

Testimony on FY 2011 Appropriations for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National  
Endowment for the Humanities

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on behalf of American Association of Museums, Washington, DC and  
Association of Art Museum Directors, New York, NY

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
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Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the subcommittee with respect to FY 2011 appropriations for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). My statement is on behalf of the Norman Rockwell Museum, (NRM) of which I am executive director, as well as the American Association of Museums (AAM) and the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD).

We respectfully request Congress to approve increases for both agencies, which offer irreplaceable support for the nation's cultural institutions and higher education humanities programs. At a time when individual, corporate, and foundation giving is under unprecedented pressure, these agencies offer a lifeline, helping us to preserve programming and educational services for the public, not to mention the jobs of our staff and vendors. Modest increases would allow both agencies to undertake new initiatives such as NEA's proposed Our Town. Absent a rise in overall funds, we would not support funding of new initiatives.

To provide context for our request, I will speak about the specific grants that NEA and NEH have provided to the two associations on behalf of which I am testifying, as well as about the grants they have provided to the NRM.

Norman Rockwell Museum stewards the world's largest, most significant collection of art and archives of American artist Norman Rockwell, and a growing collection of other notable American illustrators. Today, our holdings include more than 770 original Rockwell artworks and his personal Archive of more than 200,000 objects, as well as 60+ artworks representing other contemporary and historical illustrators.

Founded in 1969, NRM originally represented Rockwell's personal collection and quickly grew out of popular demand to become a national museum. Today, as the leading presenter of Rockwell and the preeminent museum of American illustration art, we showcase works of more than 400 illustration masters. Considered a national treasure, our growing collection drives a vibrant year-round exhibition program at the Museum, an ambitious national traveling exhibition program, and dozens of humanities programs. These exhibitions and programs attract 150,000 annual visitors to Stockbridge from around the world and reach an average of 300,000 more each year through traveling exhibitions. In 2009 alone, nine NRM exhibitions traveled to 10 states.

Our collection also supports an active research center and anchors the *Rockwell Center for American Visual Studies* – the nation’s first art-history research institute dedicated to the study of American illustration.

Caring for this world-class art collection is a formidable task for a modest-sized museum with a small endowment, and in 2003, the Museum launched ProjectNORMAN – a comprehensive 10-year preservation, digitization, and public access initiative. The Museum has earned broad public support for ProjectNORMAN – the beneficiary of \$2.3 million thus far from NEA, NEH, IMLS, and several foundations. We have protected and extended the life of more than 40,000 objects – many of which had been in peril – and have advanced new scholarship as we continue to gain intellectual control of these collections and make them more accessible to researchers and others.

For our efforts, the Museum won the **2008 National Humanities Medal** - America’s highest recognition of work by individuals and institutions in the humanities. The first museum ever to win this award, we were recognized for "*studying and honoring the life, work, and ideals of an icon of American art... [and for being] the careful curator of the archives, illustrations, and benevolent spirit Norman Rockwell bequeathed to the nation.*"

None of this could have been possible without vital grant support over the years from NEA and NEH. Beginning in 2005, these two federal agencies, along with the Institute of Museum and Library Services, have helped fund our preservation efforts. Significantly, we have successfully leveraged this federal support to acquire more than \$1 million in private foundation grants.

What follows is a summary of each NEA and NEH grant we received, including Save America's Treasures, and what they funded:

- National Endowment for the Arts, \$25,000, awarded in 2005: in preparation for preserving 18,000 fragile acetate negatives as part of ProjectNORMAN.
- NEA/Save America's Treasures, \$296,500, awarded in 2005 towards preserving 18,000 acetate negatives.
- NEA American Masterpieces, \$140,000, awarded in 2005 to support American Chronicles, the Museum's national traveling exhibition chronicling Rockwell's life and work. Launched in 2007, this exhibition will have traveled to museums in Arkansas, California, Florida, Kansas, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and Washington.
- NEH Preservation & Access, \$225,446, awarded in 2008 to support arrangement and description of the Rockwell Archive, particularly the vast collection of unprocessed correspondence, hiring a digital archivist to develop collection-level finding aids.
- NEH Chairman's Discretionary Fund, \$30,000 grant awarded in 2008 to plan an exhibition tentatively planned for 2012 called *The Pleasures of Recognition: Norman Rockwell's Inspirations and Influences*.
- NEA ARRA grant, \$50,000, awarded in July 2009 to help support three key Museum curatorial positions threatened by the ongoing national recession.

To put this in context, the museum has an annual budget of less than \$4 million and an endowment fund of under \$4 million. NEA and NEH support has therefore played an enormous

role, and we are very proud of their recognition of the excellence of our programming and the importance of Norman Rockwell's art.

As for services to the field at large, AAMD, which includes about 190 leading art museums in the United States, received \$10,000 from the NEA in 2007 to support a program for museum director management training at its January 2008 conference in Austin, TX. In 2008, it received \$10,000 from the NEA to support its January 2009 conference, which included a series of panels addressing the pressing issues facing the membership and was designed to stimulate conversation among AAMD members on diversity inside and outside the museum.

