



The Diplomatic Reception Rooms



United States Department of State



THESE ARE THE ROOMS OF A THOUSAND
STORIES, WHERE HISTORY'S TREASURES
INSPIRE THE WORLD



The Benjamin Franklin State Dining Room

THE DIPLOMATIC RECEPTION ROOMS



Welcome to the Diplomatic Reception Rooms - America's best kept secret.

Located on the top two floors of the U.S. Department of State, these 42 magnificent rooms are used each day by the President, Vice President, and Secretary of State to conduct American diplomacy at the highest levels.

For 50 years, the art of diplomacy has thrived in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms against a stunning backdrop of American art and architecture from the time of our country's founding and formative years. Many of the accomplishments of American diplomacy have been rooted in moments that have occurred in these rooms.

These rooms house a remarkable collection of historic fine and decorative arts valued at more than \$125 million. These masterpieces reflect the pride, craftsmanship, and spirit of 18th-century America. Remarkably, these rooms were created and are sustained through generous gifts from the American people. No taxpayer money has funded the creation or preservation of these rooms.

Each day, the Diplomatic Reception Rooms and their historic collection serve as silent ambassadors, sharing America's history, heritage, and achievements with the world. The rooms also play an important educational role as they tell the story of our nation's history and cultural heritage to more than 100,000 visitors who tour the rooms each year.

Today, we are sharing this collection beyond the walls of the State Department in classrooms across the country. Objects and artwork are being used to convey stories of our country's history, cultural heritage, and the importance of diplomacy and civic engagement - inspiring the hearts and minds of future leaders.

It is my great honor to serve as the Director and Curator of the Diplomatic Reception Rooms. I am delighted to share their story with you.

Marcee

Marcee Craighill
Director & Curator
Diplomatic Reception Rooms
United States Department of State





The John Quincy Adams State Reception Room

“These [objects and artwork] open up a conversation and they allow you to touch on issues like human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly - the kinds of things that are sometimes very delicate in the context of diplomacy.

I would take a leader into the John Quincy Adams Room... and I'd talk to them about the Treaty of Paris Desk... It's enormously impressive to people... We couldn't do without these rooms.”

- John Kerry, Secretary of State 2013 - 2017



A NATIONAL TREASURE WITH PURPOSE & INFLUENCE

The creation of the Diplomatic Reception Rooms began in 1961 with one mission - to employ the fine arts in support of the diplomatic arts.

The 28,000-square-foot space provides an elegant and historically evocative suite of rooms within which American and foreign leaders can establish friendships, exchange ideas, and tend to the aspirations and afflictions of a dynamic world.

The vision of the Diplomatic Reception Rooms is two-fold: to provide a beautiful and appropriate setting for productive dialogue between our nation's leaders and their international guests, and to share the Diplomatic Reception Rooms, their historic collection, and the diplomatic work that occurs in the rooms each day with people around the world.

No other American rooms or collection has such purpose and influence.



The Diplomatic Reception Rooms' first curator, Clement Conger, holds Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington while observing the installation of a Chippendale-style chest.

HISTORY HAPPENS HERE

On July 5, 1971, President Richard Nixon signed the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This important amendment gave 18-year-olds in the United States of America the right to vote. President Nixon signed the amendment on Thomas Jefferson's Architects Table.

Objects, like the architect's table in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms, not only witness history, they become part of history and enable us to build on our past accomplishments and create a stronger future.

"It is significant that this very desk on which we have certified this amendment was the desk that Thomas Jefferson used at the Continental Congress during the time that Congress was meeting in Philadelphia."

- President Richard Nixon



President Nixon signs the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on Thomas Jefferson's Architect's Table on July 5, 1971. | AP Photo

“These rooms mirror the environment in which the founding ideals of this country were established. And they provide the backdrop for our efforts to preserve and strengthen those ideals around the world.”

- Warren Christopher, Secretary of State 1993 - 1997



The Thomas Jefferson State Reception Room

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Secretary of Defense James Mattis join Chinese counterparts for the first U.S.-China Diplomatic and Security Dialogue in the Thomas Jefferson State Reception Room at the U.S. Department of State in June 2017. The diplomatic meetings and events that occur in these rooms cover a variety of important topics that shape our world.

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

The objects and art in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms provide distinguished guests with a glimpse into our country's past, and in doing so, help create a foundation for our future.

The collection helps highlight connections between the United States and other countries. As seen below, the painting *Niagara Falls* by Ferdinand Richardt (ca. 1860), beautifully displayed the shared border between Canada and the United States during Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's 2016 visit with Secretary Kerry in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms.

The collection serves as a catalyst for exchanges between American statesmen and their counterparts from around the world.



“These chambers and their magnificent contents are more than national treasures, they are true diplomatic assets and I use them proudly and with great effect as tools of diplomacy.”

