

# Accreditation Visiting Committee Report\*



**Detroit Institute of Arts**  
Detroit, MI

Visit start date: 7/25/2012

## **Members of the Visiting Committee:**

Dr. William U. Eiland  
Director  
Georgia Museum of Art  
Athens, GA

Ms. Mary Sue Sweeney Price  
Director  
The Newark Museum  
Newark, NJ

\*The comments of the Visiting Committee are based on the expertise and the site visit experience of the two individual team members. While the report provides the Accreditation Commission with a first-hand account of the museum's operations, it is not the sole basis for the Accreditation Commission's decision, nor does it carry more weight than the Self-Study in the decision-making process. The Visiting Committee Report should always be read in conjunction with the Commission's final decision letter.

The Commission does not necessarily always endorse or agree with concerns cited by the Visiting Committee. The Commission is the primary audience for the report, but it is written with the knowledge that it will be used by the museum as an important guiding, planning, and archival document. For further information, see *What You Need to Know About: The Museum's Site Visit Narrative Report*, available at [www.aam-us.org/accred](http://www.aam-us.org/accred) or through the Program staff.

## Visiting Committee Report on Detroit Institute of Art

Agenda attached in Appendix with names and titles of people interviewed

Visiting Committee NOTE: We would like to thank Graham Beal and his staff for their hospitality and generosity during our visit. In particular, we are grateful for Barbara Heller's expert handling of even our most picayune request. Her graciousness and efficiency reflected that of the staff and supporters of the DIA in general.

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Quite frankly, this assignment presented the Visiting Committee (VC) with more of a dilemma than a challenge. After all, we were to review the work of a museum located in a city that *The Art Newspaper* called "America's capital of post-industrial urban decay and foreclosure blight." (No. 211, March 2010) Yet, the Detroit Institute of Arts, for many, including the blogger Paul Orselli, is "one of the bright spots in the sometimes grim reality of modern-day Detroit." (*ExhibiTricks: A Museum/Exhibit/Design Blog*, "Tricks of the Trade, What Can Museums Learn from the DIA," August 9, 2012)

The Detroit Institute of Arts is that and more. Quite simply, it is one of the nation's great museums, a global resource for cultural and visual-arts education. The DIA is extremely well-run, with high morale and spirit among staff members, surprising, perhaps, considering the museum's recent history of budget reductions and lay-offs and the bleak prospects of the city's finances. Everyone with whom we talked understood the stakes at play with the DIA placing all its bets on the millage tax described below. Certainly, the Visiting Committee witnessed nervous anticipation but never a flagging of commitment to the museum's mission.

What the Visiting Committee observed was a staff inordinately committed to the institution; a board in step with the director and the staff in forwarding their shared vision of a stable and prosperous museum even when faced with the

toughest of times; and volunteers, supporters, patrons, and audiences whose pride in the museum is palpable. Across the board we found first-rate, compelling even, programming; unanimous agreement on goals; superior collection stewardship; a cogent plan with clear direction based on sound museological practice and philosophy; displays and exhibitions worthy of a first-rank museum; and policies and procedures, such as emergency protocols and other documents, carefully considered and germane to the particular instance of the DIA. As we visited with department head after department head, it became clearer and clearer that accreditation for the DIA was a no-brainer...except....

What we did not find was financial stability, and, thus, our trip was a story whose denouement we would not know until several weeks later.

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## HISTORY/PROFILE

While the history of the DIA is of great interest in and of itself, especially because of its late-century Gilded Age origins and its early growth during the Progressive Era, its current story is of most relevance for assessing practice. Founded in 1885, the DIA remained in its original building until 1926 when it moved to its current location and to an elegant facility designed by Paul Philippe Cret, on Woodward Avenue. Before that move however, in 1919-1920, the trustees voted “to donate the collection to the city, rename the museum the Detroit Institute of Arts and restructure it as a public-private partnership.” [Self-Study *et seq.*] The museum became a department of the city “with all operational costs met by city funds with oversight through an Arts Commission appointed by the mayor..,” paired with a then-called Founders Society, whose Board of Trustees was to serve “as a group to manage donations and endowments in support of the museum.” Under the aegis of the city, this board and the charismatic director Wilhelm Valentiner and such notable local patrons as Henry Ford and Robert Tannahill, among others, the museum and its collections experienced rapid and phenomenal growth. Of particular note, in 1932, Valentiner, with the backing of Ford, engaged Diego Rivera to paint his monumental mural *Detroit Industry*, in the building’s Garden

Court. That fresco has become an emblem of the city, its heyday and its depression.

