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**GRACIE MANSION CONSERVANCY ANNOUNCES PUBLIC RE-OPENING OF
GRACIE MANSION WITH ART ADDITIONS AND RESUMED TOURS**

New works embrace the fullness of New York City life during original Mansion period, providing more varied historical portrait of life in late 18th century

Art will be available for viewing to the public through several open houses starting on October 25 and resumption of tours in November

NEW YORK— Today the Gracie Mansion Conservancy announces the re-opening of Gracie Mansion. In honor of its 35th anniversary, the Gracie Mansion Conservancy today announced the beginning of an art installation at Gracie Mansion, titled “Windows on the City: Looking Out at Gracie’s New York,” which consists of previously and newly acquired works. All of the additional pieces come from the original Gracie Mansion period.

The installation, which includes 49 new works – paintings, objects, historical documents and more – focuses on the late Colonial, Revolutionary, and Federal Periods, a timeline that runs roughly from 1763 to 1825. Highlights include stoneware from a free African American, a portrait of the daughter of the then-governor of Connecticut, Native American artifacts, Cantonware from New York’s early trade with China, and more. The collection also features “An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery,” more commonly known as “The Gradual Emancipation Act.” The document was loaned to Gracie Mansion from the New York State Archives, a program of the New York State Education Department.

The new pieces have been carefully curated by Kalia M. Brooks, consulting curator to the Gracie Mansion Conservancy, to create a more historically accurate picture of life in New York City during the time of Gracie Mansion’s construction. Descriptive text will provide a richer educational experience for visitors and school groups.

The installation will be open to the public during an open house on October 25.

New York City residents can enter a giveaway for tickets to the open house starting October 19 at <http://www.nyc.gov/GracieOpenHouse>. Public tours will begin November 10.

“The New York City experience has always been one of many peoples and many cultures. I’m delighted that this new installation will reflect our vibrant history – and remind us all that this city is always at its best when we make room for everyone,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“The energy of many traditions and cultures has always propelled this city forward,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “When we look back, we are reminded that diversity is this city’s DNA. We flourish when we celebrate and encourage our bounty of difference. That’s the story this installation tells.”

By the late 18th century, when Gracie Mansion was constructed and first occupied by the Gracie family, New York City was already culturally and ethnically rich. The “Windows on the City” installation will integrate new artwork and objects into Gracie Mansion’s existing work to reflect the diverse experiences of New York City’s inhabitants during that time period.

“We’re so proud to honor the Gracie Mansion Conservancy’s 35th anniversary with this new artwork, paying tribute to the home’s return as the ‘Little White House’ by capturing the diversity of this city at the time when it was first a functioning home,” said **Gabrielle Fialkoff, Senior Advisor to the Mayor and Director of the Office of Strategic Partnerships, which oversees the Conservancy**. “With the inclusion of important historical items, like the Gradual Emancipation Act of New York State, and vibrant multimedia pieces, the ‘Windows on the City’ installation provides a new look at New York in the 18th and 19th centuries from Gracie’s perspective.”

“What Kalia Brooks has done so brilliantly is curate a vision of New York that more fully encompasses our One City as it looked at the time the Gracies lived in this house” said **Chair of the Gracie Mansion Conservancy and Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl**. “Thanks to everyone who contributed their talents to this fascinating project, Gracie Mansion will engage New Yorkers and visitors with this compelling look at our city’s history and we welcome the public to come and experience it for themselves.”

“The Conservancy’s goal has always been to protect its fabric, while reflecting the values and history that shape our city. This collection is a wonderful realization of that spirit,” said **Paul Gunther, Executive Director of the Gracie Mansion Conservancy**.

“It is wonderful that the Mayor and First Lady are back in our little White House. Gracie Mansion is a vital civic symbol for all new Yorkers and our many visitors from across the globe,” said **Joan K. Davidson, Founding Chair of the Gracie Mansion Conservancy**. “To invigorate the art and objects on view in the public rooms with ‘Windows on the City’ fulfills the Conservancy’s founding mission to bind together the many strands of City history in the setting of a great restored house. The result gives a deeper understanding of the forces that shaped us and the lessons at hand to guide us ahead. Having the Mayor back in residence surrounded by these varied treasures sets a promising course.”

