



T H E H U N T I N G T O N
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**Rose Hills Foundation Makes \$10-Million Gift
to The Huntington**

Funding will support renovation of the historic Huntington Gallery, home to the European art collections and former residence of Henry and Arabella Huntington

SAN MARINO, Calif. – The Los Angeles-based Rose Hills Foundation has made a \$10-million gift to The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens to support the restoration and renovation of the historic Huntington Gallery, the former home of Henry E. and Arabella Huntington. The gift will be made in \$2 million installments over five years.

“We are extremely grateful to Rose Hills for its generosity and commitment to The Huntington,” said Steven Koblik, Huntington president. “This is a strategic leadership gift that will permit us to move forward in addressing our most pressing physical challenge – repair of a very significant architectural treasure in Southern California.”

The Rose Hills contribution will make it possible to repair the internal and external structure and carry out much needed seismic, electrical, environmental, and fire prevention upgrades.

The Huntington Gallery, now nearly 100 years old, was Mr. and Mrs. Huntington's home before becoming gallery space for the European art collections. More than 30 million visitors have toured the building since 1927. The gallery is especially famous for *The Blue Boy* by Thomas Gainsborough and *Pinkie* by Thomas Lawrence as well as important works by William Hogarth, Joshua Reynolds, JMW Turner, and John Constable, in a luxurious setting of major pieces of British furniture, silver and ceramics. The gallery also is home to important holdings of French, Italian, and Netherlandish paintings and sculpture including the great bronze *Diana* by the French 18th-century sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon.

Beyond its role as a gallery, the house is a work of art in its own right – its general style is Beaux Arts, adapted to the California climate and landscape. The central architectural feature in the development of the Huntington estate, it was designed by Myron Hunt and Elmer Grey and built in 1910. “The house is of immense importance in the architectural history of Southern California, a splendid example of the way in which Myron Hunt sought to merge a classical Mediterranean lifestyle with the California dream,” says John Murdoch, director of the Huntington’s art collections. “Intended eventually to become a public art gallery, the house also represents Mr. Huntington's high ambitions for the cultural and intellectual life of Southern California.”

The building’s basic structure is a reinforced concrete frame, one of the first applications of this type of seismic engineering in a residential project in the United States. Subsequent work in the 1970s strengthened the building significantly, but only partially – and with now-dated technology. Like the structure, the mechanical and electrical systems in the building were state-of-the-art for their period, but they are now well beyond their useful lives and present critical safety issues. Indeed, the entire electrical system must be replaced. (A faulty electrical circuit,

ironically in a piece of modern equipment, caused the 1985 fire that caused extensive smoke damage, and destroyed a painting by Reynolds.) Conversely, water represents a continuing threat to the collections. Ground water penetration and leaks in the roof drainage systems have caused damage to the structure in recent years. Water has also led to the deterioration of some exterior architectural details, which need stabilization and restoration.

The program of reconstruction and renovation will also improve the manner in which the building functions as an art museum. The portrait gallery where the grand manner portraits – *Pinkie*, *The Blue Boy*, and others – are displayed will be refurbished. The climate control systems, which are so critical to the preservation of the collection, will be modernized.

In total, the renovation will cost \$20 million; the gallery will close by fall 2005, with construction slated to get under way in 2006. To keep The Huntington's major European art objects on view during the duration of the project, they are being moved from the Huntington Gallery to the new Lois and Robert F. Erburu Gallery of American Art which will open to the public in late May.

ABOUT THE HUNTINGTON: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens is a collections-based research and educational institution serving scholars and the general public. More information can be found on the Web at www.huntington.org.

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