Pressed for space, the DIA opened its South Wing in 1966 and the North Wing in 1971. Still the collections grew with notable acquisitions and bequests in the 1970s that spread the repute of the museum as an aggressive and ambitious collector.

In 1983, with the finances of the museum in disarray, the city “reasserted its authority and restructured the museum’s organization, creating a two-part structure consisting of the Arts Department of the City of Detroit, headed by the DIA director, and the Founders Society, headed by an independent, paid president—with Museum oversight still retained by the Arts Commission.” The Society and Commission became expansionist in the 1980s and hired Michael Graves and Associates to develop a Master Plan, one that languished, subsequently in abeyance, with the recession of 1990, when the DIA’s budget was slashed and staff lay-offs threatened its operations. Dissatisfaction with this situation led to another entente with Detroit whereby in 1997 the City ceded management to the Founders Society, now incorporated as the Detroit Institute of Arts, that assumed the operation and control of all aspects of running the DIA as a 501 (C) 3.” The first seven years of the new century witnessed significant construction and renovation at the DIA, along with a novel reinstallation of the collections.

The DIA reopened in 2007 after this expansion and renovation based on Michael Graves’s Master Plan, as modified after 1997. Concurrent to the building program had been thoughtful preparation for the reinterpretation of the museum’s world-class collection as it debuted that “new” building. The DIA celebrated a real reinvention of self; it defined and asserted its roles as an agent of change for its community, a partner in the education of patrons of all ages, and—more than a storehouse of beautiful objects—an aesthetic haven. The director and chief curator admitted that the rest of the curatorial corps, who may have preferred the ivory tower of collection stewardship and scholarship, now embraced the more populist approach to programming, especially making the museum even

more of a point of pride for the citizens of southeastern Michigan, indeed the whole state and region. Although some naysayers complained about the “dumbing down” of the new installation, most critics and certainly the general public, as well as the museum’s own “family” of staff and supporters acclaimed the accessibility of the permanent collections to the “whole” public, all the factions and groups and constituents, from rich to poor, from black to white, from native to foreigner, all who wished to visit and learn, with displays and didactics geared to various learning styles as well as to multiple ages. If two days can be said to bear witness to the present reality of the DIA, it is the conclusion of the Visiting Committee that the museum accomplished that goal, since it was extremely busy while we were there with well-attended public programs, enthusiastic docents and volunteers, a museum shop full of consumers, and busy security personnel.

That reopening in 2007 occurred right before the effects of the recession hit the museum world in 2008. After the grand success of its reinstatement the museum faced budget shortfalls, layoffs, and curtailed programming. Funding from the city and from the state vanished, and, although the museum has substantial endowments, those are generally restricted, and there was real concern—fear even—that the DIA could be forced to close its doors. In fact, its director at one point talked of “liquidation,” as a possibility, one that generated fearful shivers among the DIA’s national and international supporters and admirers. After all, if a museum with this storied past and justifiably enviable collection could fail, what lay in wait for other museums suffering through parlous times?

In 2011, Beal decided to obtain from donors’ descendants, from his board, and from the courts, permission to use some proceeds from acquisitions endowments for GOS in 2011, but still underfunding persisted and threatened the museum’s stability if not its very existence. Beal found it necessary to prepare a written argument for his board, for the press, and for the public on why the collections could not be raided for conversion into operating support through deaccessioning: “It would be a calamitous admission of our failure as stewards and massive betrayal of the public we are supposed to serve,” he explained.

In 2012, with the campaign in full cry as we were visiting, the DIA launched an initiative to have voters decide on a “tax millage” that would gain for the museum approximately \$23 million a year for general operating support, which would give free admission to the citizens of the counties that approved it, and which would allow the museum’s board and staff to pursue endowment campaigns for the post-millage era of self-support after the ten years of the millage tax. The citizens of three counties passed the referendum, which amounts to a “bill” of about twenty dollars per household for the next ten years. The sighs of relief from the nation’s museum community were audible from coast to coast. The Association of Art Museum Directors in its statement of congratulations described the passage of the regional millage as worthy of celebration for the museum community in general, and in particular noted that it would “ensure the future financial stability of one of the country’s greatest museums” and goes on to opine, “Thanks to the outpouring of support from the people of Macomb, Oakland and Wayne Counties, as well as the many volunteers who spread the word about this important vote, the DIA will continue to be an extraordinary resource for the people of Detroit and the nation... The results of this vote demonstrate the public support of the DIA and area tangible endorsement of the importance of art museums to their communities.” The DIA appears to have been saved through an inventive and focused strategy of survival. It is interesting to note that concurrently in Monroe, Ohio, the populace also approved a millage tax to “save” the Monroe County Historical Museum, which was imperiled to the point that without such public relief, it would have closed its doors and possibly dispersed its collections.

