

Campus Art Museums in the 21st Century: A Conversation

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Introduction

Like other kinds of cultural organizations

in these early years of the twenty-first century, art museums on college and university campuses are facing the challenges both of adapting to and influencing a new and still-shifting cultural landscape. Longstanding assumptions about the roles, aims, activities, and audiences of cultural institutions are being reconsidered, even as audience interests, expectations, and behaviors are rapidly evolving, fueled in part by the technological revolution. In addition to challenges common to all museums—programming for increasingly busy and distracted audiences, becoming more welcoming to a broader range of visitors, differentiating the experiences they offer from other cultural and artistic options in the marketplace, and making a strong case for financial support—academically affiliated art museums need to continually demonstrate their academic value to their host college or university, and serve both students and faculty as core constituents while also serving a wider public. To further complicate matters, academic museums are inevitably affected by the profound changes sweeping through higher education, including the advent of new modes of teaching and learning, the erosion of established disciplinary boundaries, questions about the value and cost of an undergraduate degree (especially in the liberal arts), and myriad financial challenges. Campus art museums operate in an exceptionally complex and fluid environment.

With those challenges in mind, the authors invited a handful of campus art museum directors and other experts to step back from their day-to-day responsibilities in order to take a collective look at how the field is evolving. Our goal was to encourage a small group of thought-leaders to ‘think out loud’ about the changes already occurring at campus museums and where new opportunities and roles may be emerging. It is our hope that the conversations summarized here will serve as further input into the field’s larger, continuing exploration of its roles and potentials through dialogue, research, and experimentation—an exploration that contributes to the continued healthy evolution of campus art museum practice.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

No group of 13 leaders can fully represent the diversity and breadth of environments, objectives, and circumstances found within the academic art museum field in the US. Nevertheless, in assembling our participant group for this dialogue (see page 1), we aimed for some diversity of geography, perspective, and institutional type and size. We invited eight museum directors and five ‘outside experts’ from various positions in the arts and museum world. The eight campus art museums whose directors participated are located in both public and private institutions; in major research universities and small liberal arts colleges; in urban metropolises and regional cities; and in eight different states across the country. The five additional experts have experience in the museum field from a variety of perspectives and were chosen for the fresh insights that they could bring to the discussion.

In May 2012, we initiated two rounds of conversation. In Round One, each participant provided an individual written response via email to an initial ‘provocation’ from us, which read:

We all know that campus art museums have the potential to become even more relevant to, and valued by, a broader set of educational and cultural constituencies. Beyond ‘marketing their story’ more effectively, what can these museums do differently or better to bring about that ideal future? In other words, what new ideas or approaches in areas like purpose, vision, programming, operating models, target audiences, organizational structure, or partnerships would you put on the table in a national dialogue about the roles that these unique institutions can and should play?

Following a loose Delphi survey structure¹, we summarized the participants’ responses to that question, then circulated our recap to the group. Round Two took the form of two conference calls, each with roughly half of the participant group. In those calls, we discussed the summary and delved further into the issues together, expanding on the ideas generated in Round One in a wider-ranging and more open-ended conversation.

1. The Delphi method entails a panel of experts answering questionnaires in multiple rounds. Between each round, a facilitator provides a summary as an aid to reflection as the group proceeds into the next round. See Linstone, Harold A. and Murray Turoff. *The Delphi Method: Techniques and Applications*, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975. Available free at <http://is.njit.edu/pubs/delphibook/>.

Findings

For the purposes of this summary, we have grouped the themes that emerged from the dialogue into three broad categories: **interrogating the purpose and value of the campus art museum; bridging the museum's multiple constituencies;** and **anticipating and leading change.** In each section, we first summarize the input and ideas of the participants, then offer a 'Counterpoint' perspective, with a few further comments and questions for the field from the authors.

I. Interrogating the Purpose and Value of the Campus Art Museum

...risk taking is valued and 'failure' is more informative and less threatening.

Are campus museums different from other museums? The majority of our 13 participants felt strongly that the answer is "yes," pointing to the capacity (if not always the practice) of campus museums to be more experimental and innovative than other kinds of art museums, as well as to their more nimble, less bureaucratic structures. The protection of academic freedom was seen by the participants as especially important because it allows greater freedom of expression and lets campus museums be more daring in their exhibition and program choices. Because an important function of campus museums is to encourage innovative forms of pedagogy across disciplines, several respondents noted that risk-taking is valued and 'failure' is perceived as both more informative and less threatening than it might be in other kinds of museums. Further to that point, the core mandate of campus museums—making a curricular impact—was seen by participants as allowing them to use different (or at least additional) metrics of success than the overall number of attendees, which is how most other kinds of museums have traditionally gauged success.