In 2009, AAMD received \$20,000 to support a research and communications effort that centers on mapping individual museums' educational partnerships across their communities. In the case of NRM, that entailed mapping 162 community partnerships. As part of the mapping project, AAMD can incorporate U.S. Census Bureau data and send it back to us, enabling us to analyze whether we are providing services to poorer as well as richer census tracts, and to adjust our efforts accordingly. The maps can be broken out by several different jurisdictions and are an invaluable tool when speaking to funders, community leaders, and other stakeholders.

In addition to these grants to associations and museums, the NEA administers a program of invaluable assistance to the museum field: the Arts Indemnity Program, which minimizes the costs of insuring art exhibitions. Simply put, without this program, many works of art would not be able to travel beyond their home and would thus be inaccessible to the public.

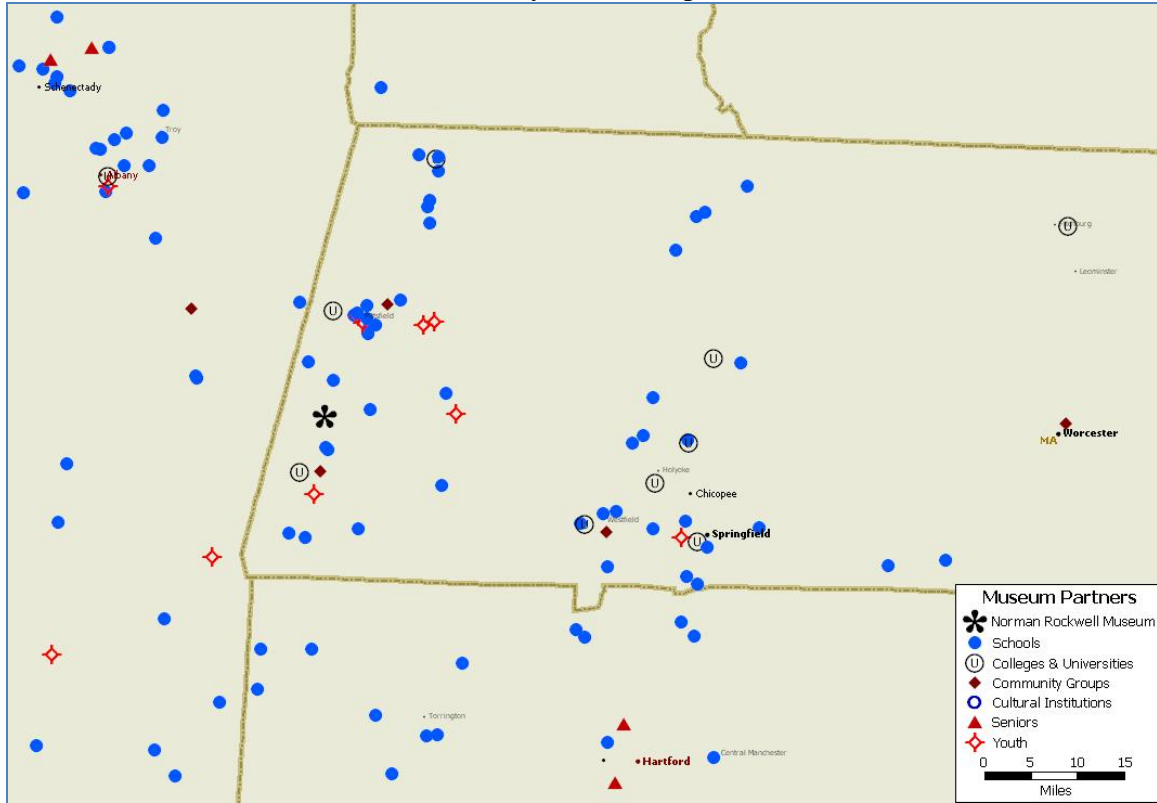
Originally only for international exhibitions, eligibility was extended to purely domestic exhibitions by Congress in December 2007, after insurance companies raised rates following Hurricane Katrina. Prior to Congress's action, many exhibitions were cancelled or curtailed owing to the huge rise in insurance rates. In some cases, insurance was unavailable at any price. The extension of the indemnity program has been of immense importance for the NRM.

Finally, I would like to ask the subcommittee to reject the budget request to eliminate Save America's Treasures. This program, established by First Lady Hillary Clinton and strongly supported by First Lady Laura Bush, has helped to rescue sites and collections of national and even world significance. It is clearly within the core mission of the National Park Service as well as the NEA and NEH. Terminating it would send a terrible message to the nation: that history has nothing to teach us. On behalf of NRM, which received a Save America's Treasures grant in 2005, as well as AAM and AAMD, I appeal to you find funding to continue this unique and wonderful program. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

*AAMD's mission is to support its members in increasing art museums' contribution to society. Its membership is composed of the directors of America's leading art museums.*

*AAM's mission is to enhance the value of museums to their communities through leadership, advocacy, and service. Its membership is composed of museums and professionals representing every discipline, including art, history, science, military and maritime, and youth museums, as well as aquariums, zoos, botanical gardens, arboretums, historic sites, and science and technology centers.*

# Norman Rockwell Museum – Community Partnerships



# Norman Rockwell Museum 2007-2013 Exhibitions