Today, the DIA serves a metropolitan area with a population of approximately 5.7 million people. Its attendance is roughly 350,000 people a year. In 2011 it had a full-time staff of 196, 86 part timers, and 709 volunteers with a total of 62,990 volunteer hours. Its two buildings encompass 658,000 square feet, with 157,314 devoted to exhibition space. The DIA has two sculpture gardens, both of which we visited and extramural storage space which we also visited, for a total square footage at 104,625.

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## PUBLIC TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The DIA knows its community, having presented in its Self-Study one of the most elaborate, demographic studies of its diverse audiences the Visiting Committee members have seen. Characterizing the museum as a “good neighbor” is most ironic, considering its location and the urban malaise in surrounding neighborhoods. Staff and trustees at the DIA are acutely aware of their obligations to the social contract and are bravely and creatively engaged in amelioration of the worst effects of the recession and its aftermath. Programs are varied and focused. Teaching is a paramount concern. The DIA reaches into all its surrounding counties and the vote in favor of the millage attests to the esteem in which it is held in the region.

Staff, volunteers, and board members all adhere to the clear and comprehensive Code of Ethics. The museum has appropriate procedures and policies in place, and, in fact, expects all segments of its extended family adherence to the highest standards of practice. At the DIA attention to diversity issues is paid, and the staff and Board especially mindful of the need for more Latino and Arab-American representation in the museum’s governance, management and even support groups.

Currently, the museum is focusing on families, midtown neighbors and senior citizens/empty-nesters as targeted audiences. As one staff member noted about the millage vote, “Seniors are a formidable voting bloc here in Michigan.”

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## MISSION, PLANNING AND ASSESSING ACHIEVEMENT

Perhaps because of the heightened anticipation over the upcoming millage vote, the staff, board, support groups, and docents were eloquent in asserting the museum’s mission: “To create experiences that help each visitor find personal meaning in art.” The Self-Study mirrors the sentiment the Visiting Committee heard over and over, namely that the mission, brief and to the point, while

assuming the traditional role of the institution in safeguarding and interpreting its collection, “makes explicit the museum’s primary responsibility to its public and declares the critical importance of translating our specialist knowledge into forms accessible to diverse populations.” Further, and we heard this sentiment loud and clear from department heads, the permanent collection, its interpretation and stewardship, is the fount from which such service and teaching flow.

Strategic planning for the museum, as discussed in its document “Touchstone” approved in 2010 to run through 2013, was geared toward and contingent on the successful millage vote, and primarily focused on shifting fundraising efforts from the constant demands of current GOS exigencies to building endowment that would be unrestricted and devoted to future operating needs, thus, in the words of the director, securing a stable financial future. The Touchstone document presents a strategy for maintaining and strengthening the museum’s visitor-centered approach in order to benefit the Detroit region and its populace; balance public support with the demands of interim goals; maintain liquidity and flexibility; align development resources to stabilize the museum while it develops a long-term sustainable operating model; ensure governance through continuing agreement with the city, which owns the collections; foster a culture of staff ownership in mission; and develop a coordinated internal and external communications plan.

With the passage of the millage tax, the DIA can now proceed with this plan, and its upcoming revision, with a major accomplishment under its belt. The plan represents clear vision from the board and administration, difficult-to-achieve but attainable goals, identification of human and capital resources, and a realizable timetable.

Research and evaluation are important to fulfilling the DIA’s mission and, in particular, to strengthening its standing in the city of Detroit and neighboring towns. A recent study indicates that from 1988 to 1993 the relatively few studies conducted at the DIA had been from the Marketing and PR staff, had been primarily surveys, and had been generated through market research focused on non-visitors. By the year 2013, and through an intense, highly focused self-study,

the DIA will have reports of “summative evaluation for the permanent gallery reinstallation; exploration of ‘indicators of success’ summarizing a broad range of outcomes for special exhibitions, and initial steps toward program evaluation linked to grant funding.” The Visiting Committee was able to review various evaluative tools and found them comprehensive and useful indicators of the museum’s success or failure with programming.