Along with these advantages, participants observed that campus museums also face a unique set of challenges. They find themselves embedded in a larger institutional structure that can be unwieldy and where the 'center of

PURPOSE AND VALUE, CONTINUED

gravity' resides within academic departments and with tenured faculty. Some participants noted that campus art museums must constantly demonstrate how they can be integrated into the curricula of *multiple* disciplines across the university, not just into art and art history departments. Yet their capacity to do that interdisciplinary work is made difficult by the traditional silos of academic departments that still exist, and by the different 'languages' and methodologies favored by each discipline, which can make collaboration across fields and perspectives difficult. This leaves some campus art museums struggling to be seen as relevant to the core mission and identity of the university.

Participants suggested that this struggle has forced many campus museums to get better at framing and answering some fundamental questions, such as, *Why does my college or university have an art museum?* and *What is my museum expected to contribute to the campus mission and*

'brand'? Answering these questions, one director in our group argued, is the necessary first step to becoming aligned with—and equally importantly, *understood by the faculty and administration* as being aligned with—the overall campus direction. Although the answers to those questions will vary from institution to institution, they all entail implementing

effective strategies to engage faculty members, reaching out to students, and advancing multiple university-wide priorities. One challenge that many campus museums face is being nimble enough to adapt to an institutional environment that is sharply hierarchical in its *administrative* power structure yet also highly decentralized in its *academic* power structure, in which authority resides in academic programs and the interests of faculty.

Layered on top of this, our participants noted, is the increasingly complex challenge of both adapting to and helping shape the changing cultural milieu of students, whose generational ethos is ever more participatory, interactive, and focused on non-hierarchical social networks and the digital communication tools that mediate them.

Our respondents agreed that campus art museums have an obligation—which many found inspiring—to align with a core value of American higher

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PURPOSE AND VALUE, CONTINUED

education: the creation and dissemination of new knowledge and skills. With increasing frequency, that new knowledge isn't limited to art and art history; these museums can bring tools of visual investigation, knowledge curation, and cultural analysis to bear on a wide variety of domains. Many campus museums strive to demonstrate their commitment to interdisciplinary research questions and modes of inquiry, to innovative pedagogical approaches, and to global perspectives.

COUNTERPOINT: PURPOSE AND VALUE*Further comments and questions from the authors*

How can campus art museums contribute to 21st century skill-building by students?

Hearing participants articulate the idea that campus museums are not only different from their off-campus peers, but more experimental and innovative by nature, or at least by capacity, raised several questions for us, which we offer here as possible topics of further discussion, potentially informed by future research. First, are the differences between academic art museums and other kinds of art museums perceived by their users? If so, how are those differences experienced and valued? When the average

college student—or the average visitor not affiliated with the college or university—engages with the campus art museum, to what extent is he or she aware of the unique attributes of campus art museums noted by our participants, and how does he or she benefit from them? Is the experience palpably different from visiting another type of art museum in the region?

Second, how does the freedom of academic museums to experiment, innovate, and make daring choices express itself? To what extent is this unconventional activity visible to the museum's visitors and how does it matter? In recent years, innovation has been much on the minds of museum professionals in all types of institutions, and some foundations have made it an explicit priority in their funding programs. (The recent launch of the Innovation Lab for Museums via the American Association of Museums, funded by MetLife and facilitated by EmcArts,² is one example of its prevalence.) Technological and interpretive experimentation, multi-disciplinary collaborations, social experiences for young-adult audiences, dedicated 'lab' spaces for experimentation, and other such new approaches are becoming more common in museums of all types, well beyond the campus domain.

So, while we agree that college and university art museums are fundamentally different kinds of institutions with unique mandates and capacities, we would be interested in seeing further exploration of how those differences and capacities are being, and could be, enacted and how they are experienced by museums' key constituencies.

