



## Association of Art Museum Directors Annual Meeting Held in Detroit, Michigan

### *AAMD honors Detroit Institute of Arts Director Graham W.J. Beal for his service to art museum field*

**New York, NY, June 8, 2015**—At its annual meeting in Detroit in May, more than 150 members of the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) gathered to discuss issues and trends in the field, innovative ways to enhance connections between museums and their communities, and the Association’s critical role in fostering professional development for current and future art museum leaders. Meeting participants visited a number of member institutions in the region, including the Art Gallery of Windsor; Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills; Toledo Museum of Art; and University of Michigan Museum of Art. The gathering in Detroit marked the final meeting under the presidency of Susan Taylor, Director of the New Orleans Museum of Art, who is succeeded as AAMD President by Johnnetta Cole, Director of the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution.

A highlight of this year’s meeting was the panel discussion “In Institutions We Trust: A Conversation on Public Trust,” hosted by the Detroit Institute of Arts. The event was free and open to the public, and was moderated by Mark Stryker, arts reporter for the *Detroit Free Press*. Panelists were: Adrian Benepe, Senior Vice President and Director of City Park Development, The Trust for Public Land; Alicia Bradford, Director, City of Detroit Recreation Department; Karen Cook, Ray Lyman Wilbur Professor of Sociology, Stanford University; and Joseph Nocera, Op-Ed columnist, *The New York Times*. The event offered varied and dynamic perspectives on the issue of public trust within and beyond the museum field to help inform thinking about art museums’ role in their communities. Together, the participants explored the concept of “public trust,” and what it means to institutions, their supporters, stakeholders, and government and civic entities.

Following this panel discussion, AAMD presented Detroit Institute of Arts Director Graham W.J. Beal with the AAMD President’s Award in recognition for his outstanding service to the art museum field, leadership, and commitment to preserving the DIA’s collection as one of the nation’s premier cultural resources for current and future generations. Beal will be stepping down as Director of the DIA on June 30, 2015.

Jamienne Studley, Deputy Under Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, delivered an opening keynote speech, and Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts Jane Chu presented an additional keynote on the NEA’s current and forthcoming initiatives to support robust connections between museums and their communities. Other programs during the meeting included presentations by AAMD members on organizations from outside the museum field that can provide models for the future of museum practices, organized by Brett Littman, Director of The Drawing Center and Chair of the Future of Museums Task Force. A panel discussion on innovative approaches to museum interpretation and audience engagement was organized by Lori Fogarty, Director of the Oakland Museum of California and Chair of AAMD’s Education Committee.

Regular committee meetings, forums, and small group discussions were also held during the meeting, each addressing specific issues facing the membership and the field, including financial planning, the importance of sustaining and enhancing professional practices, and new ways to deepen museums’ local and national outreach. At the conclusion of the meeting, members heard a presentation by Mariët Westermann, Vice President of the Mellon Foundation, and Roger Schonfeld, Director of Library and Scholarly Communication Program at Ithaca S+R, about the current state of diversity in the museum field.

AAMD voted to admit six new members representing institutions across the United States. The new members are Elizabeth Armstrong (Palm Springs Art Museum); Emily Ballew Neff (Memphis Brooks Museum of Art); Julie Decker (Anchorage Museum); Steven Kern (Newark Museum); Mark Masuoka (Akron Art Museum); and Tim Schiffer (Figge Art Museum).



The membership also voted to affirm the proposed slate of new Officers and members of the Board of Trustees. New leadership includes Johnnetta Cole, President (National Museum of African Art); Brian Ferriso, Vice President and Secretary (Portland Art Museum); and Brian Kennedy, Treasurer (Toledo Museum of Art). The new Trustees are Stephen Borys (Winnipeg Art Gallery); Thomas Campbell (Metropolitan Museum of Art); Gretchen Dietrich (Utah Museum of Fine Arts); Jeff Fleming (Des Moines Art Center); Lial Jones (Crocker Museum of Art); Mark Roglán (Meadows Museum); and Eric Shiner (Andy Warhol Museum).

The Association of Art Museum Directors—representing 244 art museum directors in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico—promotes the vital role of art museums throughout North America and advances the profession by cultivating leadership and communicating standards of excellence in museum practice. Further information about AAMD’s professional practice guidelines and position papers is available at [www.aamd.org](http://www.aamd.org).

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