

Harvard / News Release Art Museums

Harvard Art Museums Receive Award from the National Endowment for the Arts

Grant to fund initiatives in arts education for Boston-area immigrants

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The Harvard Art Museums announce they have received a 2010 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Access to Artistic Excellence grant. The grant of \$75,000 is among the largest gifts awarded by the NEA in Massachusetts last year and will help further advance the Art Museums' teaching and research mission. The grant supports the program *Engaging New Americans: Explorations in Art, Self, and Our Democratic Heritage*, designed by the Art Museums' Education Department. This gallery-based program provides classes to recent Boston-area immigrants that incorporate the principles of object-based teaching, up-close engagement with original works of art, and key lessons from American civics and history. The classes are an innovative complement to traditional citizenship exam preparation and create opportunities for participants to immerse themselves in American art and history while building English language skills and a museum-based vocabulary.

"This important gift from the National Endowment for the Arts enables the Harvard Art Museums to reach out to new audiences and to use art and art instruction to strengthen communities," said Thomas W. Lentz, Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director of the Art Museums. "By utilizing the rich and varied collections of the museum, and creating new opportunities for observation, reflection, and discussion, the *Engaging New Americans* project seeks to broaden and enrich the path toward citizenship in a unique way."

A successful pilot of the *Engaging New Americans* program was completed in 2009 in collaboration with the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS). The NEA award has enabled expansion upon the pilot activities and aids in further partnerships with MAPS, Centro Latino, Inc., and the Everett Adult Learning Center, as well as other service providers for immigrants in the Boston area. Funds are used to support multiple classroom and informational visits to the Art Museums' Arthur M. Sackler Museum, publish a sourcebook for students, and create a family day event at the Sackler Museum.

Maria Schaedler-Luera was hired in October 2010 as a part-time Community Educator at the Art Museums to help coordinate and develop the *Engaging New Americans* program. She holds a master's degree in the Intercultural Relations Program from Lesley University, with a concentration in Arts for Social Change. Her thesis focused on her work in using improvisational theater to teach English to Brazilian immigrants. Schaedler-Luera, who was born in Brazil, is fluent in Portuguese, Spanish, and English. Museum Educator Judy Murray is developing the student sourcebook for the program, which will include thought-provoking questions about featured works of art, activities to develop English language skills, and information about American history and government. Murray earned a master's degree in 19th-century American history from Boston University and has taught high school history. Prior to joining

the Art Museums, she worked as the head of the Gallery Instructor Program at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and as Director of Visitor Learning at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

“The project aims to provide new generations of Americans with an opportunity to become comfortable in the museum environment, engage in deep and personal ways with original works of art, and add their own experiences to our shared narrative of American history,” said Ray Williams, Director of Education at the Art Museums. “Our hope for the future of this program is to disseminate the model to other museums across the country, introducing a new way to engage diverse communities.”

Credit

The program *Engaging New Americans: Explorations in Art, Self, and Our Democratic Heritage* is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

About the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

The NEA was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. To join the discussion on how art works, visit the NEA at www.arts.gov.

About the Harvard Art Museums

The Harvard Art Museums, among the world’s leading art institutions, comprise three museums (Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Arthur M. Sackler) and four research centers (Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, the Harvard Art Museums Archives, and the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis). The Harvard Art Museums are distinguished by the range and depth of their collections, their groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of their staff. The collections include approximately 250,000 objects in all media, ranging in date from antiquity to the present and originating in Europe, North America, North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. Integral to Harvard University and the wider community, the art museums and research centers serve as resources for students, scholars, and other visitors. For more than a century they have been the nation’s premier training ground for museum professionals and are renowned for their seminal role in developing the discipline of art history in this country. www.harvardartmuseums.org.

In June 2008 the building at 32 Quincy Street, formerly the home of the Fogg and Busch-Reisinger museums, closed for a major renovation. During this renovation, the Sackler Museum at 485 Broadway remains open and has been reinstalled with some of the finest works representing the collections of all three museums. When complete, the renovated historic building on Quincy Street will unite the three museums in a single state-of-the-art facility designed by architect Renzo Piano.

The Harvard Art Museums receive support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

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