



Association of Art Museum Directors

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New York, NY, Posted January 30, Updated October 26, 2004 – In response to the Memorandum Opinion concerning the Barnes Foundation's Second Amended Petition to Amend Charter and Bylaws, issued in January 2004 by the Court of Common Pleas of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, Orphan's Court Division, and in anticipation of the decision pending before the Court, the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) released the following statement:

The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) is extremely concerned by the Court's encouragement of the Barnes Foundation to consider selling parts of its collections to fund operations.

Selling art for any purpose other than the strengthening of collections is a drastic measure, one that cannibalizes the interests of any institution whose responsibility to the public focuses on the preservation, presentation, and interpretation of works of art, which it holds in public trust. The Barnes Foundation is such an institution.

Museums provide educational opportunities to the broad public in numerous ways, including researching, preserving, interpreting, publishing, and displaying art, artifacts, and archives. While we recognize Dr. Barnes's unique approach to creating an educational institution, AAMD believes that the Foundation's mission is not well-served by selling parts of its collection.

An institution's collections – whether or not they are currently on view in public galleries – are essential to the fulfillment of its civic and educational mission. We support the view that agreements between museums and their donors should be guided by a commitment to the public, in whose trust these works are held.

The Association of Art Museum Directors is a membership organization representing 175 directors of major art museums in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Its purpose is to aid its members in establishing and maintaining high standards for themselves and their institutions. AAMD serves as a forum for the exchange of information and the exploration of ideas, and a voice to express the joint concerns and issues facing the museum community.

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