charlie Rose at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance in conjunction with the Art Institute's new north wing groundbreaking.

LEFT, BELOW: Caryn Harris, Judith Neisser, Patrick Diamond, and Audrey Tuggle gathered at the top of the Woman's Board Grand Staircase to view the *Zero Gravity* exhibition on the morning of the groundbreaking gala.

Report

of the President and Director

WHEN THE HISTORY of the Art Institute is written, fiscal year 2005 will be recorded as the one in which the Trustees voted to begin construction on the largest addition in the museum's history. The new north wing of the Art Institute will comprise more than 300,000 square feet, cost more than \$250 million, and contribute as no other project before to the advancement of our mission as Chicago's encyclopedic museum of the world's many artistic traditions.

In September 2004 architect Renzo Piano joined me at the annual meeting of the Sustaining Fellows to talk publicly about our plans for the new north wing. We spoke with optimism about our commitment to breaking ground within a year. We did so against the backdrop of Millennium Park, which, though it had just opened, was obviously a big success. On an earlier walk through the park with Chairman John H. Bryan and Trustee Tom Pritzker, it was painfully evident that the long-abandoned Goodman Theatre site was not only undeveloped potential for the Art Institute but also an eyesore in the center of the city. Clearly, we had to move forward with this expansion.

Over the course of the autumn, we worked on construction drawings and final estimates. By early 2005 we were nearly ready to present the Trustees with a budget for their approval. But the intervening months between September and January convinced us that we had to revisit aspects of the original project that had been eliminated in less optimistic times. In particular, we looked again at the idea of a bridge crossing Monroe Street, linking the museum to Millennium Park, and a third floor on top of the building's west pavilion. The latter would serve as the landing platform for the bridge and an attraction for the public, who upon arrival at the museum by way of the bridge could choose between an eating facility and a sculpture terrace with views back on to the park. They could also descend by escalator or elevator into the museum itself. The attractiveness of these two additions and the enhancement they would bring to the entire undertaking delayed our presentation to the Trustees until later in the spring.

In the meantime, we began our preparations for groundbreaking, firmly resolving that it was to be a celebration not only of the Art Institute but also of Chicago and of what our building program will do for this great city. I believe in the Enlightenment principles that museums and their collections are a force for understanding and tolerance, as well as for the dissolution of ignorance, superstition, and prejudice in the world. Perforce we are obliged to introduce our visitors to the full range of our collections and the world's great artistic legacies they represent. The new addition will contain galleries for our modern and contemporary collections—painting, sculpture, new media, photography, and architecture and design—and allow us to reinstall the current galleries, all the while rethinking how we present our collections to our visitors. We have formed interdepartmental curatorial teams to look afresh at our installations to emphasize the full range of the beauty and cultural significance of our collections. We fully intend to open our new addition in spring 2009 with the entire Art Institute reinstalled.

We had this in mind at our groundbreaking on May 31. The event was designed to emphasize our civic role within Chicago. Thus we invited some of the city's most important cultural institutions—the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Children's Choir, and Redmoon Theater—to join us, and we even had a Chicago actor recite passages from Daniel Burnham's poetic and foresightful 1909 *Plan of Chicago*. It was a grand day for the Art Institute and Chicago. And it marked the Trustees' formal approval of our project, expected to take three years to construct and a fourth to install and prepare. Our 2009 opening will come one hundred years after the publication of Burnham's *Plan*.

In keeping with our mission, we featured this year such notable exhibitions as *Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand: American Indian Art of the Ancient Midwest and South*, a beautiful, scholarly, and poetic presentation of objects from the earliest human settlements in the central lands of eastern North America. This was followed by *Chicago Architecture: Ten Visions*, in which local architects looked at some of the most pressing issues facing the city. An exhibition of contemporary Dutch photography was succeeded by *Toulouse-Lautrec and Montmartre*, the latter prompted by key works in our collections, including the artist's *At the Moulin Rouge* and *Ballet Dancers*, both in the Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection, the gift of one of our greatest benefactors, Frederic Clay Bartlett; *Moulin de la Galette*, given to us by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Larned Coburn; *Equestrienne (At the Circus Fernando)* from the Joseph Winterbotham Collection; as well as numerous lithographs and drawings.

In one way or another, all of our programs and exhibitions derive from our collections. Building an encyclopedic collection for Chicago, therefore, is our most important responsibility. This year, as every year, we added works of art of the greatest significance; we reproduce only some of them in this *Annual Report*, but these are fully representative of the quality and range of all of our acquisitions.

My first year at the Art Institute has been one of growth both for the museum and for me. That I could be asked to follow on the work of my friend Jim Wood, who retired on August 31, 2004, after twenty-four years of service, is an honor and a challenge of the highest order.

James Cuno, *President and Eloise W. Martin Director*



Baccio della Porta (Fra Bartolommeo; Italian, 1472–1517). *The Nativity*, 1504/07. Oil on panel; 34 x 24.5 cm. Ethel T. Scarborough Fund; L. L. and A. S. Coburn, Dr. and Mrs. William Gilligan, Mr. and Mrs. Lester King, John and Josephine Louis, Samuel A. Marx, Alexander McKay, Chester D. Tripp, and Murray Vale endowment funds; restricted gift of Marilyn Alsdorf, Anne Searle Bent, David and Celia Hilliard, Alexandra and John Nichols, Mrs. Harold T. Martin, Mrs. George B. Young in memory of her husband, and the Rhoades Foundation; gift of John Bross and members of the Old Masters Society in memory of Louise Smith Bross; through prior gift of the George F. Harding, Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Kimball, Mr. and Mrs. Martin A. Ryerson, and Charles H. and Mary F. S. Worcester collections (2005.49).