

The logo consists of a stylized blue square icon with white horizontal lines, resembling a building or a stack of books. To its right, the text "MUSEUM STUDIES" is written in a bold, grey, sans-serif font, and "BROWN BAG SERIES" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font below it.

# MUSEUM STUDIES BROWN BAG SERIES

Please bring your lunch and join us for a **Museum Studies Brown Bag!**

**Speaker:** Elizabeth Harmon (PhD candidate, American Culture)

**When:** 12:00 pm on Friday, March 24

**Where:** Multi-Purpose Room, UM Museum of Art (Room 125)

## The Smithsonian Institution and the Making of the American Nonprofit Sector

When Englishman James Smithson left \$500,000 to the United States of America to establish the Smithsonian Institution in 1829, he improbably forced the United States Congress to design America's first national benevolent institution. This talk will address how Congress came to a decision about whether the Smithsonian should be a government agency, a quasi-governmental institution, or a private corporation in the mid-nineteenth century. Their decision has had a lasting impact on the formation of the American nonprofit sector, I will argue, as future philanthropic foundations used the Smithsonian Institution's articles of incorporation as a model into the twentieth century.