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Maryland State Archives

Joint Chairmen's Report
Information Request

Conservation of the Peabody Art Collection

Page 21 of the 2013 *Joint Chairmen's Report* contains the following reporting requirement:

Request Funds to Conduct a Conditions Assessment and Begin Conservation of the Peabody Art Collection: It is the intent of the budget committees that the Maryland State Archives (MSA) shall request funding in fiscal 2015 to conduct a conditions assessment of the Peabody Art Collection and then submit to the budget committees a cost estimate to restore the collection. In addition, MSA shall submit a preliminary plan on targeted items to the budget committees by December 1, 2013.

Background

In 1996, the State of Maryland acquired the Peabody Art Collection when the Board of Public Works and the General Assembly of Maryland, under the leadership of Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller and Speaker of the House of Delegates, Casper R. Taylor, Jr., approved the final payment of \$15 million to the Peabody Institute, one of the state's premier cultural institutions. The collection is now managed by the Commission on Artistic Property of the Maryland State Archives.

In the April 2001 Joint Chairmen's Report, the General Assembly requested that the Archives prepare a condition assessment of the Peabody Art Collection to be submitted by December 31, 2001. \$30,000 was appropriated for this purpose, and the assessment was completed and submitted to the Legislature in December 2001.

This diverse collection of painting, sculpture, drawings, and decorative arts is one of the finest in the country and includes stunning works by American and European masters. Many of these objects are requested for loan and reproduction in the United States and abroad; some are on semi-permanent exhibition in the Miller Senate Building, Government House, and institutions such as the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Maryland Historical Society. This is a collection of which the state can be exceptionally proud. However, a commitment must be made to its long-term conservation and care.

Response

In the intervening years since the completion of the initial condition assessment, the Archives has routinely noted any deteriorating conditions of objects as part of the yearly physical inventory process. The curatorial staff has also been modestly successful in finding alternative resources

to conserve some of the most important pieces in the collection. However, scarcity of funds for conservation continues to be a problem. The Commission on Artistic Property, therefore, concluded that rather than pursue scarce resources for another assessment, efforts would be better spent on requesting funds for targeted conservation based on curatorial priority. The Hall of Records Commission concurred with this recommendation.

The Archives is working with the Department of Budget and Management to identify funding sources for this targeted conservation. Progress has been made in some specific areas. Most notably by tying conservation efforts to projects to restore historic spaces within the State House, the Archives has been able to fund the conservation and restoration of a number of iconic objects in the Annapolis Collection.

We also note that appropriations in the past have been used for conservation of specific targeted items in the collections. Most notably two important pieces by Charles Willson Peale.



Charles Willson Peale's *Portrait of William Paca* (c. 1780, shown at left). This full-length portrait of Paca, governor of Maryland, member of the General Assembly, and signer of the Declaration of Independence, was exhibited in the State House in the late eighteenth century. The background shows the grounds and summer pavilion of Paca's house and was instrumental in Historic Annapolis Foundation's reconstruction of the Paca gardens. The canvas had shown evidence of flaking and lost paint as well as scratches in its surface. The frame, which is probably original to the painting, had lost ornamentation and was visibly damaged around its perimeter.

Peale's portrait of William Pitt (1708-1778) shows him in a setting filled with objects that carried particular meanings, or symbols. The portrait has been called an allegory, for many of the details in it can be interpreted as republican symbols. For instance, Pitt appears not in the robes of an earl, but in classical dress. This associated the statesman with classical Roman heroes who would have worn similar attire.

In response to the Joint Chairmen's specific request for a preliminary plan on targeted items for conservation funding the Archives has developed the attached brochure describing the curatorial staff's priorities. The document will also be used to solicit funds for conservation from private donors.



**BE A PART OF MARYLAND HISTORY...
HELP CONSERVE ONE OF THE STATE'S
ENDANGERED ARTISTIC TREASURES**

The Maryland Commission on Artistic Property of the Maryland State Archives is seeking support to conserve some of the most historic and important paintings and objects in the state's collection through donations to the Friends of the Maryland State Archives. Donations made for the restoration of specific works of art will be acknowledged in all publications of the Friends and the Commission.