Much of what we heard from participants about the unique purpose and value of academic art museums had to do with their curricular and

2. EmcArts. "Innovation Lab for Museums." <http://www.emcart.org/index.cfm?PAGEPATH=&ID=38130>.

COUNTERPOINT, CONTINUED

co-curricular function in undergraduate and graduate education. Here, our questions are about how campus museums might gather, codify, and disseminate the most successful strategies for the benefit of the broader field:

- Where and how have campus museums been involved in the development of innovative pedagogies? How can the field share emerging information about successful course, program, or exhibition models so these lessons can be adapted to other institutions and contexts?
- How, exactly, are campus museums helping catalyze and becoming central to interdisciplinary work at their universities? How are they contributing to the growth of ‘connective tissues’ among academic disciplines that may have very different traditions, methodologies, and assumptions? Where do the best opportunities lie (and what hurdles need to be surmounted) for campus museums seeking to play this increasingly important bridging role?
- How can the collections, content expertise, and practices of campus art museums contribute to 21st century skill-building by students: problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, and so on? Should the visual arts on campus be focusing on ways to support inquiry and innovation in science, technology, engineering, and math, putting the ‘STEAM’ into ‘STEM’?³ If so, how can they do so most effectively?

3. One popular framework defining 21st-century skills is provided by The Partnership for 21st Century Skills. <http://www.p21.org/>. See also: “Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills.” Institute of Museum and Library Services. http://www.imls.gov/about/21st_century_skills_home.aspx, and “John Maeda: STEM to STEAM.” MIT Media Lab. <http://www.media.mit.edu/events/2011/10/26/john-maeda-stem-steam>.

Findings

II. Bridging the Museum's Multiple Constituencies

Our respondents identified a range of audiences, with most seeing faculty, students, alumni, and university staff as their top priorities. Yet the museums also serve broad constituencies from outside the campus community, particularly in cases where the museum happens to be the area's primary art museum. Those tidy lists of campus and off-campus audiences, however, mask enormous variation. Faculty hail from an array of disciplines, sub-specializations, and methodological perspectives. Students bring a mix of academic, cultural, and social needs to the campus art museum. Off-campus audiences include local and visiting artists, area residents (including both K-12 school districts and the families they serve), local and national peer institutions, and other categories, each with its own distinct needs.

Perhaps most importantly, today's students represent greater cultural and economic diversity than at any other time in the history of American higher education. Participants cited evidence that student populations are becoming increasingly diverse by ethnicity, international origin, social class,

Today's students seek 'insider' access to the *process* as well as the *products* of culture.

and familiarity with the conventions of museum-going and other forms of 'high culture.' In part because of the wide range of backgrounds and expectations that students bring, our participants unanimously noted the persistent difficulty of attracting students to campus art museums. Time is one challenge, of course, especially given the competing demands of curricular and extracurricular activities required of and

available to students. But a far greater issue, according to the participants, is how to engage students on their own terms. The museum directors and other experts we spoke to are acutely aware that today's college students are 'digital natives' who, accustomed to the unprecedented access offered by technology, want more autonomy and control over their cultural experiences. They seek opportunities for more engaged, fluid participation, 'insider' access to the process as well as the 'products' of culture, an authentic voice for themselves in the experience, and modes of interaction that are not mediated by the traditional, hierarchical structures of authority.

BRIDGING CONSTITUENCIES, CONTINUED

According to participants, campus art museums, supported by the ideals of intellectual inquiry and experimentation that animate their host institutions, often have great leeway in exploring new approaches and organizational strategies. Several of the museum directors in our dialogue described creating new kinds of engagement opportunities for students, recasting the campus art museum as venues not just for exhibits and curricular or co-curricular education but for extracurricular social gatherings and enjoyment—in other words, as entertaining and fun. To spread that message on campus, some have recast their student volunteers or student advisory committee members in new roles as ‘ambassadors’ to their peers.

Several participants argued that campus museums are, in reality, faculty-centered.

Although the prevailing rhetoric, according to our respondents, is that campus museums are student-centered, several participants argued that they are, in reality, faculty-centered. They noted that some campus museums invest a sizable proportion of their resources in enlisting the participation of faculty, who are the key to developing new curricula that involve the museum—which in turn, through coursework at

the museum, means reaching and serving students. Several participants identified initiatives to bring faculty members, including those from the natural and physical sciences, into co-curatorial roles at the museum, often supported by funding from the Mellon Foundation’s College and University Art Museum Program.⁴ Still, a current challenge of campus museums is to increase their pedagogic relevance to a broader array of academic disciplines. In some cases, museum staff can share museological approaches with faculty from disparate departments, as when the museum of one of our participants held an interdisciplinary conference on the theme of curation as a way of organizing knowledge, with rich implications for the humanities, social sciences, and physical and biological sciences. In other cases, museum staff can participate in the shaping of grant proposals for collaborative research projects, contributing to the project’s conception and the proposal’s language, goals, and methods. In this way, campus museum staff can become closer academic partners with faculty, rather than ancillary resources or ‘service providers.’

