



Maryland Commission on Artistic Property *Semi-Annual meeting*

Academy Art Museum
Easton, Maryland

May 13, 2009

Meeting Minutes

[The meeting was preceded by a tour of the Academy Art Museum.]

Call to Order by the Chair

Chairman Matthew P. Lalumia called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

Present were:

Commission Members:

Matthew P. Lalumia, Esq., Chairman

Doreen Bolger, Director, Baltimore Museum of Art

Christopher Brownawell, Director, Academy Art Museum, Easton, Maryland

Alan Fern, Director, The National Portrait Gallery, Retired

Bob Follet, Head librarian and supervisor of the archives, The Peabody Institute

[representing Jeffrey Sharkey]

Susan Perrin, Susan Perrin Art Consulting

Maureen Torgerson, Former Chair, UMUC Art Advisory Board and Independent Art Consultant

Archives' Staff:

Tim Baker, Deputy State Archivist

Elaine Rice Bachmann, Director of Outreach, Conservation, and Artistic Property

Sasha Lourie, Curator

Christopher Kintzel, Registrar

Opening Remarks

- Chairman Matthew P. Lalumia thanked Mr. Brownawell for hosting the meeting, and commended his dedication to the Commission.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

- Mr. Fern made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting of the Commission on November 6, 2008. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brownawell and approved by the Commission.

Recent and Upcoming Loans

- Mr. Lourie highlighted two recent loans of paintings for display in the Governor's Office in the State House. Francis Briscoe's *Hauling in the Nets* from the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts was initially a temporary loan in exchange for the loan two Hugh Bolton Jones paintings, *Near Union Bridge* [MSA SC 4680-10-0050] and *Morning on the Severn* [MSA SC 4680-10-0051] to the museum's *Three Maryland Artists* exhibition. At the request of the governor's office, Commission staff is working to extend the loan as a long-term renewable loan. Similarly, the Maryland Historical Society's portrait of *General John Stricker* by Charles Bird King is also on long-term loan for display.
- Ms. Bachmann noted that the Archives recently worked with the Department of General Services to install appropriate lighting in the Governor's Office to ensure the safety of the paintings and other works of art on display.
- Mr. Lourie discussed upcoming loans to the Dixon Gallery and Gardens and the Fowler Museum at UCLA. Thomas Worthington Whitridge's *Retrospection* [MSA SC 4680-10-106], typically on display in Government House, will be exhibited at the Dixon Gallery and the Katonah Museum of Art for the exhibition, "Bold, Cautious, True: Walt Whitman and American Art of the Civil War Era," from June 21, 2009 through February 7, 2010. Conservation of the canvas was funded by the Dixon.
- Mr. Lourie noted that *The Burning of the Peggy Stewart* [MSA SC 1545-1111] would be featured in a single-venue exhibition at the Fowler Museum entitled "Steeped in History: The Art of Tea" from August 2 until November 29, 2009. This is the third documented loan of the painting, which previously traveled to the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904 and to the Baltimore Museum of Art in 1938. The Archives partnered with the Fowler to share the extensive costs to conserve the painting and frame.

Director's Report:

- Ms. Bachmann commented that the State House reopened in early January, and recognized the work of the Department of General Services in opening the building on schedule to preserve the distinction of the oldest state house in continuous legislative use. Commission staff installed new "temporary" exhibits in the Old House of Delegates Chamber and other areas of the State House. She also reported on conservation efforts to get more items out on public display.
- Mr. Baker provided an update on the Archives and APC budgets for FY 2010 and FY 2011. He noted that the elimination of rent money to CDS Logistics for fine art storage will reduce the FY10 appropriation for art conservation, but noted that some funds would still be available.
- Mr. Baker reported that the Archives formally took over management of the State House Visitor Center on January 1, 2009. The Archives retained the three contractual staff and two volunteers previously employed by the Department of

Business and Economic Development, but no funds were provided to the Archives for this increase in staff or associated services. An estimated 10-20,000 people have visited the State House each month since January, and nearly half of those received a guided tour offered by the Visitor Center.

- Ms. Bachmann added that interpretive tours offered by the Visitor Center will focus exclusively on the history of the State House and noted a need to obtain more volunteers. Ms. Bolger noted that training new docents will be a lengthy, but worthwhile, endeavor to help build volunteer base.

