

Vision Statement for the Bowdoin College Museum of Art

We envision the Bowdoin College Museum of Art to be a dynamic, student/faculty-centered, educational resource that facilitates connections to the world and all periods of human history. A laboratory for creativity, the BCMA strives to be open and accessible to those from near and far.

The BCMA enjoys a reputation as one of the finest small college art museums in the nation. With a collection that began with a bequest from the College's founder in 1811, it is one of the oldest art museums in the United States. Since 1894, the BCMA's home has been the Walker Art Building, which was designed by McKim, Mead, and White and thoughtfully renovated by Machado and Silvetti in 2007. Over the past two centuries, the museum's collections have grown to include more than 20,000 works. These collections are the only in the state of Maine to be truly global and transhistorical in scope. We will continue to build the BCMA's collection, guided by a new Collections Plan that will foreground a commitment to excellence, a balance between historic and contemporary art, and a focus on the educational mission of the College.

The BCMA's location at the center of campus is one of its defining characteristics. We will work to continue to enhance its openness to students, faculty, and the larger public and will foster creative collaborations with appropriate partners. Promoting student engagement and educational opportunities is a core responsibility, and we will encourage further accessibility to all aspects of the museum, including our collections, exhibitions, and programs. Towards this goal, we will look anew at the different ways in which we connect with visitors and will work to develop still further the museum's educational offerings. New attention will be paid especially to our internship, docent, and membership programs.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the BCMA's landmark exhibition *The Portrayal of the Negro in American Painting*, we recall that the museum has a proud history of developing original, groundbreaking exhibitions. This commitment to new ideas will serve as a hallmark of the museum's exhibition program. Eschewing the familiar, the art museum will be a site for investigations into creative expression in the visual arts. The BCMA's exhibitions will continue to highlight leading research in the field and will aspire to attract regional, national, and international attention.

Museums in the twenty-first century will increasingly take advantage of innovations in technology and communications to attract new audiences and to invigorate their collections, exhibitions, and programs. The BCMA will strive to be a leader in thinking

creatively about how to use technology to enhance access, to foster dialogue, and to improve the visitor experience. Building upon our commitment to the works in our collection, we are excited about finding new ways to share these works with the world. Given this goal, we will implement a process for digitizing the museum's holdings to expand access to them and to enhance the education opportunities connected with them.

The College currently provides substantial financial support for the BCMA. Going forward, we seek to raise money to defray operational costs contributed by the College and thereby to enhance the collections, programming, and access offered by the museum. Building endowments for exhibitions, acquisitions, and education must take center stage to ensure the museum's future vitality. We will also prioritize the maintenance and development of appropriate facilities, including storage space for collections. As part of a larger strategy to enhance the BCMA's financial position, we will pursue opportunities to create endowed staff positions, to name galleries, and to establish specific exhibition and program endowments. In our fund-raising efforts, we will strive to strike a balance between raising funds for annual programming and building long-term capacity.

With its history, collections, and recently-renovated building, the BCMA is well-positioned to be one of the leading art museums in New England and a model for college art museums throughout the United States. By prioritizing its educational focus and its openness to new ideas, we envision a museum that will contribute much to the cultural life of Bowdoin College and beyond.

Anne Collins Goodyear and Frank H. Goodyear, III
Co-Directors

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Bowdoin College Museum of Art Strategic Plan, FY 2015-2019

Mission Statement:

It is the mission of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art to serve and inspire the college and the community at large by fostering creativity and education through access, innovative programming, and continued attention to the ongoing care, exhibition, interpretation, and growth of its collection, comprising works of art in all media from around the world and made throughout human history.

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Goals:

- I. Promote Educational Programming
- II. Promote the Ethical Acquisition, Care, Exhibition, and Interpretation of Works of Art
- III. Communication and Access Through Innovative Use of New Technologies
- IV. Maintain and Develop Appropriate Staff and Facilities
- V. Finance and Development
- VI. Governance

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies, FY 2015-2019:

Over the next five years, our strategic priorities to enable the museum to best serve the educational mission of the College are as follows:

GOAL I: PROMOTE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Objective 1: Continue Strong Academic Engagement with the Museum

Strategy 1.1: Continue engagement with academic classes across the curriculum, under the leadership of the Andrew W. Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellow.

Strategy 1.2: Continue to expose students directly to objects in the collection, providing opportunities to work with original works of art and providing training for interpreting and handling these objects.

Strategy 1.3: Create and provide easy accessibility to digital resources that will enhance the use and interpretation of collections by students and faculty.

Strategy 1.4: Explore collections-sharing initiatives with peer institutions.

Objective 2: Promote Student Engagement and Educational Opportunities

In order to foster student engagement with the museum, we aim to create strategic and diverse programming involving students and engaging employment opportunities for students across the museum, understanding the museum as an institution that can provide educational and professional training for future leaders in the arts and beyond.

Strategy 2.1: Develop strategic and diverse programming involving students, working in partnership with the Student Museum Collaborative, the Bowdoin Arts Society, Career Planning, and in partnership with other departments such as Residential life, as appropriate.

Strategy 2.2: Develop enhanced internship program to involve students across museum departments.

Objective 3: Evaluate BCMA's Educational Programming for Local K-12 Students

Given the important role of education in the mandate of the College, we will examine opportunities for further community outreach and educational programming by the museum.

Strategy 3.1: Develop enhanced connections with academic departments and divisions involved with K-12 teaching initiatives, such as the Education Department and the McKeen Center for the Common Good.