**YES! I WANT TO HELP SAVE
MARYLAND'S ARTWORK**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email: _____

Donation amount: \$ _____

Paintings or objects you would like to support:

Please send your tax deductible donation to:
Friends of the Maryland State Archives
3034 Aberdeen Road, Annapolis MD 21403

*The Friends of the Maryland State Archives is a 501(c)(3)
organization & donations are fully tax deductible.*

Maryland's Historic Art Collection

Maryland is fortunate to own one of the oldest and finest public art collections in the United States. It dates from 1774 when the portrait of William Pitt was given to the colony by renowned artist Charles Willson Peale. The collection has grown over the centuries and includes both fine and decorative arts. Many of these works are of national importance. In 1996, the state acquired the Peabody Art Collection, a significant collection of paintings, sculpture, and works on paper.

The body charged with the management, care, and conservation of these works of art is the Maryland Commission on Artistic Property, a unit of the Maryland State Archives. The Commission currently receives no funding for the care and conservation of the collection, and is unable to conduct a complete assessment survey. Nevertheless, we are grateful for the support of an anonymous donor who has made it possible to assess the condition of the items included in this brochure. We hope that private financial support will allow us to fund the restoration of these important works of art.

The Commission, through the Friends of the Maryland State Archives, is appealing to the public to help support the restoration and display of these important works.

For more information about the state-owned art collection or to make a donation to the Friends of MSA please contact: Mimi Calver at 410.260.6444 or Mimi.Calver@Maryland.gov

**CONSERVATION WISH LIST
OF THE
MARYLAND COMMISSION ON
ARTISTIC PROPERTY**



**ENDANGERED STATE-OWNED TREASURES
IN NEED OF PRIVATE SUPPORT**

Maryland's Royal Heritage

This trio of portraits was purchased in 1925-26 by Governor Albert C. Ritchie for display in the State House. King Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria hung in the Governor's Reception Room until 2008. Queen Anne remains on display but is also in urgent need of conservation. Conservation of these three portraits will reunite them on display, honoring both Maryland and Annapolis' namesakes.



King Charles I (1600-1649)
Studio of Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641), c. 1640

Estimated hours to conserve the canvases: 65-85 hours. Frame: 148 hours.

Financial support needed: \$25,880



Queen Henrietta Maria (1609-1669)
Studio of Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641), c. 1632

Estimated hours to conserve the canvases: 80-95 hours. Frame: 18 hours.

Financial support needed: \$14,080



Queen Anne of England (1665-1714)
Attributed to Michael Dahl (1659-1743), c. 1702 after Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723)

Estimated hours to conserve the canvases: 49-94 hours. Frame: 18 hours.

Financial support needed: \$12,154

Maryland's Endangered Treasures

John Paca (1712-1771)
John Hesselius (1728-1778), c. 1765



John Paca was a member of the Lower House from Baltimore and was the father of William Paca, a delegate to the Continental Congress, governor of Maryland and Maryland state senator. This important colonial painting retains its original frame, a rare early American example.

Conservation treatment for the canvas includes cleaning, inpainting to remove damage and abrasions, and revarnishing: 68-88 hours. Conservation treatment for the frame includes replacement of missing ornaments, removal of secondary gilding, and adding a new liner: 48 hours.

Financial support needed: \$20,510



John Eager Howard (1752-1827)
Thomas Sully (1783-1872), 1834

Howard served as an outstanding officer in the Revolutionary War and as governor of Maryland from 1788-1791. He also served in the Maryland Senate and the U.S. Senate. This portrait was commissioned by the state after Howard's death in 1827.

Conservation treatment for the canvas includes cleaning, inpainting to remove damage and abrasions, and revarnishing: 40-58 hours. Conservation treatment for the frame includes stabilization of the coatings and removal of bronze paint and over gilding: 48 hours.

Financial support needed: \$13,210

Important Decorative Arts



Four Mahogany side chairs, Irish Queen Anne style, c. 1750

This set of chairs is among the oldest objects in the state's collection and is on display at Government House.

They require structural repairs and re-upholstering so they can continue to be used in the house.

Financial support needed: \$3,600

House of Delegates desk
Gould & Glanville, 1858

Used in the House of Delegates from 1858-1876, this desk will be an important element in the interpretation of the re-created Old House of Delegates Chamber.

Financial support needed: \$4,250



Thank you for your support!

Friends of the Maryland State Archives
October 2013