- Colin Powell, Secretary of State 2001 - 2005



The Treaty Room

“We believe we have an obligation to share these remarkable rooms and the historic treasures they contain with students and educators so we can help ensure our future leaders understand the events, ideas, and movements that have shaped our country and the world.”

- Rex Tillerson, Secretary of State 2017 - 2018



Objects and art from the Diplomatic Reception Rooms (pictured from left to right): The Cliffs of Green River, Wyoming by Thomas Moran (1900), Plate for Chinese Export (ca. 1805-10), and The American Commissioners after Benjamin West (after 1820).



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PLEDGING
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U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry delivers remarks at the Pledging Conference in Support of Iraq in the Benjamin Franklin State Dining Room at the U.S. Department of State in July 2016.

SHARING OUR STORY

The Diplomatic Reception Rooms shares stories and resources with students through public tours. Students and the public are captivated by their visits to the rooms, and often want to learn more. The *Declaration of Learning* program is an opportunity to share the objects, art, and stories beyond the walls of the State Department, have an even greater impact.



The Thomas Jefferson State Reception Room

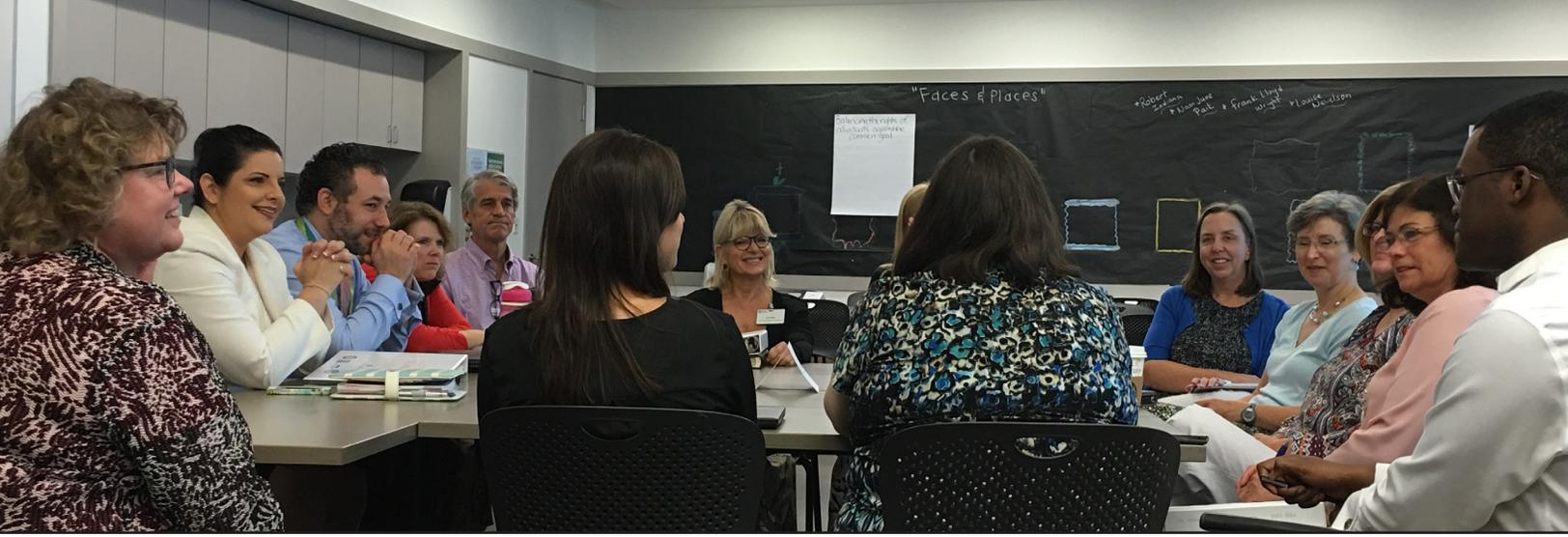


THE DECLARATION OF LEARNING

Led by the Diplomatic Reception Rooms, a group of prestigious national organizations signed the nation's first *Declaration of Learning* in January 2013. The document was signed on the historic Treaty of Paris desk, one of the Diplomatic Reception Rooms' most treasured objects. The *Declaration of Learning* pledged to use each organization's historic objects and works of art, and their educational expertise, to help educators engage students by bringing the events, ideas, and movements that shaped our country to life.

To put this pledge into action, the organizations committed to two major initiatives:

1. Build a national database to make objects, art, and related resources from their collections accessible to educators and students.
2. Collaborate with local educators to use historic objects and art to engage students, aid learning, and encourage civic engagement.



A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Teachers and school librarians understand the best way to work with their students, while museums and collection holders have the best understanding of their historical objects, art, and documents. By working collaboratively within our areas of expertise, we are achieving maximum benefit for students.

