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The Carter to Debut Major Exhibition Tracing the Statue of Liberty's Rise as an American Icon



Press Releases

Opening August 2026, The Statue of Liberty from Bartholdi to Warhol combines nearly 100 historical and contemporary works that follow the statue's story over 150 years, including a rare early cast of Bartholdi's masterwork

Fort Worth, TX, November 13, 2025 — In August 2026, the Amon Carter Museum of American Art (the Carter) will premiere [*The Statue of Liberty from Bartholdi to Warhol*](#), an examination of the Statue of Liberty's enduring relevance in American visual culture and the evolution of its image from the 1870s to the present. Bringing together nearly 100 artworks and objects from more than 70 artists, the exhibition explores the statue's varied manifestations—from artistic marvel and pop culture icon to symbol of immigration, patriotism, and resistance—and how successive generations of artists, including Pacita Abad, Benny Andrews, Edward Moran, Norman Rockwell, Nari Ward, and Andy Warhol, have represented its iconic form over the past 150 years. Co-organized with the Denver Art Museum, *The Statue of Liberty from Bartholdi to Warhol* will open

at the Carter on August 15, 2026, and be on view through January 3, 2027, before its presentation in Denver.

“This monumental exhibition tells the story of how our nation has interpreted the Statue of Liberty not only as a national icon, but also as a reflection of American values, creativity, and identity throughout our collective history,” said Scott Wilcox, Interim Director of the Carter “Premiering *The Statue of Liberty from Bartholdi to Warhol* in Fort Worth on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of our nation’s founding invites our community to see this emblematic statue in new dimensions.”

The exhibition is anchored by a rare cast of French sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi’s bronze sculpture [*Liberty Enlightening the World \(Statue of Liberty\)*](#) (1894-1901), one of only five domestic-scale bronze reductions made during the artist’s lifetime. The cast was acquired by the Carter in 2024, and is highlighted in the first of four sections that comprise the exhibition. These include:

- **Creating a Monument (1865-1917)** focuses on the statue’s origins and initial public reception in the tumultuous decades between the American Civil War and World War I. Introducing the early history of the Statue of Liberty, an idea conceived, in the wake of the American Civil War, and presenting early iterations of the icon, “Creating a Monument” lays the groundwork for Bartholdi’s vision of the monument as an enduring testament to Franco-American friendship and shared values of liberty and freedom. By pairing watercolor paintings of the sculpture, early studies for the monument, archival photographs of its construction, and images of Bartholdi himself with **Edward Moran**’s notable painting *Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World (The Unveiling of the Statue of Liberty)* (1886) and the Carter’s Bartholdi cast, visitors can trace the evolution of the statue from a political statement and feat of engineering to a gesture of artistic grandeur and reflection of aspirational American values. This section will also include a series of representations of the monument from period newspapers, underscoring how quickly the Statue of Liberty became a cultural touchstone both for debates about the nation and for advertisers who capitalized on its iconic form and growing popularity.
- **Creating an Icon (1917-1962)** mimics the way that society and visual culture were inundated with Statue of Liberty imagery between World War I and the 1950s by immersing visitors within a tightly hung installation of newspapers, advertisements, lithographs, images, films, and paintings, that mark the turning point in the statue’s transformation into a dominant American icon. Interpretations in this section include works by artists such as **Margaret Bourke-White**, **Norman Rockwell**, and **N.C. Wyeth** as well as filmmakers **Alfred Hitchcock** and **Charlie Chaplin**, in addition to government-sponsored posters that, at the time, leveraged the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of patriotism amidst global conflicts.
- **Transforming an Icon (1962-2001)** explores pop art and reproductions of the statue’s imagery, demonstrating its increasing detachment from its original image and malleability as

an American symbol. In the 1960s, artists including **Andy Warhol** elevated the statue to pop icon and a trove of artists followed suit by creating new meanings of the figure through increasingly altered depictions of its image. Furthermore, many artists used the Statue of Liberty to ask broader questions about the American experience in the years around the American Bicentennial, including **Robert Colescott**, whose monumental painting investigated the coded language of national identity and standards of beauty. This section also includes notable works by **Pacita Abad**, **Benny Andrews**, **Gail LeBoff**, **Roy Lichtenstein**, **Robert Rauschenberg**, and **Ruth Thorne-Thomsen**, among others.

