

Proposed Randolph College Art Collection Sale

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Category: Museums and Galleries

The College Art Association, the largest membership organization in the country for artists and art historians, represents the interests of a wide variety of art professionals. In this capacity, CAA supports and promotes best practices and professional guidelines for all institutions related to the making, display, and preservation of art. Thus we feel we must comment on the redistribution of cultural assets through sales and other means, as is being considered at Randolph College.

The College Art Association understands that the sale of the Maier Museum of Art's collection is to provide operating revenue for Randolph College, and, as such, contravenes the Professional Practices for Art Museums policy outlined by the American Association of Museums and the Association of Art Museum Directors. This policy, which College Art Association wholeheartedly endorses, states that art collections are held by museums as a public trust and that any decisions to sell objects from the collection should be based on donor intent and aesthetic quality. Any revenue gained from sales is solely to support future art acquisitions.

Most colleges and universities adhere to a transparent process for financial exigency where all stake-holders are consulted in advance of decisions. CAA expects that any process that involves the disposal of art or not be an open one that is clearly articulated and involves all stake-holders. A dialogue and transparency are needed for such major decisions.

Statement of Condemnation for the Proposed Sale of Paintings

COLLEGEVILLE, PA.- The Association of College and University Museums & Galleries (ACUMG), which represents over 400 institutions across the country, joins the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) in its statement of condemnation for the proposed sale of four paintings from Randolph College's Maier Museum of Art in order to bolster the general endowment fund. Further, ACUMG also questions the methodology used to remove the works from the Maier Museum of Art.

Counter to the formal communications issued by the President's Office at Randolph College, there has been little transparency in the discussions and no credence given to the recommendations given by arts and culture professionals engaged to advise the process. Such a position by the Trustees and the President significantly impact the ability of the Maier Museum of Art to be accreditable by the American Association of Museums (AAM). It also significantly compromises the future leadership of the museum since no credible professional would take a position with the knowledge that the permanent collection is viewed as a savior for fiscal issues affecting Randolph College.

Art and cultural collections - in the public trust under the aegis of academic museums - support the pedagogical program of the college's mission. Thus, the value of a Randolph College education has been compromised by this decision. Such an action is counter to the ethical and

professional standards established by the museum field and sets a dangerous precedent that threatens the viability and integrity of all university collections.

We stand ready to help the institution navigate this issue which has an impact that is greater than the perceived economic benefits.

On behalf of the ACUMG Board of Directors and Membership

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