

WHITNEY

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Press Release

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ICONIC DEMUTH PAINTINGS OF LANCASTER TO GO ON VIEW AT THE WHITNEY IN FEBRUARY

New York, January 2, 2008 — *Chimneys and Towers: Charles Demuth's Late Paintings of Lancaster*, an intimate exhibition of an important body of work by one of America's greatest modernists, goes on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art from February 23 through April 27, 2008. The exhibition is organized by the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, where it made its debut. The New York installation, in the Sondra Gilman Gallery on the mezzanine off the Museum's fifth floor, is being overseen by Whitney curatorial assistant Sasha Nicholas, in consultation with Whitney curator Barbara Haskell.

Between 1927 and 1933, Charles Demuth (1883–1935) made a dramatic series of paintings depicting industrial sites in his hometown of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Today, this landmark body of work is recognized as a major artistic achievement. Created during an intense six-year period, Demuth's late paintings of Lancaster ushered in a new period of American modernism. While these works drew upon compositional innovations that had been pioneered in Europe, they boldly asserted a new American artistic movement, Precisionism, in which architectural subjects were depicted with crisp geometric lines and flat, austere planes of color. These oils, the last in Demuth's career, represent the final creative surge of an artist who was progressively ill with diabetes, and reveal the importance of place to a painter who, along with others of his generation, reassessed what it meant to be an American artist.

Despite three journeys to Paris and frequent visits to New York City, where he was nurtured by avant-garde intellectual and artistic circles, Demuth's home was always the house he shared with his mother in Lancaster. Towards the end of his life, when his illness made traveling more difficult, Demuth turned to the town's local industrial sites as his subjects—the Armstrong Cork Company, grain elevators, and smokestacks. For Demuth, as for other Precisionist artists, depicting industrial structures, a product of the tremendous industrial growth following World War I, represented an opportunity to create a distinctly American aesthetic rooted in shared national experience.

The six oil paintings featured in the exhibition include *My Egypt* (1927) and *Buildings, Lancaster* (1930), two of the most iconic works in the Whitney's collection; *Chimney and Water Tower* (1931, Amon Carter Museum); *Buildings* (ca. 1931, Dallas Museum of Art); *And the Home of the Brave* (1931, Art Institute of Chicago); and the last oil the artist is known to have completed, the enigmatic *After All* (1933, Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida).

In addition to the six paintings, the exhibition features a group of the rapid graphite notations that Demuth made of the factory buildings in Lancaster, providing insight into the artist's creative method. Also on view is a selection of Demuth's earlier work in watercolor, including rarely-seen works from the Whitney's collection, which illuminates the artist's favored subject matter and technical evolution prior to his final paintings of Lancaster's industrial architecture.

Chimneys and Towers: Charles Demuth's Late Paintings of Lancaster is accompanied by a publication that contains new scholarship about aspects of the artist's life and work, including his attachment to Lancaster, his diabetes, and the disease's effect on his career. Essayists are Betsy Fahlman, guest curator of the exhibition, and Claire Barry, the Amon Carter Museum's chief paintings conservator.

Chimneys and Towers: Charles Demuth's Late Paintings of Lancaster is organized by the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas. The Texas presentation of the exhibition and the accompanying publication were made possible in part by a generous grant from The Henry Luce Foundation.

About the Whitney

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the leading advocate of 20th- and 21st-century American art. Founded in 1930, the Museum is regarded as the preeminent collection of American art and includes major works and materials from the estate of Edward Hopper, the largest public collection of works by Alexander Calder, Louise Nevelson, and Lucas Samaras, as well as significant works by Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Agnes Martin, Bruce Nauman, Georgia O'Keeffe, Claes Oldenburg, Kiki Smith, and Andy Warhol, among other artists. With its history of exhibiting the most promising and influential American artists and provoking intense critical and public debate, the Whitney's signature show, the Biennial, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in America today.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art:

Jacob Lawrence: Selections from Migration Series	Through January 6, 2008
Danny Lyon	Through January 13, 2008
Modernisms	Through January 13, 2008
The Whitney's Collection	Opens January 30, 2008
Kara Walker	Through February 3, 2008
Lawrence Weiner	Through February 10, 2008
Television Delivers People	Through February 17, 2008
Two Years: Additions to the Collection, 2006-07	Through February 17, 2008
Beth Campbell: Following Room	Through February 24, 2008
Demuth's Late Paintings of Lancaster	February 23-April 27, 2008
2008 Whitney Biennial	March 6-June 1, 2008
Polaroids: Mapplethorpe	May 3-September 7, 2008
Buckminster Fuller: Starting with the Universe	June 26-September 21, 2008
Alexander Calder: The Paris Years	October 16, 2008-February 15, 2009

The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue, New York City. Museum hours are: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. Admission is \$15 for adults; Members, children (ages 11 and under), and New York City public high school students free. Senior citizens (62 and over) and students with valid ID: \$10. There is a \$6 admission fee for a pass to the Kaufman Astoria Studios Film & Video Gallery only. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 6-9 pm. For information, please call 1-800 WHITNEY or visit www.whitney.org

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria:

Undone Through January 29, 2008

The Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria is located at 120 Park Avenue at 42nd Street. Gallery hours: Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursdays 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Sculpture Court Hours: Monday through Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., Sundays and holidays 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Whitney Museum at Altria is funded by Altria Group, Inc. Admission is free. Free gallery talks are offered every Wednesday and Friday at 1:00 p.m. For further information, please call (917) 663-2453.