"Our City has an rich and textured cultural, artistic and architectural history," said **Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer, Chair of the Cultural Affairs Committee**. "This installation at Gracie Mansion makes sure that this beautiful house showcases our rich and vibrant history."

"The original home of the Museum of the City of New York, Gracie Mansion will again be a destination for New York City art and history," said **Council Member Ben Kallos**. "This will provide an opportunity for visitors to experience the history of our city through the history of Gracie, and will help reconnect the 'People's House' with the Upper East Side and the rest of

New York. Thank you to Mayor Bill de Blasio, First Lady Chirlaine McCray, and several of New York's premier cultural institutions for creating this opportunity."

"The reopening of Gracie Mansion and new art installation, "Windows on the City: Looking Out at Gracie's New York," is an incredible opportunity for residents to take a journey into the past that shaped our city's unique identity and culture. The newly-acquired works will offer a glimpse into the historical events that would ultimately build the strong foundation that has enabled our city to thrive," said **Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo**.

"New York City was built and continues to be shaped by a vibrant combination of peoples – it's not only appropriate but also necessary that our city's most historic institutions reflect the varied experiences of its past and future inhabitants," said **Dr. Kenneth T. Jackson, Barzun Professor of History at Columbia University and Editor of the Encyclopedia of New York City**. "It's wonderful to see that, with the new 'Windows on the City' installation, Gracie Mansion is paying tribute to New York's rich culture and welcoming the forward-thinking and change that has propelled our city for more than 200 years."

"'Windows on the City' brings important voices into the multifaceted conversations around New York City's history," said **Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator of The Studio Museum**. "By locating art and artifacts that reflect the longstanding diversity of our city at this renowned site, the exhibition both challenges our ideas of what a historic house museum can be and exemplifies the city's commitment to cultural dialogue. By striving to represent all New Yorkers during this important historical period, 'Windows on the City' truly embraces the ideal of Gracie Mansion as 'The People's House.'"

"Gracie Mansion's new 'Windows on the City' installation is precisely the type of re-imagining that historic house museums should be facilitating," said **Franklin Vagnone, Executive Director of the Historic House Trust of New York City**. "Through these efforts, and in an attempt to better present the life and legacy of our city, we can highlight the diverse realities of our heritage."

The new pieces included as part of the "Windows on the City" installation fit broadly into five themes: the early days of the nation's founding; the experience of immigration and the working class; the confluence of rural and urban life in a growing city; global trade; and the uneven discourse of freedom and opportunity.

Show highlights include:

- *The Gradual Emancipation Act of New York State, 1799*: In 1799 the New York State Legislature called for all current slaves to remain in servitude for the rest of their lives and for all children born after July 4, 1799 to receive their freedom in mid-adulthood. Original draft document is ink on paper. Original document to be replaced with replica on November 1. Courtesy of the New York State Archives, a program of the New York State Education Department.
- *The Baker Cart, Cries of New York Series, by Nicolino Caylo, ca. 1840-44*: This collection of six pieces represents ordinary, daily scenes in New York City. A nearby video installation will show contemporary actors recreating the scenes. Watercolor, graphite and gouache on paper. Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society.

- *Mrs. William Gracie by John Trumbull, ca. 1816-1819:* John Trumbull, a friend of the family, painted Elizabeth (Stoughton) Wolcott, who married William Gracie, son of Archibald Gracie, on July 2, 1813. This painting was added to Gracie Mansion during its first restoration in 1982 and will remain in the home for the “Windows on the City” installation. Oil on Canvas. Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society.

A full list of pieces is available upon request.

Representatives from a number of groups including the Museum of the City of New York, the New-York Historical Society, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art consulted on and contributed to the project.

In 2002, a major restoration project and expanded public access helped to reestablish Gracie Mansion as the “People’s House.” The re-opening continues tradition, following the return of the house to a dynamic residence with the arrival of the de Blasios in 2014.

Following recent repairs to the mansion, it is scheduled to reopen this fall with a series of celebrations, including:

- An invitation-only fundraiser on October 20.
- A public open house on October 25. New York City residents will be able to enter a ticket giveaway starting October 19 at www.nyc.gov/GracieOpenHouse.
- Two days of Halloween celebrations. Ticket giveaway details will be made public in the coming days.
- Tours will resume November 10.

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