



ASSOCIATION OF ART MUSEUM DIRECTORS SANCTIONS DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

New York, NY, June 18, 2014 – The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) releases the following statement:

The Association of Art Museum Directors is deeply troubled and saddened that the Delaware Art Museum has deaccessioned and sold a work of art from its collection to pay outstanding debt and build its operating endowment. Art museums collect works of art for the benefit of present and future generations. Responsible stewardship of a museum's collection and the conservation, exhibition, and study of these works are the heart of a museum's commitment to its community and to the public. It is therefore a fundamental professional principle that works can only be deaccessioned to provide funds to acquire works of art and enhance a museum's collection.

AAMD does not agree that the Delaware Art Museum had only two options to address its current financial challenges—sell works from the collection or close the museum. Over the course of more than six months prior to this sale, AAMD reached out to the Delaware Art Museum's leadership on multiple occasions in the hope that we could offer assistance in investigating alternatives to the planned sale—including helping the museum to campaign for private funding—in order to support the museum in upholding the highest professional standards. With this sale, the museum is treating works from its collection as disposable assets, rather than irreplaceable cultural heritage that it holds in trust for people now and in the future. It is also sending a clear signal to its audiences that private support is unnecessary, since it can always sell additional items from its collection to cover its costs.

By deaccessioning and selling a work from its collection to cover costs, the Delaware Art Museum has violated one of the most basic and important of AAMD's principles. Therefore, AAMD has no choice but to sanction the Delaware Art Museum, since the actions of one institution can affect the entire field. Consistent with AAMD's Code of Ethics, we ask our members to suspend any loans of works of art to, and any collaborations on exhibitions with, the Delaware Art Museum, until notified by us that the sanctions have been suspended or removed. While each of our members needs to consider this request individually and make its own decision, it is AAMD's strong belief that the actions of the Delaware Art Museum are contrary to the long term interest of each and every art museum.

The Association of Art Museum Directors, representing 242 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. Since its founding in 1916, AAMD has played a leading role in helping to define the best practices for its members and for the art museum community as a whole. An important component of this work is the publication of AAMD's Professional Practices in Art Museums, first adopted in 1966, most recently updated in 2011. This document provides a framework for museums to make informed and responsible decisions regarding their institutional management. Further information about AAMD's professional practice guidelines and position papers is available at www.aamd.org.

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