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## LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

To reiterate the governance of the museum described in the history above, the DIA is effectively owned by the City of Detroit, but, under a 20-year agreement with the city, effective in 1998, museum operations are the responsibility of a non-profit corporation known as the Detroit Institute of Arts. It has a volunteer board of directors, which hires and supervises the museum’s director. The City appoints a volunteer Arts Commission that ensures that the DIA, Inc. is in compliance with the operating agreement. The mayor and city council receive an annual report, but governance is at this point almost entirely in the hands of the corporation and its board.

The Board of Directors has an appropriate committee structure with clear duties assigned to each; the Board’s Executive Committee oversees such other committees as those with responsibility for Finances, Investments, the Building, Audit, Development, “Community Connections,” Campaign, Governance and Nominating, Professional Practices, Collections, Human Resources, and Education and Interpretation. At the DIA, membership on these committees, with the exceptions of the Executive and Governance and Nominating Committees, is actually open to non-board members, to emeritus members, and to honorary members, and those who are being groomed for full board membership.

The museum itself has a rational organizational chart with strong department heads and appropriate management committees. The Board offers appropriate guidance and oversight as well as counsel to the director and staff. The museum

appears to run smoothly, and all staff interviewed by the Visiting Committee understood and were committed to the DIA's mission.

Representing the high caliber of the DIA's dedicated staff is the universally admired director Graham Beal, who received vehement and emphatic support from the trustees with whom we spoke as well as from the staff and volunteers. Walking around the museum with him was something akin to a rock-star tour, especially at the time it occurred. We were stopped by visitors who interrogated Beal about the seriousness of the financial problems, how sanguine he was about the millage passage, and about the installation of the collection. His courteous and engaged responses were illustrative of his commitment to the DIA and called to mind the AAMD's recognition of Graham's "hard work, dedication, and passion" and of his selflessness as an "outstanding leader," during a time of crisis. All with whom we spoke repeated their admiration for his devotion and vision for the museum and called out the innovative programs, excellent acquisitions, and accessibility of the collections as hallmarks of his tenure there.

The DIA's marketing and development professionals are clearly dedicated to expanding the museum's reach to the widest possible audiences and with the greatest possible public and private support for its operations and programming. Fully versed in social networking as well as in traditional forms of communication [See the excellent publications of this museum.], staff members in these departments are effective and vocal advocates of the museum and its programs.

The Visiting Committee had the opportunity to review the "Employee Handbook" and found it complete, readily comprehensible, and easy to use. In fact, the briefing book given to us by our coordinator was comprehensive and up-to-date, important since the self-study had been finished some months earlier. All issues raised by the staff of AAM received elaborate answers in the briefing book, and all appeared in order.

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## COLLECTIONS STEWARDSHIP

Most impressive in the DIA's recent history has been the focus on its collections. The works of art themselves are uniformly of the highest quality, with the word "masterpiece" applicable to many; the installations are straightforward and elegant, and serve effectively the didactic mission of the museum. Registrarial records are comprehensive, readily retrievable, objects "locatable" with ease, with collections management staff, preparators, designers, and conservators all committed to the highest standards of collections stewardship and care. Each curator was jealous of the objects under his or her care, and each showed seriousness of purpose, ambitious planning for the aggrandizement of the collection, dissemination of knowledge through scholarship and exhibition, and adherence to the museum's mission of teaching all ages with visual-arts resources. Each discipline-specific curatorial department is supported by volunteer committees of patrons and collectors.

A word not in vogue at the moment, having been eclipsed by other fashionable nomenclature, applies to the collections at the DIA: they are multicultural and do offer a survey of human creativity across the ages and in all lands. The eight curatorial departments at the museum are: Africa, Oceania and the Indigenous Americas; African American Art; American Art through 1950; Arts of Asia and the Islamic World; European Art through 1950; Contemporary Art (post 1950); Performing Arts; and Prints, Drawings and Photographs. Staff and volunteers have a ready resource in the museum's large Research Library.