Participants also cited the potential of introducing a new kind of museum professional that would facilitate the two-way flow of ideas and

4. The Mellon Foundation’s generous support for campus art museums has been a significant force in the field for more than two decades, and has been instrumental in promoting and sustaining connections among academic art museums and the faculty and students of their host institutions in a variety of innovative ways. The summary report of their 15-year College and University Art Museum Program is: Goethals, Marion M. and Suzannah Fabing. “College and University Art Museum Program.” The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, November 2007. Available at http://mac.mellon.org/CUAM/cuam_report.pdf.

BRIDGING CONSTITUENCIES, CONTINUED

methodologies between the museum and other academic divisions. This position would build on the curatorial fellow or liaison role, with staff acting not only in the traditional role of object- and content-experts, but as ‘bridge people’ who could help translate ideas and approaches across disciplines and across academic and non-academic constituencies.

Finally, our participants agreed that campus museums are already serving broad constituencies beyond the campus and that this practice will remain critical to the future of university art museums. In addition to being receptive and welcoming to communities outside the university, participants told us that they were now asking how their museums can ‘take the museum outside its own walls’ and indeed outside the campus gates. They noted that there is a need for off-campus, community-oriented projects that meet residents on their own terms and recognize that broader engagement requires a dynamic, two-way process. Their goal is to be outward-looking in order to play a major role in lifelong learning in both formal and informal settings around their communities. Several respondents noted that campus art museums have long filled the gap in art education for K-12 students, and others pointed out that this was a form of ‘early intervention’ in which the students’ perceptions of art and of museums can be influenced positively—before they get to college. Campus art museums were also identified as a resource and ‘home’ for visiting and local artists, a crucial space for forging connections among local creative communities.

Some of our participants suggested that one key to bridging these museums’ multiple constituencies both on and off campus might be reconceptualizing audience development strategies in terms of ‘narrowcasting’ rather than ‘broadcasting.’ Museum exhibitions and programs often tend to appeal to distinct or ‘niche’ audiences with different motivations, tastes, and desired experiences. There is cumulative power in small audience numbers, however, especially if the museum can encourage the members of those subgroups to explore outside the original ‘niche’ interest that drew them to the museum and become more frequent visitors.

COUNTERPOINT: BRIDGING CONSTITUENCIES*Further comments and questions from the authors*

Does serving non-campus audiences send a double-edged message to the university's leaders?

A great deal of the conversation and innovation within the campus art museum community in recent years has focused on deepening connections with the host university. Yet as noted, these museums also serve off-campus visitors and, in some cases, are their city's or region's primary art museum. We opened this dialogue in part to include these non-academic audiences and the multiple purposes of academic art museums. Although the preponderance of participants' comments suggest that, while off-

campus audiences are important, students, faculty, and other university audiences (including, for obvious reasons, the presidents, provosts, and trustees to whom academic art museum directors directly and indirectly report) are of higher priority. This focus, of course, is built into the missions of campus museums. Still, this multi-layered, multi-stakeholder environment is part of what makes campus-based museums unique

among cultural institutions. Today's museum professionals often refer to cultural institutions as 'informal learning environments' because visitors ('learners') engage with museum content in their leisure time, without being enrolled in a course, without being tested or graded, and so on. Academic art museums may be informal learning environments for some audiences and in some situations, but they are simultaneously—and primarily—part of a *formal* educational system.

The questions that, for the authors, emerged from this part of the dialogue have to do with this complex set of constituencies. Is seeking connections with non-campus audiences a double-edged sword for these museums, because to the extent that it is successful it might suggest to the university's leadership that the museum's priorities lie outside the academic mission? Yet, as more universities become concerned about the quality of their relationships with the cities and towns in which they sit, are universities looking to their art museums to serve as gateways for area residents to 'enter' the university and make enjoyable use of its cultural and intellectual resources? Is the opposite direction also sometimes important: can campus art museums be portals for faculty, for example, to engage with a wider, more public audience than most university settings permit? Whatever the answers to those questions, we would be interested in further

COUNTERPOINT, CONTINUED

research to help identify emerging best practices in connecting academic art museums with their non-academic constituencies. Do those practices differ from those of non-university art museums seeking to serve and engage the same public audiences? What can campus and non-campus art museums learn from each other about ‘lifelong learners’ and community, civic, and social engagement? Ditto for serving public schools, which art museums of all types are concerned about as support for K-12 arts education continues to diminish—and just at a time when visual literacy is becoming an essential 21st century skill.

