



KIRKLAND MUSEUM OF FINE & DECORATIVE ART ANNOUNCES NEW CHAIR ATTRIBUTION

Recent Dresser discovery brings clout to upcoming exhibition “Truth, Beauty and Power: Christopher Dresser and The Aesthetic Movement”

Denver, March 15, 2021 – Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art announces findings from new research attributing the design of a beautiful five-legged chair to famous British designer Christopher Dresser. Kirkland Museum is likely the first museum in the United States to display this chair with this attribution.

In preparation for the upcoming exhibition ***Truth, Beauty and Power: Christopher Dresser and The Aesthetic Movement***, Museum curatorial staff, working with international experts, uncovered the exciting new attribution of the chair which has been on view with Arts & Crafts and Aesthetic Movement designs at Kirkland Museum since May 2018, with no designer identified.

Research in preparation for the exhibition led staff to contact experts at the Dorman Memorial Museum in Middlesbrough, UK, which has the world’s largest public collection of works designed by Christopher Dresser. Dorman Museum then reached out to Harry Lyons, Dresser expert and author of “Christopher Dresser: The People’s Designer 1834–1904.”

“After preliminary research, I started making the connection to Dresser, and, after working with Dorman Museum and Mr. Lyons (both based in the UK), I was thrilled to find a compelling link between Dresser and our chair,” states Collections & Research Manager Becca Goodrum. “Dresser and his role in the Aesthetic Movement are an important early foundation of our decorative art collection. The discovery of this attribution further elevates the importance of our chair and enhances our wonderful collection even more.”

“In conjunction with our exhibition hopefully opening this summer, we are delighted to announce that per Harry Lyons and Dorman Museum, we believe this chair was designed by Christopher Dresser,” says Associate Museum Director Renée Albiston. “The chair was always intriguing, lovely and extraordinarily good design, only enhanced by this connection to one of the central designers of the era.”

In 1873, Christopher Dresser wrote about five-legged chairs. “There is no reason whatever why a chair should have four legs. If three would be better, or five, or any other number, let us use what would be best.” From this knowledge, along with the timing of Dresser’s work, Mr. Lyons believes the Kirkland Museum chair itself, as well as the upholstery (added later to the chair), were designed by Dresser, though he notes no definitive proof has been found about this chair specifically.

About Truth, Beauty and Power: Christopher Dresser and The Aesthetic Movement

Presented by Deputy Curator Christopher Herron, chosen from the collection assembled by Founding Director & Curator Hugh Grant.

Exhibition visitors will learn more about this lesser-known design movement through an exploration of common motifs used in designs from the Aesthetic Movement (c. 1865–1900) and the influence of British designer Christopher Dresser (1834–1904). This exhibition showcases works from the Museum's permanent collections, many never seen before.

Planning is underway for a virtual lecture and two virtual tours of the exhibition. Dates and registration details will be posted to the website when finalized. Please note: Due to the uncertainties of COVID-19, exhibition details are subject to change.

Reopening Kirkland Museum

Kirkland Museum is temporarily closed to the public due to damage from a burst water valve during February’s polar vortex that froze much of Denver. The closure is anticipated to last into May, though a firm date is yet to be set.

Damage to the Museum was mitigated by the swift response from Kirkland Museum staff, the facilities management team and a restoration contractor.

A staged restoration is in process and plans for repair are underway. Most of the damage is to the building, although some art restoration will be necessary.

Until the Museum can welcome visitors back to the building, the public can:

- Visit the Museum from the comfort of home with a [360 Degree Tour](#)
- Explore the Museum’s [Virtual Exhibitions](#)
- Shop the [Online Store](#) with both shipping and pickup options available
- Like/follow the Museum on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

Kirkland Museum has three principal collections, all shown together in salon style, allowing visitors to time travel through about 150 years of art. The evolving collections contain over 30,000 works by more than 1,500 artists and designers. The collections are: international decorative art from about 1870 to the present, with examples of every major design period from Arts & Crafts through Postmodern; a retrospective of Colorado painter Vance Kirkland (1904–1981) and the work of other Colorado and regional artists.

For more information, please visit kirklandmuseum.org. A digital press kit is available at kirklandmuseum.org/about-us/press/.

###

MEDIA CONTACT on behalf of Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art:

Katie Converse, Peri Marketing & Public Relations, 720-979-4530 or katie@perimarketing.com

About Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art:

Kirkland Museum is dedicated to enriching lives by presenting art and design in a unique and approachable way. The Museum is rediscovering, documenting, collecting, preserving and exhibiting works from over 150 years, beginning in the mid-19th century, of Colorado's distinguished art history, international decorative art and the works of Vance Kirkland (1904–1981). The Museum serves the general public and scholars through exhibitions, the loan of works and public programs.