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For Immediate Release

## **Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Announces the Public Opening Date and Inaugural Programming Highlights of the New Renzo Piano-Designed Wing: Thursday, January 19, 2012**

May 12, 2011—Boston, MA □ The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum announced today that it will open its new wing, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Renzo Piano, on **Thursday, January 19, 2012.**

The public opening celebration will begin with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, with Boston Mayor Thomas Menino officiating. The Museum will honor its legacy by opening the new wing in January, as Isabella Gardner originally unveiled the Museum on January 1, 1903.

Among the inaugural season programming highlights announced today are exhibitions in the new Special Exhibition Gallery and historic building, as well as an expanded concert series showcasing three works commissioned in honor of the new Calderwood Performance Hall. The wing will house essential programming and visitor amenities in purpose-built spaces, enabling preservation and restoration work in the historic 1903 building. Eight months out from the opening, the new wing is almost completely clad in its exterior materials of glass, brick and patinated copper with many interior systems going into place.

“The new wing will reveal the vibrant programming that has been constrained by the historic building's spaces—a true opening up of the Gardner Museum. Our opening celebration in 2012 will feature all of this programming in purpose-built spaces for the first time in the museum's history. We invite the public to join us as we celebrate the renewal of the Gardner Museum and the premiere of Renzo Piano's brilliantly designed spaces which give contemporary form to Gardner's legacy,” says Anne Hawley, Norma Jean Calderwood Director of the museum.

### **Inaugural Exhibitions**

The inaugural exhibition in the Special Exhibition Gallery in the new wing presents the first American museum solo show of artist Victoria Morton (b. 1971, Scotland), who was a Gardner Museum Artist-in-Residence in 2009. The yet-to-be-titled exhibition will feature new paintings created specifically for the new gallery and the opening of the new wing. The exhibition will

include a film about Morton at work in her studios in Glasgow and Urbino, as well as a live concert in the new performance hall by her band Muscles of Joy, whose members are all women artists. Following their U.S. debut at the Gardner Museum, the group will perform at Location One, New York.

“Victoria often creates three-dimensional paintings that question the so-called ‘dilemma of the edge’: frames, no frames, or multi-tasking frames. Visitors will see connections between Morton’s work and the richness of paintings in the Gardner collection, particularly exploring the context of the unique and surprising adjacencies present in Isabella Gardner’s installations,” says Pieranna Cavalchini, Gardner Museum Curator of Contemporary Art.

A complementary exhibition, on view in the Special Exhibition Gallery’s smaller space, will celebrate the Gardner’s Artist-in-Residence program, which commemorates its 20th anniversary in 2012. The exhibition will examine the history of the program through selected works by past participants, as well as works by artists who had personal ties to the Museum, such as John Singer Sargent, whom Isabella Gardner invited to paint in the museum in the winter of 1903.

Another inaugural exhibition will present the work of **Luisa Lambri** (b. 1969, Italy), who was an Artist-in-Residence in 2008. This exhibition will be presented in a new gallery space that currently serves as the entrance vestibule to the historic building. Lambri, who travels the world photographing architectural interiors, has photographed the Gardner Museum extensively and will return to the Gardner this year to photograph the completed new wing. She is now creating an artist book of these photographs, which will be juxtaposed with the diary of Willard Sears, the architect of the historic building. The artist book will be available in the new Museum Shop.

### **Site-Specific Installation**

The inaugural exhibitions will also extend outdoors, as a site-specific work by **Stefano Arienti** (b. 1961, Italy) will be installed on the exterior of the new wing. An installation artist who works with found images, Arienti was an Artist-in-Residence in 2004. In 2007, he presented *The Asian Shore*, an exhibition inspired by archival imagery of the Second Chinese Room, Isabella Gardner’s private meditation space. Arienti has been invited to produce a temporary work for the façade of the new wing, where architect Renzo Piano has designed a 36-foot-high by 16-foot-wide space for changing art installations. Arienti also will produce a guest book for the Living Room orientation area, where visitors can log memories or anecdotes from their visit.

### **Opening Music Season**

Among the most dramatic changes is the relocation of the Museum’s music programming from the Tapestry Room to the unique, cube-shaped, intimate Calderwood Performance Hall. The Gardner Museum’s celebrated music program will return in 2012 after a brief fall hiatus, offering expanded programming in the program’s key areas of chamber music, new music, and jazz. The new hall is designed to showcase a diverse range of programming, from solo performances to large ensembles, as well as lectures and talks.

From January through June 2012, the **Sunday Concert Series** will feature 18 concerts, including world premieres of three works in honor of the new hall by young composers commissioned by the Claremont Piano Trio, and a new collaboration with the New York Festival

of Song.

