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DEGAS IN BRONZE: THE COMPLETE SCULPTURES

*Only Midwest Venue for this Important Impressionist Exhibition
May 30 – August 31, 2008*

GRAND RAPIDS, MI— May 7, 2008— Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, the most significant sculpture and botanic experience in the Midwest and an emerging cultural destination on the national scene, is pleased to host the internationally acclaimed exhibition ***Degas in Bronze: The Complete Sculptures***. The exhibition will be on display May 30 through August 31, 2008.

Degas in Bronze presents an extraordinary opportunity to experience Degas' work in sculpture. A pioneering artist in many respects, Degas set the stage for later developments in modern art through his innovations in depicting form and movement. This is a rare opportunity to view the complete set of acclaimed A. A. Hébrard bronze castings—73 sculptures in total—one of only four complete sets in the world.

The exhibition is organized by International Arts, curated by Joseph S. Czestochowski, from the celebrated collections of MASP, Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Assis Chateaubriand, São Paulo, Brasil.

“The opportunity to present these 73 bronzes by celebrated Impressionist master, Edgar Degas is tremendous for the institution, Michigan and the entire Great Lakes region,” said Joseph Becherer, Director of Exhibitions and Curator of the Sculpture Program at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. “Although Degas’ bronzes are revered by museums collections, this group is one of only four complete sets in the world - allowing visitors the rare opportunity to understand the brilliance of the artist’s ideas about three dimensional form.”

Featured are three-dimensional explorations of the very themes for which Degas is well known: dancers, bathers, horses, and studies of the female figure. The centerpiece of the exhibition is *Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen*. Though he worked relentlessly on sculpture throughout his lifetime, only one wax sculpture *Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen* was exhibited.

It was not until after the artist's death in 1917 that the extent of his work in sculpture was made known when the contents of his studio were inventoried. More than 150 works in clay and wax were discovered, but their state of preservation and future were unresolved. In the following year, Degas' heirs decided to authorize a series edition of bronze casts to be made from 73 of the

fragile wax and clay figures by master foundry man Albino Palazzolo at the famed Paris foundry A. A. Hébrard et Cie.

Although Degas bronzes are cherished works in museum collections across the globe, *Degas in Bronze: The Complete Sculptures* offers a rare opportunity for visitors to experience a set thanks to the significant loan from the MASP, Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Assis Chateaubriand, São Paulo, Brasil. The other sets are held by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Musée d'Orsay, Paris; and the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.

This magnificent exhibition explores one of the most fascinating aspects of the work of Degas, whose innovative compositions, skillful drawing, and perceptive analysis of movement made him one of the late 19th-century masters of modern art.

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park's presentation of *Degas in Bronze* is supported by The Sculpture Society, Meijer Foundation, and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated 288-page catalogue, [Degas Sculptures: Catalogue Raisonné of the Bronzes](#), compiled by art historian and former museum director, Joseph S. Czestochowski, and Anne Pingeot, conservateur général at the Musée d'Orsay.

About Edgar Degas

One of the most important artists of the 19th century, the French painter and sculptor Edgar Degas (1834-1917) spent his entire life investigating the figure in motion through countless studies of ballerinas, racehorses, and bathers. Though he worked relentlessly on small composite sculptures privately, he only exhibited one completed sculpture during his lifetime.

About Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

The 132-acre Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, which currently serves more than a half-million visitors annually, features Michigan's largest tropical conservatory; one of the largest children's gardens in the country; arid and Victorian gardens; carnivorous plant house; outdoor gardens; the Midwest's most comprehensive sculpture experience featuring internationally-acclaimed works by Rodin, Oldenburg, Moore, Rickey, di Suvero and others; indoor galleries with changing sculpture exhibitions, as well as a 1750-seat outdoor amphitheater, featuring an eclectic mix of world-renowned musicians every summer, café and gift shop. For additional information, please visit www.meijergardens.org

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