One tangential question concerns the increasingly participatory ethos and aesthetic of contemporary culture. Some art museums are experimenting with participatory design in their programs and exhibitions, involving their publics in new ways in the processes of curation, interpretation, and

For some, participatory programs raise concerns about the ownership of cultural authority.

communication. For some observers within and around the museum field, these participatory programs raise concerns about the integrity and ownership of cultural authority. For others, they represent the long-overdue democratization of cultural institutions. How do those dynamics play out in college and university museums? Does the academic responsibility of the host institutions make it

even harder for campus art museums to share authority with their audiences—including the students whom they are charged with helping educate? Or does the tradition of academic freedom and spirit of inquiry that our participants ascribed to campus museums actually pave a smoother way for experimentation with participatory modes of museology?

Findings

III. Anticipating and Leading Change

As noted, the museum directors and other experts in this conversation agreed that significant changes are occurring in society, the arts and culture sector, and higher education. Some saw these still-evolving circumstances as a call-to-action for campus museums to ‘get out ahead of the curve’ so that they aren’t bypassed or marginalized. Others felt confident that their museums—and many others like them—were already leading rather than following in this shifting environment, becoming champions and examples of risk-taking, creative inquiry, and forward-looking dialogue and debate. While some participants noted that being ahead of the curve can be a risky prospect amid the financial, academic, and political pressures of today’s universities—and that the traditional reward structures of the academy do not always encourage innovation and can sometimes even seem to punish it—others felt lauded by their universities for taking risks. Clearly, the relationships between campus art museums and their academic hosts vary widely in this critical area.

A few participants pointed out that, on their campuses, most major change initiatives—from strategic planning and capital campaigns to the construction of new buildings and other infrastructure investments—are directed in top-down fashion by university leadership. That puts the arts on

campus in direct competition with other priorities that presidents, provosts, and trustees may view as higher or more urgent, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (the so-called STEM disciplines). Some campus art museums are actively exploring collaborations with science, medicine, and engineering, in part because those are

fertile new areas for aesthetics and in part because, pragmatically speaking, that is where the resources are most abundant. This dynamic points to a challenge facing campus museums, which, as many participants noted, is to find creative ways of making (or keeping) a place for themselves—and for the visual arts—at the heart of the university’s priorities and mission.

How can campus museums make (or keep) a place for themselves at the heart of the university’s priorities and mission?

LEADING CHANGE, CONTINUED

...repositioning themselves as laboratories or test sites for developing innovative pedagogies.

Some of our participants argued that the directions in which higher education is evolving—becoming more global; more technologically mediated and hence less place-based; more interdisciplinary; more varied in its pedagogical modes; and more participatory and social—mirror the ways in which the museum field has been changing in recent years. This puts many campus art museums in a strong position to lead and experiment. For example, participants noted that university alumni and national funders have become strong proponents of interdisciplinary approaches and innovative collaborations. Because campus museums are not housed in discipline-specific silos and already engage in project-based inquiry that requires multiple perspectives and collaborative structures, they are well positioned to become partners in, and sites for, interdisciplinary scholarship.

In terms of promoting global engagement and transnational thinking, participants noted that American universities have been avidly establishing international outposts. Campus art museums are often seen as safe spaces for conversations that cross international and cultural borders—conversations that needn't be about the arts, but for which the universalizing context of the arts and creativity provide a common ground. Campus art museums can become examples of “living the global reality,” as one participant put it—a lesson that would not be lost on the members of today's highly international student bodies, whose interests and perspectives are increasingly shaped by global dynamics.

In terms of new modes of learning, campus art museums have been repositioning themselves as ‘laboratories’ or ‘test sites’ for developing innovative pedagogies. Their traditions of object-based inquiry match well with new research on multiple learning styles. And their grounding in the university's traditions of open inquiry, experimentation, and intellectual tolerance provides a solid foundation upon which to build.