- The exhibition closes with a selection of works by living artists who have continued to investigate the Statue of Liberty's meaning in the 21st century. Featuring **Nari Ward's** *Lazarus* alongside works by artists such as **Craig George**, **Diego Romero**, **Paola Pivi**, and **Hank Willis Thomas** among others, the coda demonstrates the statue's continued relevance for artists working today and how it remains a powerful lens for interpreting American values and identities.

"As the preeminent allegory of the United States, the Statute of Liberty has time and again been a symbol ripe for experimentation by a range of dynamic artists," said Andrew Eschelbacher, Director of Collections & Exhibitions and the exhibition's curator. "*The Statue of Liberty from Bartholdi to Warhol* not only traces the statue's evolution in our society's conscience but also supports the Carter's broader mission to present American art in all its richness and complexity for our community."

Accompanying the exhibition is a community centered installation of ephemeral objects depicting the representation of the Statue of Liberty in popular culture. Members of the community are invited to loan items from their personal collections, from rubber ducks to dolls, for inclusion in the closing section of the exhibition. The Carter is accepting applications through May 1, 2026, at cartermuseum.org/LendLiberty.

The Statue of Liberty from Bartholdi to Warhol is co-organized by the Amon Carter Museum of American Art and the Denver Art Museum. The Carter's presentation of *The Statue of Liberty from Bartholdi to Warhol* is supported by The Ann L. & Carol Greene Rhodes Charitable Trust, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee and the Alice L. Walton Foundation Temporary Exhibitions Endowment.

The exhibition will also travel to the Munson Museum of Art in Utica, New York, from August 5 through December 5, 2027. In Denver, the Denver Art Museum and the Carter will co-host an in-person symposium, learnings from which will be published online thereafter. The Carter will celebrate the exhibition during their Second Thursdays event on Thursday, September 10, 2026, with talks and activities exploring the exhibition. Additional events will be scheduled throughout the run of the exhibition. For dates and details visit cartermuseum.org.

About the Amon Carter Museum of American Art

Located in the heart of Fort Worth's Cultural District, the Amon Carter Museum of American Art (the Carter) is a dynamic cultural resource that provides unique access and insight into the history and future of American creativity through its expansive exhibitions and programming. The Carter's preeminent collection includes masterworks by legendary American artists such as Ruth Asawa, Alexander Calder, Frederic Church, Stuart Davis, Robert Duncanson, Thomas Eakins, Georgia O'Keeffe, Jacob Lawrence, Frederic Remington, Charles M. Russell, and John Singer Sargent, as well as one of the country's foremost repositories of American photography. In addition to its innovative exhibition program and engagement with artists working today, the Museum's premier primary research collection and leading conservation program make it a must-see destination for art lovers and scholars of all ages nationwide. Admission is always free. To learn more about the Carter, visit cartermuseum.org.

Image: Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi (1834–1904), *Liberty Enlightening the World* (*Statue of Liberty*), 1894–1901, bronze with brown patina and black lacquer, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, Purchase with assistance from the Ruth Carter Stevenson Acquisition Endowment, Pat and Shelby Adams, Anonymous, Susan and Stephen Butt, Sue and John Allen Chalk, Julie and Glenn Davidson, Subie and Phil Green, Debra and Ken Hamlett, Karen Hixon, Diane Jacobsen, Christina and Mark Johnson, Luther King Capital Management, Mary Potishman Lard Trust, Dana and David Porter, Richard Russack, Clara and Stephen Smiley, and Barbara and David Wyatt, 2024.26



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