NEW HAVEN – The Yale Center for British Art is delighted to announce the reopening of its Study Room on January 14, 2014. A unique and invaluable resource for researchers, the Study Room is also among the most beautiful spaces in the Center’s landmark building, designed by the renowned architect Louis I. Kahn.

Renewed as part of the first phase of the Center’s building conservation project, the Study Room is available to students, scholars, and the general public for the viewing and study of materials from the collections of the Prints & Drawings and Rare Books & Manuscripts departments. Visitors may examine, for example, George Stubbs’s extraordinary anatomical drawings, marvel at virtuosic watercolors by J. M. W. Turner, follow the naval expedition of Francis Drake, read the correspondence of Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, or view print portfolios by cutting-edge contemporary British artists. As before, appointments are not required. Study Room hours are Tuesday through Friday, 10 am to 4:30 pm.

The Center will celebrate the reopening with two events:

On Saturday, February 8, from 1 to 4 pm, the Center welcomes the public to a Study Room Open House. Members of the community are invited to explore this beautifully restored space, view highlights from the Prints & Drawings and Rare Books & Manuscripts collections, meet curators and staff, and enjoy refreshments in the adjoining Library Court. Curators will lead informal discussions about the selected works on display at 1:30, 2:30, and 3:30 pm. The event is free and everyone is welcome.

On Wednesday, February 12, from 7 to 9 pm, the Center will host college students at an after-hours event, Student Night Out. Students at Yale and other colleges in the area will learn about using the Study Room for research and study, view outstanding objects from the Prints & Drawings and Rare Books & Manuscripts collections, and hear informal talks from curators and members of the Student Guide program, as well as enjoy refreshments.
and have the opportunity to network in the Library Court. RSVPs are requested at ycba.studyroom@yale.edu or 203 432 2840.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2013 the Center began work on a two-phase building conservation project to address spaces inside its award-winning building, several of which had not been refurbished since the museum opened to the public in 1977. Over the course of sixteen weeks, the Study Room and work spaces of the Prints & Drawings and Rare Books & Manuscripts departments were restored to pristine condition. Worn wool carpet and discolored linen wall coverings were replaced, the finish on white oak storage cabinets was renewed, several offices were reconfigured to accommodate the needs of an enlarged staff, and the storage capacity for works on paper was increased. Also addressed were condensation management, fire suppression, and technology upgrades—including the installment of additional Ethernet connections and power outlets—that will directly enhance the visitor experience. One enhancement was spurred by the discovery by Knight Architecture LLC of Louis Kahn’s architectural drawings from 1973, indicating his intention to furnish the two-story Study Room and Reading Room with white oak paneling; and those original plans have been carried out to splendid effect.

The guidelines for this work, ten years in the making, were published by the Center in 2011 as Louis Kahn and the Yale Center for British Art: A Conservation Plan, by Peter Inskip and Stephen Gee, in association with Constance Clement, the Center’s deputy director. The second phase of the conservation project is scheduled for calendar year 2015.

The Center is indebted to the key players in the project: conservation architects Peter Inskip and Stephen Gee of Peter Inskip + Peter Jenkins Architects, London; Kristina Chmelar and Don Iddings of the Yale Office of Facilities; the staff of Knight Architecture LLC, including George Knight, AIA, principal, Daphne Kalomiris, and Megan Milawski; and Project Manager Lisa Mendes, Jessica Roessler, and Mike Diehl of Turner Construction Company. The entire effort was overseen on behalf of the Center by Constance Clement with the assistance of Operations Manager Martin Staffaroni and the staffs of the Operations and Security departments.

DEPARTMENTS OF PRINTS & DRAWINGS AND RARE BOOKS & MANUSCRIPTS

The Department of Prints and Drawings has more than twenty thousand drawings and watercolors and thirty thousand prints, and the Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts holds approximately thirty-five thousand volumes. Together, the two collections contain a rich range of materials relating to the visual arts and cultural life of the United Kingdom and the former British Empire, dating from the fifteenth century to the present. Records of both collections can be searched online via the Center’s website, britishart.yale.edu. The online catalogue of the Yale Libraries, Orbis (library.yale.edu), also provides access to materials from Rare Books. In addition, the Yale Finding Aid Database offers detailed descriptions of the Rare Books and Manuscripts department’s archival collections.

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YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART

Presented to the university by Paul Mellon (Yale College Class of 1929), the Yale Center for British Art houses the largest and most comprehensive collection of British art outside the United Kingdom. The collections reflect the development of British art, life, and thought from the Elizabethan period onward. The Center offers a year-round schedule of exhibitions and educational programs, as well as numerous academic resources. One of the museum’s greatest treasures is the building itself. The Center, designed by internationally acclaimed American architect Louis I. Kahn, was presented with the American Institute of Architects’ 2005 AIA Twenty-Five Year Award, which recognizes architectural landmarks of enduring significance completed in the last twenty-five to thirty-five years that have withstood the test of time. An affiliated institution in London, the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, awards grants and fellowships, publishes academic titles, and sponsors Yale in London, Yale’s first credit-granting undergraduate study abroad program.

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