The visiting committees or support groups for the various disciplines represented in the museum's collections are knowledgeable and committed, so much so that each group sponsors impressive series of lectures or other programming, helps acquire works of art, and, in general, supports the work, including research, of "its" curator. One example is the Visiting Committee for European Sculpture and Decorative Arts's sponsorship of lectures, luncheons, and trips and tours focusing on the glass, furniture, porcelains, sculpture, and other *objets de vertu* and of material culture at the DIA. It is an impressive series of programs for the years

2011 and 2012 and matched by the creative offerings of the Friends of Modern and Contemporary Art. The European Paintings Council, of course, was focusing on the five Spanish masterpieces on view this summer and fall. The General Motors Center for African American Art prides itself on improving “*all visitors’* understanding of the achievements and influence of African American artists.” Important also, the GM Center exists “to collect and organize supporting documents and archival materials related to the DIA’s African American holdings and assist in developing a specialized library collection.” (“General Motors Center for African American Art Report,” February 2012) The other councils, visiting committees, or auxiliary groups offer material support to the curators in other departments with the same sorts of programming. Those include: the Asian and Islamic Art Forum; Associates of the American Wing; Forum for Prints, Drawings and Photographs; Founders Junior Council; Friends of Art and Flowers; Friends of the Detroit Film Theatre; and Volunteer Council. With the three noted above, these 11 groups illustrate the variety and strength of support for the museum’s collections and its programming.

As an example of the museum’s commitment to research, primarily “pure” rather than “applied,” the *Bulletin* of the DIA is a handsome periodical that advances scholarship on the various collections at the museum. For example, recent volumes have included essays by curators and outside scholars on such multifarious subjects as the art of Reginald Marsh, Chinese calligraphy, collecting Modernist art, Florine Stettheimer, the “Yale School,” the contemporary African artist Olowe of Ise, and, in a particularly apt and topical essay, on “Detroit industry: Art and Healing of the Body Politic” (*Bulletin of the DIA*, vol. 85, No 1/4 2011, 52-61). Among the curators at the DIA are several recognized as the “go-to” authorities in their specializations.

More general ephemera, various and attractive, are available for children and adults to broaden the experiences of their visits, with but one example a simple yet effective card, mostly white space for writing, that asks the question: “How do you commemorate the major milestones of life?” Even the maps given to visitors have fresh didactics, with outlines of suggested tours or important objects to locate. One devoted to a “walking tour” of the museum identifies 125 objects

chosen by the director and curators from all the collections, that merit special attention if one only has time for a “masterpiece” visit. Another, and one we witnessed being studied over and over again, is devoted to an explanation of Diego Rivera’s beloved *Detroit Industry Murals*.

As the core of the museum’s mission, the 60,000-plus objects in the collections at the DIA receive extraordinary care and attention. Storage is clean, well-organized, and appropriate to the objects. The Visiting Committee visited the off-site storage warehouse as well as the sculpture park located across the street at a nearby college. At the latter the works on display were well-cared for, tended regularly, and of high quality. At the former, a 63,500-square-foot facility devoted to “non-sensitive materials,” the Visiting Committee witnessed a leak that we reported to the director since it could have endangered works of art in storage. Otherwise, it appeared to be a secure space for larger works and for crates and gallery furniture.

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## EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Interpretation carries a specific meaning at the DIA: ongoing dialogue with visitors about the works of art on display, whether in the museum’s collections or on temporary exhibition. The DIA has an active Visitor Studies Department to make sure that it is delivering on this mission of dialogue, and its educators are well-versed in the newest methodology for extracting experience from visitors and creating new ones for them. In fact, the education department is known as Learning and Interpretation, and bases its activities on a team-based approach where educators join with curators, evaluators and designers to fashion learning activities based on the most up-to-date methodology as well as on the expertise of all team members. So important is this mission-driven activity that one of the museum’s major management committees, the eponymously named Strategic Interpretative Team, includes the director, executive vice-president/COO, chief curator, and executive director of the Department of Learning and Interpretation,

who meet twice monthly to oversee and coordinate “interpretation” as an integral component of all the museum’s many projects.

Technology is one tool, an important one, for the dialogue fostered by the museum’s educators. The most frequently cited example is the video embedded in the table that describes 18<sup>th</sup>-centure dining habits.

The DIA knows its audiences and can cite the results of visitor studies as noted above. Underserved audiences, including under-represented suburban communities; home-schooled students; adults with dementia; and hospitals are now being targeted.

