



Association of Art Museum Directors

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New York, NY, December 5, 2008 – The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) releases the following statement:

Art museums collect works of art for the benefit of present and future generations. The conservation, exhibition, and study of the collection are the heart of a museum's service to its community and to the public.

It is therefore a fundamental professional principle that works can only be deaccessioned to provide funds to acquire works of art and enhance a museum's collection. The Association of Art Museum Directors is deeply concerned to learn that the National Academy Museum has deaccessioned works of art from its collection to pay for operating expenses. Prior to this decision, AAMD contacted the National Academy in the hope that we could offer assistance in investigating alternatives to deaccessioning, and to support the museum in upholding the highest professional standards as it faces current challenges.

The National Academy is now breaching one of the most basic and important of AAMD's principles by treating its collection as a financial asset, rather than the cornerstone of research, exhibition, and public programming, a record of human creativity held in trust for people now and in the future.

In the notification of its decision to AAMD last evening, the National Academy voluntarily withdrew from membership in the organization. It is not, however, membership in AAMD *per se*, but rather a broader commitment to ethical museum practice that demands adherence to the principles governing deaccessioning. Therefore, we have no choice but to censure the National Academy for this action. Consistent with AAMD's Code of Ethics, we call on our members to suspend any loans of works of art to and any collaborations on exhibitions with the National Academy.

The Association of Art Museum Directors, representing 180 art museum directors in the US, Canada and Mexico, aids its members in establishing and maintaining the highest professional standards for themselves and the museums they represent. It serves as a forum for the exchange of information and the exploration of ideas, and as a voice with which museum directors may express their joint concerns and

those of their institutions. Since its founding, AAMD has played a leading role in helping to define the best practices for its members and for the art museum community as a whole. An important component of this work is the publication of AAMD's Professional Practices in Art Museums, first adopted in 1966, most recently updated in 2001. This document provides a framework for museums to make informed and responsible decisions regarding their own institutional management. Further information about AAMD's professional practice guidelines and position papers is available at www.aamd.org.

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