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**ISABELLA
STEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM**

**Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Marks the Nineteenth Anniversary
of the Theft of Thirteen Works of Art from its Collection on March 18, 1990**

Museum renews its commitment to the \$5 million reward and assurances of complete confidentiality for individuals who share information leading to the recovery of the stolen artworks in good condition

March 13, 2009 • BOSTON, MA • In anticipation of March 18, 2009, the 19th anniversary of the theft of thirteen priceless artworks from its collection, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, today reissued reassurances of a \$5 million reward and complete confidentiality for anyone who comes forward with information leading to the return of the stolen artworks in good condition.

In the early morning hours of March 18, 1990, as Boston wrapped up its city-wide celebration of St. Patrick's Day, thirteen priceless works of art, including three Rembrandts, a Vermeer, a Manet, and five Degas drawings, were stolen from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. The largest art heist ever from a museum, the Gardner theft remains an open, active investigation.

The museum remains committed to the return of the stolen artworks to the museum and an awaiting public where they belong. The Gardner is offering a \$5 million reward and is prepared to ensure complete confidentiality to those who come forward with information leading to the return of the stolen artworks in good condition. Anyone with any information about the theft, the investigation, and/or the location of the stolen artworks is encouraged to contact the Gardner Museum's *Director of Security Anthony Amore* directly at 617 278 5114 or theft@gardnermuseum.org. Additionally, anonymous tips can be hand-delivered or mailed to the Museum at 280 The Fenway, Boston, or via staff offices at 2 Palace Road, Boston 02115.

"The theft of these important artworks is a tragic loss to the art world and to society as a whole," says **Anne Hawley**, *Norma Jean Calderwood Director* of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. "Art has the power to inspire thinking and creativity at every level; Isabella Gardner installed her galleries in a personal way to engage visitors in conversations with great art."

The stolen artworks include some of the world's most important cultural riches: Rembrandt's only known seascape *Storm on the Sea of Galilee* (1633); and *The Concert* (1658-1660), one of only 34 known Vermeers in the world. "With these works gone, the museum is incomplete," adds Hawley. "We look forward to the day when these artworks are returned—and the museum can, again, be enjoyed in its entirety, as Isabella Gardner intended."

Empty frames now hang where the Vermeer, Flinck, and two Rembrandts used to be in the Dutch Room, "as an homage to the missing works and a placeholder for their return," according to Hawley. Museum conservators implore those holding the stolen artworks to protect them by keeping them in optimal conditions that do not allow for swings in temperature and humidity (68 degrees Fahrenheit and 50% humidity).

The Museum remains hopeful that the story of the Gardner theft will appeal to the public's sense of civic pride—and the \$5 million reward will encourage individuals to come forward. The investigation also remains a top priority of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.)'s Art Crime Team, and of the Office of the United States Attorney for Massachusetts. Anyone interested in sharing information with the FBI may also do so directly by contacting F.B.I. Special Agent Geoffrey Kelly at 617 742 5533.

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EDITORS' NOTES • An **image sheet** of the stolen artworks and a pdf of this **press release** is available online via: www.gardnermuseum.org/information/press_news.asp.