



Association of Art Museum Directors

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New York, NY, February 5, 2009 – The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) releases the following statement:

The Association of Art Museum Directors' (AAMD) Board of Trustees has carefully and thoroughly reviewed the Denver Art Museum's unprecedented fractional deaccession of Charles Deas's painting, *Long Jakes*, to a Denver philanthropist, Mr. Philip Anschutz, and its joint acquisition with Mr. Anschutz of Thomas Eakins's painting, *Cowboy Singing*, from the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

We recognize the Denver Art Museum engaged in this unusual transaction with the full support of its Board of Trustees, relevant curatorial staff, and Mr. Anschutz to benefit the public by strengthening the Museum's important collection of Western Art.

AAMD's policies regarding deaccessioning works of art and the relationship between a museum and parties to whom works of art are deaccessioned did not anticipate and do not clearly address transactions of the sort the Denver Art Museum carried out with Mr. Anschutz.

AAMD intends no further inquiry or action with respect to the Denver Art Museum's transaction with Mr. Anschutz. All parties carried out this transaction in good faith and all sought to deal effectively with the complexities such a transaction entails.

However, after a detailed review of the general issues involved in fractional deaccessions of works of art from a museum to a private party, the Board of AAMD strongly encourages member museums not to employ fractional deaccessions as a method of collections development. The nature of such transactions involves very complex issues and considerations. AAMD's Professional Issues Committee, with suggestions from our members, is reviewing and will revise AAMD's policy regarding deaccessioning to address the issue of partial deaccessioning to private parties.

The AAMD Board wishes to recognize and thank Mr. Lewis Sharp, Director of the Denver Art Museum, for his full support and cooperation in the review of its transaction with Mr. Anschutz and in the more general consideration of fractional deaccessions as a tool for collections development.

The Association of Art Museum Directors, representing 198 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. Further information about AAMD's professional practice guidelines and position papers is available at www.aamd.org.

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