



New Orleans Museum of Art

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Contact: Grace Wilson, Director of Communications and Marketing, (504) 658-4106

SCENTS AND SENSIBILITY: Perfume Bottles & Related Accessories from Antiquity to Present

NOMA showcases Perfume's Historic Influence upon Art and Design

NEW ORLEANS – Just as young gentleman charmed the women in Jane Austin's *Sense and Sensibility*, perfumes have inspired people for centuries. The designs of each unique bottle reflect history. Curator John Keefe, Curator of Decorative Arts, showcases the art of perfumery and the craftsmanship behind each scent's unique case in *Scents and Sensibility*, on display on the New Orleans Museum of Art's (NOMA) second floor June 23 - October 24, 2010.

Sense and Sensibility showcases 125 objects covering the history of the scent bottle from its ancient origins to the present day. Scents, or perfumes, have been a part of civilization for more than four-thousand years and have characterized every known civilization. "Scents and their containers have fascinated the world from Julius Caesar to Coco Chanel," Keefe said.

Originating in the Near East, the first fragrances were aromatics kindled as incense to the gods and ancestors. Years later, oils scented by saffron, cyprus, juniper, and more were applied to the body in ancient Egypt.

Perfume's popularity continued into the eighteenth-century, as France emerged as the European center of fragrance production. In the twentieth century, the innovative Parisian couturier Paul Poiret initiated the tradition of each couture house's creating a scent embodying a particular aesthetic. Thus were born such classic fragrances as Chanel's *No5* of 1921, Jeanne Lanvin's 1925 *My Sin* and Jean Patout's extravagant *Joy* of 1931.

"Perfume has always been a luxury product and it's interesting that the bottles accurately reflect different eras," Keefe said. "*Scents and Sensibility* is a true representation of changes in styles and fashion. Each vessel is mesmerizing."

Objects within *Scents and Sensibility* include scent bottles, powder boxes, talc jars and similar objects made to hold scented contents. Permanent collection pieces as well as those on loan from regional collectors range from approximately 1100 B.C. to the present day. Glass, pottery, gold, porcelain, hardstone and silver are all represented in the collection, as well as some recognizable names: Coco Chanel, Jeanne Lanvin, Christian Dior, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Peter Carl Fabergé, René Lalique and Stueben Glass.

NOMA ADMISSION

Wednesdays are FREE for all Museum visitors. Louisiana residents with valid photo identification: Adults, \$8; Seniors (65 and up), \$7; Children 3-17, \$4; Children under 3, free. Out-of-state visitors: Adults, \$10; Seniors (65 and up), \$9; Children 3-17, \$5; Children under 3, free. Free Wednesdays and discounted admission for Louisiana residents is made possible through the generosity of The Helis Foundation.

ABOUT NOMA AND THE BESTHOFF SCULPTURE GARDEN

The New Orleans Museum of Art, founded in 1910 by Isaac Delgado, houses more than 30,000 art objects encompassing 4,000 years of world art. Works from the permanent collection, along with continuously changing temporary exhibitions, are on view in the Museum's 46 galleries Wednesdays from noon to 8 p.m. and Thursdays to Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Admission to the adjacent Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden, featuring work by 61 artists, including several of the 20th century's great master sculptors is always free. The Sculpture Garden is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. except for Wednesdays, when it's open until dusk. The New Orleans Museum of Art and the Besthoff Sculpture Garden are fully accessible to handicapped visitors and wheelchairs are available from the front desk.

For more information, call (504) 658-4100 or visit www.noma.org.