Exhibition design at the DIA takes into account the museum’s interpretative and teaching goals, with great pains taken to ensure that lines of sight, labels and didactic materials, even seating, are all focused on engaging visitors in a visual dialogue with an object. The museum is unique in employing two full-time visitor-study specialists, who are first and foremost audience advocates. The Public Programming Department works with the Department of Learning and Interpretation to offer the widest scope of educational opportunities through museum tours, studio programs, films, lectures, symposia—a plethora of engaging programs—to targeted community groups as well as the general public.

Particularly innovative, the wildly successful “Inside/Out” brings reproductions of the museum’s masterworks into communities in and around Detroit. Located in parks, theaters, libraries, community centers, etc., the images strengthen the bond between the museum and its local and regional audiences, and in the summer of 2012 were installed in twelve locations from Canton to Troy, from Clinton Township and Dearborn to Royal Oak and Waterford.

The staff at the DIA is not neglected as far as education or teaching is concerned. Every weekday, the communications department sends out an internal “newspaper” that keeps all abreast of the museum’s “doings,” its exhibitions and tours, its community outreach, birthdays, anniversaries, kudos, and even the visit of yours truly, the Visiting Committee! [**Hot Topic:** If you didn’t find time to spend some time with art last week, take an art break today. And don’t forget we

have two museum directors as guests in the building this Thursday and Friday, conducting a site visit for our AAM accreditation. They are in for a treat!" ("DIA Today," Thurs. July 26, 2012. We were right under the weather ("scattered T-Storms" and the café menu (cabbage soup...)]

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## FINANCIAL STABILITY

The DIA's budgeting process, led by its Accounting Department, is normal, with an annual budget developed for the fiscal year and a rolling five-year plan. All of the museum's departments are engaged in the process with monthly reviews to ensure consistency, accuracy and compliance with the institutional plan.

Since 2010 the museum's budget has been at roughly \$30.9 million with an annual deficit offset primarily by campaign contributions. The museum has an annual draw on its endowment at 4.6% based on a 3-year average. It has no debt and manages a \$25 million line of credit for cash-flow purposes. Endowment, after the recent three campaigns, is now roughly \$161 million.

The DIA's fiscal challenge over the past four years has been financial sustainability in a period when the museum has lost all state and municipal funding. The financial model has shifted in that period to one of almost complete dependency on private funding. The current operating gap is approximately ten million dollars annually, an unsustainable amount, leading to the successful millage-tax solution described above.

The museum's senior management team, the Strategy Group, has identified several fundamental requirements to achieve financial sustainability: 1. Build operating endowment; 2. Build other endowments for art acquisitions, programming, and positions such as curatorial ones; and 3. Increase earned income. The DIA will focus on these three financial goals now that the millage tax has been passed in its favor.

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## FACILITIES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Well-maintained and clean, the DIA's public areas are inviting and helpful in assuring a good visitor experience. Galleries are well-lit, and installed around focal points to engage the immediate interest of the viewer and then move him or her to adjoining objects for comparison or further discovery. Staff members devoted to the care of the building as well as to the security of the objects and visitors are conscientious and well-trained. Volunteers with whom we talked were enthusiastic and well-versed in the interpretive strategies of dialogue and self-education. The grounds were neat and expansive.

While at the DIA, the Visiting Committee was able to visit the new Gallery of Islamic Arts, perhaps emblematic of the thoughtful attention to detail and the careful planning that characterize installations. Clean, well-lit, elegant, the exhibition presents objects that require focused interpretation but that are also of particular interest to the large Arab-American communities in such nearby cities as Dearborn. Throughout the museum, this emphasis on direct and clear interpretation was evident in the originality of the famous 18<sup>th</sup>-century dinner service to the flip-down labels that allow further investigation for children and adults. And, the objects themselves in this museum are, well, quite frankly, glorious. Shall we give one example? How about one of the best-known images in the world: Henry Fuseli's incubus.

We were gratified to visit the DIA's auditoriums, one of them imposing and grand—and quite beautiful—and the other more serviceable for smaller groups. The DIA hosts a popular film series that brings commercial as well as experimental films to the museum. While we were there the DFT was finishing a series on landmark films, such as *The Bank Dick* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*, of the 1930s and 1940s.