Strategy 3.2: Explore opportunities for Bowdoin docents to work with local students at the museum and in their own classrooms. Enhance Bowdoin's community outreach through enhanced programming for students K-12.

GOAL II: PROMOTE THE ETHICAL ACQUISITION, INTERPRETATION, EXHIBITION, AND CARE OF WORKS OF ART

Objective 1: Build and Maintain Strong Collections

Strategy 1.1: Develop a collections plan that builds on collection strengths and fills gaps.

Strategy 1.2: Develop a collections catalogue, potentially as an online publication.

Objective 2: Promote Research and Scholarship

Strategy 2.1 Maintain strong educational programming through public lectures, symposia, and other scholarly events.

Strategy 2.2: Maintain strong publications, including scholarly online and print catalogues connected with exhibitions and the collection.

Strategy 2.3: Develop interpretative labels of approximately 150 words for all works installed in the museum.

Strategy 2.4: Tap into existing expertise on campus for research, advice on new acquisitions, etc.; structure engagement to promote class studies.

Strategy 2.5: Explore means to capture student and faculty research in collection database.

Objective 3: Maintain a Strong Exhibition Program

Strong exhibitions serve the college well by attracting international attention and inspiring students and alumni to support the museum as an institution of national significance. In selecting exhibition topics, we aspire to create a balance between historic and contemporary exhibitions, and to foreground the BCMA's heritage as a global museum.

Strategy 3.1: Regularly host temporary exhibitions of varying scales, which may incorporate or rely on outside loans, with scheduled openings in the fall,

the spring, and the summer season, thus enabling the museum to target both academic audiences and the general public.

Strategy 3.2: Develop and travel exhibitions organized by BCMA in partnership with other institutions.

Strategy 3.2: Organize regular thematic installations of the Permanent Collection, taking advantage of discrete loan opportunities when appropriate.

Strategy 3.3: Balance a strong exhibition program with installations from the permanent collection.

Objective 4: Promote Strong Care and Stewardship of Collections

Strategy 4.1: Ensure adequate physical storage space for Collections.

Strategy 4.2: Promote safe interaction with collections.

Strategy 4.3: To promote collection of born-digital and time-based media art and to protect the museum's digital assets, explore the development of a College-wide (possibly as part of a regional) Trustworthy Digital Repository to preserve digital resources, including works of art.

Strategy 4.4: Ensure works are conserved as needed.

Strategy 4.5: Ensure appropriate and proactive security protocols and resources in coordination with campus security.

GOAL III: ENHANCED ACCESS TO AND COMMUNICATION ABOUT COLLECTIONS, EXHIBITIONS, AND MUSEUM PROGRAMS

We aim to get to know our audiences better and actively recruit new ones and strategically enhance access to and information about the collections to make interactions with the museum even more enjoyable and satisfying. Improved visitor experience will in turn serve as means of developing and promoting the Bowdoin/BCMA "brand" to general audiences.

Objective 1: Assess Effectiveness and Accessibility of Museum Resources

Strategy 1.1: In concert with Bowdoin's Office of Institutional Research, develop metrics and assessment tools to evaluate student and faculty access to electronic resources and museum collections.

Strategy 1.2: In concert with Bowdoin's Office of Institutional Research, develop metrics and assessment tools to evaluate the public's impression of exhibitions, programs, and the visitor experience.

Objective 2: Enhance the Visitor Experience of Students, Faculty, and the General Public to the Museum

Strategy 2.1: Continue to build communications strategies to share information about the museum and develop relationships with patrons.

Strategy 2.2: Actively seek collaborations with peer departments on campus and other institutions to enhance engagement with and programming for the museum.

Strategy 2.3: Take advantage of assessment findings, as described under Objective 1, to implement other changes, as appropriate.

Objective 3: Enhance and Build Membership Program

Strategy 3.1: Launch a membership campaign and develop new benefits for members.

Objective 4: Promote Innovative Use of Technology for Communication, Access, and Education

Strategy 4.1: Enhance website.

Strategy 4.2: Promote use of museum collections by providing easy access to digitized works of art.

Strategy 4.3: Enhance development of social media strategies.

GOAL IV: MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP APPROPRIATE STAFF AND FACILITIES

Thinking strategically over the long-term, we will explore the possibility of increasing the BCMA's staff, particularly in the realm of curatorial affairs and electronic outreach. To enable growth in staff and collections, we will continue to assess the museum's use of space.

Objective 1: Proactively plan for future storage needs

Strategy 1.1: Evaluate current storage, inventory Fort Andross storage, and evaluate new storage options.

Objective 2: Ensure adequate space for staff and programming

Strategy 2.1: Define improved research space for museum interns and volunteers.

GOAL V: FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Objective 1: Increase designated endowment and annual giving support of the museum and decrease dependence on college operating funds

Strategy 1.1: Develop a multi-year fundraising strategy to support exhibitions, programs, and staff positions.

Strategy 1.2: Increase development efforts with arts foundations and regional corporations.

Objective 2: Increase revenue for the museum through sales of books and other items.

Objective 3: Further improve tools for financial record keeping.

GOAL VI: GOVERNANCE

Objective 1: Continue to facilitate the transparent interaction of the museum, its Advisory Council, and the College's Board of Trustees.

Objective 2: Seek to expand membership of Advisory Council with engaged patrons of, and professional in, the arts, with special consideration to the inclusion of qualified members well acquainted with the local community.