

Testimony in support of the Capital Budget Appropriation 2012

Doreen Bolger, Director of The Baltimore Museum of Art

The Baltimore Museum of Art is requesting your support for an allocation of \$2.5 million, proposed in Governor O'Malley's FY2012 Capital Budget. As the second of four appropriations totaling \$10 million, this funding will support a comprehensive renovation project that will maintain and improve the BMA's facility and enhance the Museum's already substantial service to the citizens of Maryland. The project will be completed between 2011 and 2014, when the BMA celebrates its 100th anniversary. Work has already begun on the first phase of the project, using the \$2.5 million already approved by the General Assembly for FY2011 and matching funds raised by the Museum.

The renovation will build on the momentum of free admission, which the BMA launched in 2006. Free admission has eliminated the financial barrier to public access to the BMA's collection and educational programs, and prompted a dramatic increase in the number of first-time visitors to the Museum (44% of our audience in FY2010.) As a result of the proposed project, the Museum will become more intellectually and physically accessible to a larger, broader, and more diverse audience.

Goals

- Preserve and display the outstanding art collection entrusted to us by generations of Marylanders, an artistic legacy of 90,000 highly significant art objects.
- Promote economic development by attracting cultural tourists from the region and the nation to a must-see destination in the heart of Maryland.
- Encourage lifelong learning by offering appealing and accessible educational experiences to Marylanders, from schoolchildren to senior citizens.

Planning Completed

The proposed project is the result of a decade of carefully sequenced institutional planning, starting with a strategic plan and space use study in 2001. Working with architects and construction management companies, the Museum has developed thorough cost estimates and a construction-work sequence that will permit it to remain open and serving the public throughout the four years of construction.

Project Scope

This transformative project will better integrate the BMA's original 1929 building with the nine subsequent additions that were completed over a period of 75 years. It will also establish a consistent, positive experience for Museum visitors, offering them the educational experiences, technology, and amenities expected by 21st century audiences.

In the current year, the BMA is replacing the roof and lighting systems of its West Wing for Contemporary Art, which displays art created from 1960 through the present day. This will permit the safe display of fragile works on paper, such as photography, and accommodate video and other new media by the best artists from Maryland and beyond. The roof over the Northwest Cone Wing, which houses critical collections storage, is also being addressed in this phase of work.

Subsequent phases of the project, included in the outlying years of the State budget plan, will result in renovations to two additional sets of galleries for important collections. In 2012, work will begin on the American Wing. When it reopens in 2013, it will highlight the very best examples of Maryland and American art, combining paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, and prints, drawings, and photographs from 1720 to 1960. This Wing will also include a highly significant collection of art by African-Americans that will be even more prominently featured when this renovation is complete. As one of the very first art museums to exhibit and collect the work of African-American artists—holding its first exhibition in 1939 and making its first purchase in 1942—the BMA is able to show visitors an extraordinary range of art, from the early 19th-century portraits of Joshua Johnson to the 20th-century masterpieces of William H. Johnson and Hale Woodruff to major 21st century pieces by Kerry James Marshall, Kara Walker, and Allison Saar.

In 2013, the BMA's treasured collection of African art will be reinstalled to underscore the global reach of the BMA's collections and the relevance of its African holdings. The African galleries will reopen in 2014. This final phase of work will also result in an improved East Wing lobby providing a warmer welcome and better service for all visitors, particularly for those with disabilities and our growing family audience. These improvements will help visitors find information, plan their visit, and prepare to experience the collections.

Behind the scenes, we will improve our infrastructure by adding a 4,137 sq. ft. flexible-use space above the BMA's 1982 Thalheimer Galleries, using the existing stairs and elevator to minimize costs. The aging building automation system will be upgraded to improve HVAC control, providing better protection for the works of art in the Museum's care. Finally, we are embracing "green" construction for long-term savings and wise stewardship of resources.

Using Maryland Firms

Last year, the Museum's Board of Trustees voted to consider only architecture firms headquartered in Maryland to lead the project. The BMA's goal is to use Maryland firms as much as possible throughout the entire project. The Museum has already selected a Baltimore City firm as the Lead Architect for the roof replacement and West Wing renovations already underway, and has hired a Howard County firm to serve as Owner Representative for the entire four-year renovation process. The final selection is being made this month for the Lead Architect for years 2-4 of the project: four Maryland firms are on the short list.

Based on estimates from J.M. Zell Associates, construction planners, a total of 185 jobs will be created in design, construction, and related industries as a result of this project from 2011 through 2014.

Financial Position and Fundraising Capacity

The Museum is a financially secure partner. Our \$12 million annual operating budget has diverse range of revenue streams in addition to government support from the Maryland State Arts Council; from the City and Counties; and from the Federal government. We raise private gifts and grants, take a draw on the

Museum's endowment, and generate earned income. And we always balance our budget, even in these economically challenging times.

The BMA is currently engaged in a comprehensive fundraising initiative, *In a New Light*. Launched publicly in 2008, this campaign has already raised \$28.9 million toward our \$30 million endowment goal and \$7.2 million in funds for the capital project, including State and City funds already committed. This success gives us enormous confidence that we can leverage the remaining funds required to match the full \$10 million of State funding.