Finally, in terms of digitized, interactive, and participatory approaches, museums of all kinds (not just campus-based museums) are re-envisioning

LEADING CHANGE, CONTINUED

themselves as open-source centers for creativity and as ‘town squares’ for civic dialogue and social connection. They are also using the Internet in new ways to expand access to, and two-way engagement with, their programs and collections beyond the physical setting. One of the outside experts noted that campus museums, in particular, can lead in using digital opportunities creatively to expand participation because they serve today’s most digitally-attuned generation: young adults. Students provide a built-in audience for, and potential partners in, experimentation with new digital projects, from transmedia games and other narrative-based projects to apps and videos involving the collection—engagement tools that go well beyond making the museum’s collections available online. College and university art museums can take advantage of the opportunities that technology offers to merge formal and informal learning environments, create opportunities for more participatory modes of engagement, and expand the programmatic scale and reach of even small museums.

Campus museums serve today’s most digitally attuned generation...

Participants admitted that there is no predicting the direction or rate of change in their operating environments. Where institutions of higher education will be in ten or twenty years is an open question, with speculation within our participant group ranging from “pretty much what we see today” (because of the many institutional barriers to change and the

conflicting, inertial pulls of the various scholarly disciplines) to “the traditional campus will disappear” (because of the rise of distance learning and other technological and social trends). But if truly dramatic changes are coming (or are already underway), then additional pressure will be placed on campus museums’ ability to adapt and on their creativity of vision. Questions of art museum tradition, precedent, and mission may become more acute. As one participant asked, “Are campus museums prepared to radically reconfigure themselves in order to play a leading role in the transformation of higher education?”

COUNTERPOINT: LEADING CHANGE*Further comments and questions from the authors*

We echo the essential question quoted at the end of the previous page. To it, we would add the pressing point that campus art museums need to continue working to enlighten faculty, academic leaders, and administrators about how an art museum can contribute to the university's core academic and economic cycle, including education, research, innovation, and reputation. Clearly, these museums are well positioned to do that, and some have made impressive strides in that direction already. But how much and in what ways will they need to change in order to be seen more frequently in that light and involved more deeply in those activities? Will the traditions of art-historical scholarship that have been at the heart of art museum practice need to morph into something different—and, if so, what? Are there other institutional or disciplinary barriers to change with which the leaders of campus museums will need to grapple if they are to become champions and examples of a new kind of relevance?

Some commentators within the broader museum field argue that, although the rhetoric has changed significantly, art museums still look and feel much the same as they did in the past. We were heartened to hear our participants speak so compellingly about their institutions' roles as leaders

Will the traditions that have been at the heart of art museum practice need to morph into something different?

of change rather than followers, though it may be useful to contextualize that vision with the perceptions of other observers and stakeholders within and outside of the university community. Other areas of the academy are increasingly embracing formal, third-party assessment—for instance, student learning outcomes measurement, program assessment, and the like—to inform curriculum

development, planning processes, and so on. Museums have their own tradition of exhibition and program evaluation, which has traditionally centered on 'outcomes-based evaluation' and how much visitors learn from the museum experience. We wonder whether those assessment and evaluation tools could, if brought to bear in new and thoughtful ways, inform the exciting innovations and help realize the ambitious agendas of academic art museums.

Conclusion

The dialogue summarized in the three

preceding sections identified both opportunities and challenges faced by campus art museums, some of which are shared by other kinds of art museums and cultural institutions. It also pointed out ways in which campus art museums are already seizing those opportunities and addressing those challenges in promising ways. But the story may be as much about the *potential* of these museums as about what they have already tried or accomplished. Campus art museums are, in the view of some of our participants, still very much in the process of being shaped by—and helping shape—the changing cultural and educational ideals of our times. They may now be at a critical juncture in determining what roles they can and want to play. The consensus among our participants was clear: campus museums have unique potential—some of it already being tapped, some of it probably still latent—to emerge as leaders and change agents in the new era.

We hope this dialogue contributes in some small way to that emergence, if only by helping clarify what is unique about the capacities of college and university museums both within their academic environments and within the art museum field. As we said at the outset, we offer this summary document as a next step in the academic museum community's ongoing conversation about its future and its vision. **We invite responses and further dialogue from all who are interested in that future;** please email the authors collectively at culturalpolicy@uchicago.edu.

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We hasten to add that this report does not necessarily reflect the views of any of those organizations or individuals.

About the authors

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