



Association of Art Museum Directors

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ASSOCIATION OF ART MUSEUM DIRECTORS MID-WINTER MEETING HELD IN SARASOTA

New York, NY, January, 15, 2010—More than 125 art museum directors from 35 states and 3 countries participated in the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) mid-winter meeting, held this week in Sarasota, Florida. AAMD's mission is to maximize the impact and appreciation of art museums in North America and to champion the importance of art in people's lives. The meeting focused on AAMD's strategic planning for the future of the organization and its service to the field.

“The members of AAMD became art museum directors because of a shared commitment to engaging ever increasing audiences with the power of art,” said Michael Conforti, President of AAMD and Director of the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. “We are bringing that same energy and zeal to shaping the future of AAMD—leading in advocacy for art museums’ role in society, nurturing the next generation of art museum leaders, and sharing new concepts for expanding the role of art in contemporary life.”

The meeting included panel discussions, committee sessions, and presentations with both AAMD members and invited speakers. Members learned more about a “mapping” project that AAMD launched to illustrate members’ impact on their communities through lifelong learning programs and other public service initiatives. The membership examined the changing nature of information exchange and the growth of digital and informal learning, as well as new opportunities for cultural exchange with Russia, India, Italy and other countries around the world, and innovative ways to use the power of the visual arts to change the lives of individuals.

“AAMD is dedicated to the professional development of our field and creating a new generation of art museum leaders,” said Janet Landay, Executive Director of AAMD. “I am delighted to be working with the members of AAMD to make this vital contribution to the future of art museums.”

A range of leaders from the education field shared perspectives on twenty-first-century learning styles, new types of arts programming afforded by new technologies, and opportunities for art museums to play an expanded role in both formal and informal education. A keynote address by recently appointed Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, James Leach, looked at the contribution of art museums in creating an engaged, civil society.

The members also addressed professional practices and standards for art museums. AAMD's Deaccessioning Task Force, chaired by Dan Monroe (Peabody Essex Museum) and William Eiland

(Georgia Museum of Art), met to continue its review of the Association's policies on this issue. The discussion reaffirmed that art museums exist for the care and interpretation of art collections—collections that are the cornerstone of research, exhibition, and public programming. The Task Force, therefore, reaffirmed the principle that works cannot be deaccessioned to provide funds for operating or capital purposes, and such funds may only be used for the refinement and expansion of the collection. The Task Force anticipates completing its work in summer 2010 and issuing an updated policy.

“AAMD’s deaccessioning policy is a core principle for the art museum field,” said William Eiland, Co-Chair of the Task Force and Director of the Georgia Museum of Art. “We believe that the actions we have taken over the last year to uphold this principle have had a positive impact on museum collecting and deaccessioning practices.”

The Association of Art Museum Directors, representing 193 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 perspectives and those of their institutions. Further information about AAMD’s professional practice guidelines and position papers is available at www.aamd.org.

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