The *Declaration of Learning* program uses a collaborative approach that creates a unique partnership between museums and educators:

- Museums use their expertise to share how object-based learning brings history and art to life, facilitates critical thinking, and fosters learning.
- Educators use their expertise to craft innovative activities and lesson plans using objects and art from the institutions' collections. Educators use each state's educational standards and frameworks, integrating object-based learning seamlessly into any subject area.
- By exploring historic objects and art digitally, students are exposed to our country's history and the importance of civic engagement in a new way. Students see themselves as participants in our nation's story and are motivated to become engaged in their community, state, nation, and world through thought-provoking projects that address real-world issues.
- The *Declaration of Learning* is the first initiative to unite key federal collections and leading educational organizations in a collaborative partnership with local teachers and school librarians.



IMPACTING STUDENTS & EDUCATORS

To date, the *Declaration of Learning* program has impacted more than 6,000 students.

“Participating in the *Declaration of Learning* program allowed me to connect our students with subjects they don’t always get to think about in our rural Arkansas community: art, history, and civic involvement.

Since becoming exposed to these ideas and works of art, students are thinking about civic engagement, themselves, and the past in an entirely new way.

The *Declaration of Learning* program has had a profound effect on our students.”

Tracy Cline
7th - 8th Grade Librarian
Van Buren, Arkansas





Louise XVI and Benjamin Franklin Bisque Figural Group by Niderviller Factory (ca. 1780-1785)

STUDENTS CHANGING THEIR COMMUNITIES

After studying specific works, students form connections and make meaningful observations about how these artworks, objects, and oral histories relate to civic engagement.

“The Benjamin Franklin Porcelain (left) shows that anybody can change the government and help everyone out,” said one *Declaration of Learning* student.

To date, the *Declaration of Learning* program has impacted more than 6,000. Their engagement with historical art, objects, and resources has resulted in thoughtful inquiry into challenging topics and introduced them to art’s powerful ability to impact society.

Students have also gained insight into their own power to change the world and emerged motivated to become civically engaged. Projects facilitated by the *Declaration of Learning* program include creating community gardens, spearheading Get-Out-the-Vote and voter registration initiatives, increasing veteran support and awareness, painting a 100-foot mural to increase community awareness of the impact of rising sea levels on the Marshall Islands, and much more.



“These rooms remind us all, each day, of the story of America, and that we each have a role to play in it, whether as public official or a citizen of the Republic.”

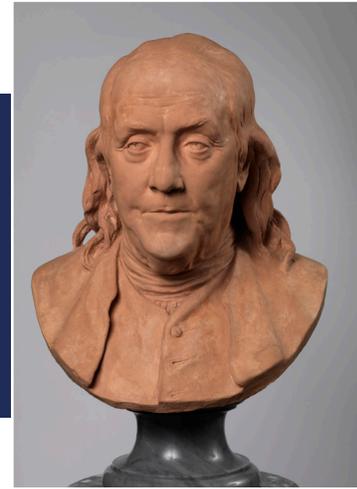
- Madeline Albright, Secretary of State 1997 - 2001



The James Monroe State Reception Room

“The inspiration [these Rooms] give... goes beyond the architectural and decorative, because it reminds us that this country, with its tradition of freedom, respect for human dignity, with the enterprise of its private citizens, is the hope of the world. Without our dedication, there can be no progress.”

- Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State 1973 - 1977



Objects and art from the Diplomatic Reception Rooms (pictured from left to right): Timothy Pickering's Society of the Cincinnati Badge (1784), Thomas Strong's Farm by William Sidney Mount (1864), and Benjamin Franklin by Jean Antoine Houdon (1778).

TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

Educators participating in the *Declaration of Learning* program report that their teaching has been transformed. Educators continue to use objects and art from the collection in their classrooms and school libraries each year, increasing the reach of the program.

*Stony Evans
Librarian Media Specialist
Hot Springs, Arkansas*



“The *Declaration of Learning* program and its goals have completely changed the way I teach art in the classroom. Rather than moving from one skill to the next or one concept to the next, my students now analyze not only the artwork but the connection with the artwork to our environment, culture, and personal beliefs.”

*Meagan McGuire
7th Grade Art Teacher
Benton, Arkansas*

“The *Declaration of Learning* program gave my students the ability to have a voice on issues that they felt very strongly about in their community and the ability to create change. Students were able to use the historical artifacts to enhance their understanding and knowledge of how to communicate their point of view on different issues.”

*Virginia King
9th-12th Grade Art Teacher
Little Rock, Arkansas*



“Through the *Declaration of Learning* program, we are learning that history is far more than words on a page. It is a living, breathing, and ever-changing discipline. When we use objects and teach students how to analyze them, we are empowering them to become active historians rather than passive students behind a desk.”

*Lisa Lacefield
8th Grade History Teacher
Jonesboro, Arkansas*



CELEBRATING THE PAST. CREATING THE FUTURE.



To learn more about the Diplomatic Reception Rooms, or become involved, please contact:

Office of the Curator
The Diplomatic Reception Rooms, U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
M/FA Room 8213
Washington, D.C. 20520
(202) 647-1990
curator@state.gov

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