
From: Tuttle, Ilene [BOARD] [ituttle@iastate.edu]
Sent: Friday, August 15, 2008 3:30 PM
To: Campbell, Bonnie J.; Downer, Robert; Evans, Jack B.; Gartner, Michael; Harkin, Ruth; Lang, Craig; Miles, David; Vasquez, Rose
Cc: Donley, Robert [BOARD]
Subject: On behalf of David Miles --
Attachments: Letter to University of Iowa.pdf

From: David W. Miles [mailto:miles.david.w@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, August 14, 2008 3:11 PM
To: 'Donley, Robert [BOARD]'
Cc: 'Tuttle, Ilene [BOARD]'
Subject: FW: Association of Art Museum Directors

Please forward to all Regents. Thanks!

Dave

From: Christine Anagnos [mailto:canagnos@aamd.org]
Sent: Tuesday, August 12, 2008 4:01 PM
To: Pamela-White@UIowa.edu; miles.david.w@gmail.com; sally-mason@uiowa.edu; marilyn-brown@uiowa.edu
Cc: 'Bill Eiland'; 'Michael Conforti'; mgaudieri@aamd.org; pwright@uga.edu; 'Kjell Wangensteen'
Subject: Association of Art Museum Directors

Attached is a letter from Michael Conforti, President of the Association of Art Museum Directors and William Eiland, Chair of the Professional Issues Committee of the Association of Art Museum Directors, regarding the recent news reports about the University of Iowa Museum of Art.

Christine Anagnos
Association of Art Museum Directors
120 East 56th Street, Suite 520
New York, NY 10022
T: 212.754.8084
F: 212.754.8084



Association of Art Museum Directors

120 East 56th Street
Suite 520
New York, NY 10022
Tel: 212.754.8084
Fax: 212.754.8087

12 August 2008

David W. Miles, President
Board of Regents, State of Iowa
1402 Tulip Tree Lane
West Des Moines, IA 50266-6665

Dear Mr. Miles:

On behalf of the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), we write concerning Jackson Pollock's painting *Mural* and the collection of the University of Iowa Museum of Art. We understand that the campus of the university, including the museum, has experienced significant damage due to the record floodwaters in June and that it has been suggested that the Iowa Board of Regents research the deaccessioning and sale of *Mural* as a possible source of income to address the resulting costs of repairing that damage.

Deaccessioning is a serious issue, for which very strict professional standards apply. The AAMD guidelines (as detailed in *Professional Practices in Art Museums*, 2001) state clearly that deaccessioning is not to be used to provide operating funds, and that such proceeds be treated as acquisition funds. This stipulation reflects the belief that art collections are assets of trust, owned not merely by us, but by future generations.

The University of Iowa Museum of Art possesses a permanent collection that is especially strong in contemporary art, and Pollock's painting plays an important role not only in that collection, but also in terms of its significance in the field. *Mural* is a landmark work of art, and the fact that it belongs to the people of the state of Iowa should not be underemphasized. As Iowa Lieutenant Governor Patty Judge, who is also heading the Rebuild Iowa Office for flood recovery, has pointed out, once the painting is deaccessioned, the likelihood of obtaining a work of comparable significance is small to nonexistent.

The idea of *Mural* being sold is an alarming one to museum professionals and art historians, and should be as well to those who appreciate art from a more laic perspective. The possibility of the work passing into private hands and becoming unavailable for study and enjoyment alike is a particularly frightening one. Its deaccessioning would also harm the reputation of the University of Iowa Museum of Art; the museum's ability to attract future donors of works of art would no doubt diminish, as well as its competitive

edge in winning grant awards and fellowships in the field of visual arts. Great schools have great museums, and the tarnishing of the reputation of the University of Iowa Museum of Art would certainly reflect on the reputation of the university as a whole.

In this difficult time, as the state of Iowa seeks to rebuild and repair all that it has suffered in the floods, the university should focus its attentions not on short-term fiscal gain, however necessary it may be, but keep its eye on the bigger picture: the valuable visual arts legacy to the people of the state that this painting symbolizes.

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As representatives of the board and membership of AAMD, we urge the University of Iowa Board of Regents not to deaccession *Mural* from the collection of the university's museum of art. We offer you our help in the development of plan or course of action to preserve your collection intact as a fundamental resource in furthering the university's important mission.

With appreciation for your consideration, and best wishes,

Michael Conforti
President
Association of Art Museum Directors

William U. Eiland
Professional Issues Committee
Association of Art Museum Directors

Cc:

Pamela J. White
150 North Riverside Drive
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1789

Sally Mason, President
The University of Iowa
President's Office
101 Jessup Hall
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1316