



ASSOCIATION OF ART MUSEUM DIRECTORS' STATEMENT ON RANDOLPH COLLEGE AND MAIER MUSEUM OF ART

New York, NY, March 12, 2014 – In response to Randolph College's decision to sell George Bellows' painting *Men of the Docks* from the collection of its Maier Museum of Art and to use the proceeds to support the College's operating budget, the Association of Art Museum Directors announced that it is sanctioning the Museum and made the following statement:

The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), an organization representing 236 directors of North America's leading art museums, is deeply disturbed to learn of Randolph College's continuing sale of works of art from the collection of its Maier Museum of Art to provide general operating funds for the College.

We appreciate both the College's decision to sell *Men of the Docks* to a public institution, thus ensuring that this work will remain in the public domain, and the educational exchange that the College and the purchaser of the painting, the National Gallery of Art in London, are launching. Nevertheless, these steps—however laudable they may be—do not mitigate the fact that the funds realized from this sale will be utilized for a purpose that we believe will, ultimately, be damaging to our field.

The prohibition against the sale of works of art from museum collections for such purposes is a violation of one of the most fundamental professional principles of the art museum field. That Randolph College, which is responsible for establishing policies for and overseeing the operations of the Maier Museum, continues to take such actions is a matter of grave concern to AAMD, art museums everywhere, and the public they serve.

When the Randolph College's plan to deaccession and sell works from the collection of the Maier Museum to support the operations of the College became public in 2007, AAMD contacted the College leadership in the hope that AAMD could offer assistance in investigating alternatives to address these challenges. Unfortunately, the College continued on this path and in 2008 sold Rufino Tamayo's painting *Trovador*. As a result, AAMD censured the Maier Museum of Art to signal its objection to this action and to endeavor to discourage the College from selling works from its collection for this purpose in the future.

Following the sale of George Bellows' *Men of the Docks* in February 2014, AAMD once again reached out to Randolph College to encourage the College to find other solutions to its need to secure additional resources for its operations. Unfortunately, the College did not express any willingness to cease its deaccessioning plans, but rather simply restated its rationale for doing so.

In order to affirm one of the core principles of the field, AAMD's Board of Trustees has voted to sanction the Maier Museum of Art, which is a more stringent step than censure. The sanctions will include instructions to our members to suspend any loans of works of art to and any collaboration on exhibitions and programs with the Maier Museum of Art.

AAMD continues to decry Randolph College's sale of works from the Maier Museum of Art for operating funds and urges the College to stop this practice, which not only erodes the credibility and good standing of the Maier Museum, but also affects all art museums and the trust that the public has placed in them.

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The Association of Art Museum Directors—representing 236 art museum directors in the US, Canada, and Mexico—promotes the vital role of art museums throughout North America and advances the profession by cultivating leadership and communicating standards of excellence in museum practice. Further information about AAMD's professional practice guidelines and position papers is available at www.aamd.org.

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