Curator's Report

- Mr. Lourie reported on the submission of the 95% design drawings for the restoration of the late 19th century Old House of Delegates Chamber. He noted that the Francis Blackwell Mayer's paintings of *The Burning of the Peggy Stewart* [MSA SC 1545-1111] and *The Planting of the Colony of Maryland* [MSA SC 1545-1125] will be conserved and reinstalled in the restored chamber. The portrait of *Governor Thomas Holliday Hicks* [MSA SC 1545-1175], which has been in storage since 1995, will also be conserved and reinstalled in the restored chamber.
- Mr. Lourie highlighted several recent conservation projects, including the conservation of a c. 1760-1780 English Chippendale-style mirror [MSA SC 1545-3204] for installation in Comptroller Franchot's conference room. Mr. Lourie noted that the conservation of Charles Willson Peale's portraits of *William Pitt* [MSA SC 1545-1113] and *William Paca* [MSA SC 4680-10-0083] are nearing completion, and MSA is exploring the possibility of conserving the Paca frame before the end of the fiscal year.

Old Business

- Ms. Bachmann and Mr. Baker discussed recent and upcoming outreach programs associated with the reopening of the State House. Ms. Bachmann summarized the special events commemorating the 225th anniversary of George Washington's resignation in the Old Senate Chamber. Ms. Bolger recommended providing a mechanism, such as comment cards or a "contact us" email link, at the Visitor Center to solicit public and legislative support for future goals. Mr. Fern added that the significance of the State House to Maryland and the nation cannot be overstated.

Fine Art Storage

- Mr. Lourie provided an update on fine art storage and introduced the "Summary of Collections Storage Issues" document prepared by the staff of the Commission. At the November 2008 meeting, the Commission staff was planning for the removal of all objects stored at CDS Logistics because of a thirty-three percent rent increase. Since that meeting, the Archives has faced a mounting challenge of finding suitable storage options for objects not on display. In January, staff oversaw the removal of 221 objects from CDS to the Archives' Annapolis facility and a rented non-climate-controlled warehouse. Staff is also planning to receive seventeen paintings presently stored at Security Moving and Storage under a contract previously funded by the General Assembly. Potential solutions under

consideration include expansion and renovation of the existing Archives building, creation of a new facility at Crownsville, and a satellite archives system.

- Mr. Baker provided a detailed summary of the Archives' plan to expand and renovate the existing Annapolis facility for additional fine art and records storage. Mr. Fern inquired if an increased facility would lead to higher operating expenses and rent obligations owed to the Department of General Services.
- Mr. Lalumia asked an estimated budget for the proposed project and whether creating separate projects for art storage and records storage would be beneficial. Mr. Baker noted that previous cost estimate worksheets prepared by DGS estimated \$50-55 million. He suggested that future storage of fine arts would probably not be funded if art storage and record storage were considered separately.
- Mr. Fern and Ms. Bolger recommended the Archives should stress the urgent need of a solution and highlight the implications of recent real-world archival and museum disasters, such as the destruction of the Cologne Archives and the fire in the Prince George's County Courthouse, when seeking support from the legislature for a new facility. Commission members also advised the importance of quantifying the financial and historical implications of the destruction of valuable objects and records, such as Washington's resignation speech.
- Mr. Brownawell suggested creating a one-page informational document that outlined the value and current peril of the collection and justified the proposed expansion. He advised the staff to be aggressive in advocating elected officials to obtain support for the plan.
- Ms. Bolger stressed that the Archives should impress upon the leadership that the benefits of constructing an addition at the existing site—including access to police protection, fire protection, accessibility of professional staff, and accessibility to the capitol complex—cannot be replicated at another site without significant additional expense.
- Ms. Bolger also suggested linking the preservation of the state's historical and artistic legacy with the bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812.
- Mr. Lalumia noted that the Commission members endorsed the Archives' efforts to advance the proposal, and advised the staff to prepare an informational summary packet as soon as possible.

New Business

- Ms. Bachmann reported that the Old Senate Chamber Architectural Advisory Committee has been formed in conjunction with the ongoing investigations in the room. Staff from the Archives and Maryland Historical Trust are working together to support the work of the committee. Further discussion of this project, including the role of Archives and Commission staff, was deferred to the next meeting.

Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 5:30.

Approved by the Maryland Commission on Artistic Property, October 27, 2009.