



## American Federation of Arts

### For Immediate Release

Contact: 212.988.7700

### THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS CELEBRATES ITS 90TH ANNIVERSARY

#### Fall Gala Honors AFA President Jan Mayer

#### Three Major Exhibitions Premiere and AFA Web Site is Launched

The American Federation of Arts kicks off a season of celebration in honor of its 90th anniversary as the country's oldest and most comprehensive art services organization. Serena Rattazzi, director of the AFA, says, "In its 90 years of existence, the AFA -- through its exhibitions, its publications, and its programs -- has had an unobtrusive but profound influence on the development of cultural life in 20th-century America. We celebrate with pride and affection this venerable organization, so steadfast in its commitment of service to the art museum community, and all the people -- trustees, members, and staff -- who have nurtured it through the decades."

Three major exhibitions revealing the diversity and breadth of the AFA's exhibition program premiere in September and October: **James Tissot: Victorian Life/Modern Love** opens at the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut; **Rembrandt to Gainsborough: Masterpieces from England's Dulwich Picture Gallery** is presented at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and **Watteau and His World: French Drawing from 1700 to 1750** is featured at The Frick Collection, New York City.

On the evening of October 18, the AFA's fall gala fittingly honors Jan Mayer, AFA's president since 1995. She joined the board as a trustee in 1981. According to Robert Meltzer, chairman of the board of trustees of the AFA, "Jan Mayer is the ideal trustee; actively involved, generous, and always thinking about the next step. As President, she has been instrumental in setting ever higher goals for the organization, and in helping us to achieve them. I cannot think of a more deserving person to honor on this anniversary."

Co-chairs Meryl and Robert Meltzer, J. Carter Brown, and Stephanie French and honorary chair Jan Cowles, will greet attendees in the Rainbow Room at Rockefeller Center to dance, dine, and toast Ms. Mayer. Cocktails begin at 7:00 p.m. followed by dinner and dancing until midnight.

In conjunction with its 90th anniversary, the AFA will launch a Web site in early 2000. According to Ms. Rattazzi, "A Web site seemed to us an appropriate birthday present for the AFA, surely not the only nonagenarian on the Internet! The site will help us to communicate with a much broader audience and to make our many initiatives better known and, therefore, more useful."

The site, at [www.afaweb.org](http://www.afaweb.org), describes AFA programs, services, and activities. Educational materials developed to accompany each exhibition, such as lesson plans, teacher kits, and at-home activities, may be downloaded by individuals or by teachers for classroom use. Internet browsers may view works presented in AFA's exhibitions. Membership information for art museums, individuals, and corporations, applications for the annual Directors Forum, and press releases are also on-line.

Ms. Rattazzi concludes, "AFA's longevity is rooted in the timelessness of its mission, to bring people to art by bringing art to people. We know it will continue to do so successfully, well beyond this century."