

Statement of Christine Anagnos  
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for the record of the  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies

The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) respectfully requests funding of \$155 million each for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for Fiscal Year 2016. We also ask that the subcommittee provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) with the funding necessary to staff and train personnel in order to avoid placing any additional impediments on American art museums that are importing works of art containing ivory for the purposes of public exhibition.

#### ARTS AND ARTIFACTS INDEMNITY PROGRAM

AAMD wishes to thank the Subcommittee for the language included in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act that revised the statutory caps for international and domestic arts exhibition indemnity agreements. Museums have already applied for indemnity under the new caps, which will serve the public well by allowing major exhibitions to be organized and to travel across the United States. We are eagerly awaiting the announcement of the latest exhibitions to receive indemnification.

An excellent example of the type of exhibition that the indemnity program, which is administered by the National Endowment for the Arts, is furnished by *The Habsburgs: Rarely Seen Masterpieces from Europe's Great Dynasty*, currently on view at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, after which it will travel to Atlanta and Houston. The estimate of insurance cost savings for the MIA alone is \$308,370, and the museum estimates that 125,000 visitors will attend the exhibition in Minneapolis.

#### NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

As stated above, AAMD requests that Congress appropriate \$155 million for the NEA. The agency continues to make modest but important grants that leverage significant private support, disseminate best practices, and foster innovation.

For example, the NEA has awarded a 2015-16 grant to the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington for *Hot Shop Heroes: Healing with Fire*, a glass-blowing program for wounded soldiers.

The act of glassblowing can heal the wounded. This was the hypothesis of Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) General Robert Brown after seeing soldiers participate in hands-on activities at the Museum of Glass (MOG) on President's Day, 2012, when artist Dale Chihuly hosted Military Day at MOG. Gen. Brown believed that the precise

and orchestrated team processes of glassblowing, and the ability of the artists to calmly deal with a volatile material, echoed military life.

To explore this idea, MOG partnered with JBLM's Warrior Transition Battalion (WTB) to pilot a glassblowing program for wounded soldiers. The pilots took place over a year and were evaluated by a local college. With proven and moving results, particularly for soldiers suffering from PTSD, Hot Shop Heroes is now a core education program with two 8-week classes, introductory and intermediate, offered three times a year. Curriculum was developed with an occupational therapist from JBLM; each weekly class serves 12 soldiers. There is a waiting list to participate.

Hot Shop Heroes encourages life-long learning in the arts; many participants have said that the program awakened creativity they thought they had lost. The act of making objects fosters imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and healing in the bodies and minds of wounded soldiers.

At JBLM, more than 2,000 wounded soldiers are on base. With assistance from the NEA, MOG will serve these soldiers and veterans as well. MOG is working with the Soldier Family Assistance Program at JBLM to create a referral plan for participants. With NEA support, the program will be offered five times a year and will reach 120 critically wounded soldiers and veterans.

Job training will also be enhanced in the program. Some participants have shown an aptitude for glassmaking. At the invitation of MOG, soldiers will be selected for one-on-one master classes with the MOG's Lead Gaffer; eligibility for a scholarship to Pilchuck Glass School; and eligibility for master classes at the studios of Preston Singletary, John Kiley, Dale Chihuly and Benjamin Moore.

All participants will benefit. Participants learn skills that improve dexterity through new access to the arts which are transferrable to other occupations, such as machining and welding. MOG will partner with Rally Point 6, a soldiers/veteran's service organization, to connect participants with potential employers as appropriate.

An exhibition of work by project participants will be shown at MOG and JBLM at the end of the year. MOG is planning a best practices model so that this unique and effective program can be shared with glassmaking institutions and military bases across the U.S.

Comments received from participants in Pilot I after the conclusion of the class include:

“The positive feedback/accomplishments of this class was better than months of therapy.”

“[The class] awakened previously hidden joy in creating things by hand. [Made me] able to actually ‘feel’ something other than numb.”

“Glassblowing is very relaxing. You forget everything and focus on glass—I love it.”

It should come as no surprise to members of the Subcommittee that the Museum of Glass is a Blue Star Museum, offering free admission to active duty military families (and up to five guests) from Memorial Day through Labor Day. In fact, about 80 percent of the AAMD member museums participate in the program, which offers museums a chance to give back to those in the armed forces.

## NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

As stated above, AAMD requests that Congress appropriate \$155 million for the NEH.

This important agency assists art museums in presenting humanities scholarship to the general public. It also has historically played an invaluable role in assisting with the preservation and conservation of important collections. This is exactly the type of unglamorous work for which it is chronically difficult to raise private funding, making federal support all the more valuable.

For example, a current grant is supporting a conservation assessment at the Portland Museum of Art of 300 of its most significant works on paper. This group of drawings, watercolors, pastels, and prints encompasses a wide variety of media, technique, and styles. Most works were made between the early 19th century and present day by American and European artists, particularly artists with strong ties to Maine, such as Marsden Hartley, Winslow Homer, Edward Hopper, Robert Indiana, Yvonne Jacquette, Andrew Wyeth, and William Zorach. These works showcase the diversity of human creativity, provide insight into the cultural conditions of a historical moment, and inspire and educate audiences. A conservator will examine each piece and prepare a survey form, summarizing the current condition and proposing treatment. This survey will allow the PMA to prioritize conservation treatments as the museum prepares for a major reinstallation in 2016.

AAMD is particularly encouraged by the NEH initiative The Common Good, which is designed to demonstrate the critical role that humanities scholarship can play in public life. Standing at the intersection of scholarship and the general public, museums have developed expertise in presenting complex ideas to non-specialists.

Both the NEA and NEH rely on the participation of non-governmental peer reviewers in making funding decisions, ensuring that political interference is non-existent. This system is the envy of many nations, and we strongly encourage Congress to maintain its vitality through continued and increased funding.

## U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The AAMD has had extensive conversations with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) about the importance of presenting works of many cultures to the American public, works that without temporary exhibitions, Americans would never see. These works, entrusted to our museums from both foreign museums and foreign private collectors,

are fragile, invaluable and represent the highest professional quality. American museums borrowing these works must be assured that the works can move quickly, safely and be fully protected.

This is especially true when moving works of art, made in whole or in part of ivory, through designated ports as called for in the Director's Order 210 issued February 25, 2014. The Director's Order 210 imposed strict requirements on importing works of ivory from abroad, with which museums are struggling to comply.

Unfortunately, the FWS has limited capacity to staff and train personnel at the designated ports to process works of ivory for special exhibitions. There must be sufficient staff to ensure that the works move in accordance with professionally accepted procedures, the new requirements and the speed that a temporary exhibition requires. The AAMD urges the committee to provide FWS with the funding necessary to staff and train personnel in order to avoid placing any additional impediments on American art museums.

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