



Association of Art Museum Directors

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AAMD Statement on the Foreign Cultural Exchange Jurisdictional Immunity Clarification Act

Americans can view works of art from other nations—from King Tut’s treasures to Van Gogh’s paintings—because museums around the world loan their masterworks for exhibitions at U.S. museums. The exchange of works of art between countries supports cultural understanding and enables Americans to see great works of art that they might otherwise never experience for themselves.

The United States has long provided the crucial legal protection that helps make loans from foreign museums possible through a law that enables the Department of State to grant immunity for artworks during the short time they are on loan to American museums. Unfortunately, a 2004-2008 court case (where the heirs of the artist Russian artist Kazimir Malevich sued the City of Amsterdam in U.S. court), diminished these protections.

Because AAMD believes in the crucial importance of cultural exchange, it has worked with Congress to help frame new legislation that clarifies the intent of the original law—to make international cultural exchange possible and safe, while addressing claims related to works seized during the Holocaust. This legislation will help ensure that foreign museums do not stop lending works to U.S. museums. Bringing these loans to a standstill would be a great loss for the American public.

AAMD recognizes the thoughtful work of Congress to develop the bill and supports its passage.

For more information: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-112hrpt413/pdf/CRPT-112hrpt413.pdf>

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