### **Jazz at the Gardner**

will continue on the third Thursday of each month, presenting globally inspired jazz performed by Berklee College of Music students.

### **Avant Gardner,**

the museum's celebration of cutting-edge classical music, will offer an extended number of programs on a new evening (the first Thursday of each month), welcoming back the Composer Portraits series from Columbia University's Miller Theater, as well as Boston's own Callithumpian Consort, who will celebrate the 100th birthday of groundbreaking American composer John Cage.

### **Landscape Residency Fellowship**

In 2012, the Museum will launch its first Landscape residency under the leadership of its recently named Consulting Curator of Landscape Charles Waldheim/Urban Agency. The bi-annual **Gardner Residential Fellowship in Landscape Studies** will recognize the work of an emerging design talent whose projects articulate the potential for landscape as a medium of design in the public realm. The Gardner Fellow will be selected by an international jury of leading voices in landscape architecture and will be awarded a three-month residency at the museum in the summer of 2012, living on-site in one of the Renzo Piano-designed apartments.

### **Lectures**

A four-part lecture series focusing on the theme of Masterpieces will reconnect audiences with some of the Gardner Museum's most intriguing objects through public conversations that both celebrate and interrogate the concept. Addressing works of art from a Roman sarcophagus to Matisse's *The Terrace, St. Tropez*, scholars will explore this compelling idea across medium and culture. The new lecture series explores how influential artists and collectors have assigned celebrity to certain works of art and how ideas of a masterwork change over time. The Landscape program also will continue to present scholars and thinkers in the field through its annual four-part lecture series, the first to be organized by Charles Waldheim/Urban Agency.

### **New Public Spaces**

The opening of the new wing will also introduce a truly unique visitor orientation space, called the Living Room, which will acclimate those unfamiliar with the distinctive world of the Gardner, as well as remind returning visitors of the experience ahead. Inspired by a project of the same name that was created for the museum in 2000 by Artist-in-Residence Lee Mingwei, the Living Room will have a domestic aesthetic that echoes the essence of Isabella Gardner's Palace, where personal and public spaces blend seamlessly. The space will be furnished with comfortable couches and chairs, reading tables and potted plants, creating an intimate and comfortable space for visitors who wish to linger and interact. The Living Room will be a lively space, where visitors can experience the "museum-at-work," much like in the adjacent greenhouses, classroom and education studio. Carrying on the tradition of Gardner's gracious hospitality, tea will be served in the Living Room in the afternoon.

Home to the museum's School and Community Partner Programs, the Studio provides a hands-on art-making workshop to complement the teaching in the galleries. The space, previously located in the basement of the historic building, will now be part of the public experience. Across from the Studio in the public hallway, an exhibition space will be devoted to

the display of works from students and the public. The first exhibition will be a photographic interpretation of School Partner Tobin Elementary School's journey from Tobin to the Gardner Museum. On the weekends during open hours, the space will be used for drop-in art-making for visitors of all ages.

**Preservation Update □ Tapestry Room, Lighting Project, South Façade**

For the first time since it opened in 1914, the 4,000-square-foot Tapestry Room is being restored to its original glory and will once again take its place as one of the nation's great tapestry halls. The restoration of this space will return the Tapestry Room to its original configuration for the first time since a temporary stage, chairs, and other modern elements were added to accommodate formal concerts in the early 1970s. While occasional smaller musical performances and talks will continue once the space is fully reinstalled, the Tapestry Room will primarily serve as a grand gallery for viewing tapestries and other works of art.

Conservation treatment of the Tapestry Room will encompass cleaning, restoration, and reinstallation of many parts of the gallery—including its Mercer-tiled floors and French medieval stone fireplace, select art and furniture objects, and new lighting. The historic arrangement of furniture in the center of the gallery and other vignettes around the windows as depicted in early photographs will also be restored.

The multi-year Lighting Project will be completed in time for the opening of the new wing featuring updated electrical systems, replaced or refurbished historic lighting fixtures, and the installation of a three-part shade system on gallery windows. Exterior work will restore the southern façade of the 1903 building facing the new wing with reinstalled historic windows and other architectural features.

**Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum • 280 The Fenway Boston MA 02115 617 566 1401**  
[www.gardnermuseum.org](http://www.gardnermuseum.org) • Modeled after a 15th-century Venetian palazzo with an interior courtyard garden, the Gardner Museum houses a collection of fine art spanning 30 centuries and featuring works by Titian, Rembrandt, Botticelli, and Sargent, as well as changing contemporary and historic exhibitions, classical concerts, lectures, and special events. The museum will open its new wing, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Renzo Piano, on January 19, 2012.

**Building on a Legacy Website □** [www.buildingproject.gardnermuseum.org](http://www.buildingproject.gardnermuseum.org).

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