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Fact Sheet

...“a repository, conservatory, and museum of art... for the enjoyment, inspiration and instruction of our people.” --Bessie Vance Brooks

- The Memphis Brooks Museum of Art houses the oldest and largest collection of world art in Tennessee and is among the largest museums of its kind in the South.
- The initial funding to build the Brooks was donated by Bessie Vance Brooks. Her \$100,000 donation made to the City of Memphis in 1913 was contributed in honor of her late husband, Samuel Hamilton Brooks.
- The Beaux Arts style building constructed of Georgian marble was inspired by Morgan Library in New York City and was designed by James Gamble Rogers.
- The Brooks Memorial Art Gallery opened to the public on May 26, 1916.
- In 1933, the Brooks' collection contained nineteen paintings by mostly American artists.
- In 1955, the Museum completed an expansion that would house 32 objects given by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.
- In 1983, the Museum's name was changed to the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art.
- In 1989, the Museum became fully private, although the City of Memphis retains ownership of the building, the bulk of the collection acquired up to that time, and currently operates from a management contract with the city.
- Today, the Museum houses 9,000 works by artists from around the world in an 86,000-square-foot building.
- Nearly 12,000 school children tour and participate in hands-on art activities at the museum free of charge each year.
- In addition to featuring art exhibitions, the Museum offers visiting lectures, concerts, dance performances and free family events.
- With less than 12 percent of it is funding provided by government resources, the Museum relies on the generosity of friends and supporters for meeting operating costs and other expenses.