Most worrisome was our tour of the off-site storage facilities, which were generally well-organized, ample, and commodious, but with, in one room and over works of art that were fortunately covered, an active leak from a pipe. The

building manager was alerted, as was the director, with assurances to the Visiting Committee that the leak would be taken care of immediately.

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## CONCLUSION

With the issue of the millage tax resolved since our visit, the members of the Visiting Committee are relieved that now the one deficit in this museum's adherence to best practices and the highest standards, its sustainability, does not detract from our observations that the DIA in its everyday functioning lives up to its reputation as one of the world's great museums. Given the troubles of the immediate community it serves in Wayne County, Michigan, the museum is absolutely essential as an oasis of aesthetic delight and as a center for life-long learning. It is, moreover, symbolic, as it struggles to overcome its recent financial travails and its reputation for "fusty irrelevance," of the city that nurtured it in its infancy and that, now, it must lead into a new era of hoped-for prosperity, enlightened management and civic integrity.

With the DIA as representative, truly one can remark, thus is the power of the museum.

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## COMMENDABLE PRACTICES

--The museum's publications are of the highest quality while being readily accessible to scholars and laypeople alike. *The Bulletin* is particularly praiseworthy.

--The sections of the Self-Study devoted to the history of the museum and to the descriptions of the collections were text book in their breadth and depth, and in their persuasive, cogent descriptions of a national "museum-monument." They were a pleasure to read and did not at all succumb to the temptation to

abbreviate or to simplify for the sake of expediency; these sections were highlights of a real self-analysis.

--Inside/Out and educational events in general

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## CONCERNS

--Leak at the storage facility, surely now repaired, but that occasions a new look at the regularity with which this facility is checked.

--Support for the library may be lagging due to other financial concerns. The Research Library and Archives are a collection unto themselves, with some 190,000 volumes and a proud history as one of the “oldest and largest art and art history museum libraries in America.” In 1954, Edgar Richardson and Lawrence Fleischman at the DIA established the Archives of American Art, which has since moved to the Smithsonian (1970). With that history, the Library and Archives are not just a local resource but a national treasure.

--Continued study of the 19% of the collection not yet fully catalogued (From the Self-Study, “Some parts of the collections are still in deep storage.”) The DIA has a long-term goal of having 20% of the collection with publishable images. Given the quality of the collections, should that goal encompass more than twenty per cent of the collection?

--Now that the millage has passed, the DIA should not “let up” in its campaigns to raise an operating endowment.

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## APPENDIX

### Staff Interviewed:

- Alfred Ackerman, Department Head and Conservator of Paintings
- Cedric Alexander, Engineering Manager
- Lawrence Baranski, Director, Public Programming
- Graham W. J. Beal, Director, DIA
- Terry Birkett, Director, Collections Management
- Robert E. Bowen, Vice President & Chief Financial Officer
- Elliott W. Broom, Vice President, Museum Operations
- Jennifer Czajkowski, Executive Director, Learning & Interpretation
- Alan Phipps Darr, Senior Curator of the European Art Dept. and Walter B. Ford II

### Family Curator of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts

- Kimberly Dziurman, Director, Registration Department
- Annmarie Erickson, Executive Vice President/COO
- Peggy A. Falcon, Vice President of Development
- Amy Hamilton Foley, Exhibitions Manager
- Rebecca Ruth Hart, Associate Curator
- Barbara G. Heller, Director & Conservator, Special Projects
- Sondra Jenkins, Executive Director, ODHR
- Christine Kloostra, Director of Marketing
- Susan Higman Larsen, Director of Publications
- Pamela Marcil, Director, Public Relations
- Kenneth John Myers, Chief Curator and Curator of American Art, Head,

### Department of American Art

- Nii O Quarcoopome, Curator of African Art and Dept. Head, Africa, Oceania and

### Indigenous Americas

- Salvador Salort-Pons, Head of the European Art Dept., The Elizabeth and

### Shelden Curator of European Painting

- Matt Sikora, Director, Research and Evaluation (by phone)
- Robert Stark, Director, Human Resources
- Ernie Smith, Director of Security
- John Steele, Conservator of Sculpture and Decorative Arts

--Kurtis Van De Wiele, Director of Building Operations

Board Members Interviewed

--Eugene A. Gargaro, Chair

--John L. Lewis, Vice-Chair

--Richard M. Gabrys, Vice-Chair

--Amanda Van Dusen, Secretary