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Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Awards Historic \$30 Million Endowment Challenge Grant to National Gallery of Art, Washington, in Honor of Museum's 75th Anniversary



Washington, DC—The National Gallery of Art announced today that The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded the museum an endowment challenge grant of \$30 million on the occasion of its 75th anniversary. The endowment challenge grant will reinforce the Gallery's leadership role as the nation's art museum by strengthening four crucial areas—digital programs and collaborations, education and outreach, conservation and conservation science, and the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA).

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation was formed on June 30, 1969, through the consolidation of two existing foundations—the Avalon Foundation and the Old Dominion Foundation. The Avalon Foundation had been established by Ailsa Mellon Bruce, Mellon's daughter, and the Old Dominion Foundation had been established by Paul Mellon, Mellon's son. When the two foundations were consolidated, Paul and Ailsa adopted the name The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to honor their father.

"This endowment challenge grant will honor Andrew Mellon and his legacy as we celebrate the 1941 opening of the National Gallery in March. The trustees and staff join me in expressing our deep gratitude for all that the Mellon family and Mellon Foundation have done for this institution, and we look forward to continuing this successful partnership in the years ahead," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art, Washington. "Paul Mellon and Ailsa Mellon Bruce will be the focus of our celebration this fall when we reopen the newly renovated East Building—which Mellon's children supported—on September 30, 2016."

"The National Gallery of Art is a leader in the worlds of museums, art history, and conservation," said Earl Lewis, president of the Foundation. "On the occasion of its 75th anniversary, we are pleased to support the Gallery's work in four areas that are of strategic importance to the Foundation—art research, conservation, digital scholarship, and education and outreach programs."

Endowment Challenge Grant

The \$30 million endowment challenge grant will build upon core programming already funded by the Mellon Foundation at the National Gallery of Art, such as imaging science, photograph conservation, and CASVA fellowships. New areas of support include the digital outreach program and future educational activities that enable the Gallery to expand its reach fulfilling its central mission to make art accessible to everyone.

The Gallery's educational programs serve a wide range of audiences, including the historically underrepresented, and provide opportunities to train and diversify the next generation of museum professionals. Given the rapid growth and change in technology, the Gallery must keep pace to ensure that its collections, art historical and conservation research, and educational resources are available in digital form. This grant substantially strengthens digital outreach, digital imaging, and media production, ensuring the preservation and dissemination of Gallery materials.

The Mellon Foundation's first payment of \$5 million will be granted outright in 2016, with a second payment of \$10 million that would be transferred over time as the Gallery raises a 3:1 match of this total Mellon commitment of \$15 million. Once the Gallery secures \$45 million in matching gifts, the Mellon Foundation would contribute another \$15 million outright, bringing the total Mellon gift to \$30 million. This will result in an overall total of \$75 million in new funding in honor of the 75th anniversary.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Since 1969, the Mellon Foundation has provided critical support for the National Gallery's core scholarly activities, all of which ultimately benefit the wider museum community. The Mellon Foundation has supported the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA) with significant gifts for its fellowships, research, and publication programs. In the realm of conservation, Mellon Foundation grants have funded groundbreaking work in scientific research and imaging science, as well as recent multi-institutional initiatives such as ConservationSpace, an enterprise content management system for conservation documentation—an invaluable research tool for conservators worldwide. Past Mellon Foundation grants have also supported areas such as curatorial research and fellowships, scholarly publications, and the National Gallery of Art Library.

The Mellon Foundation has stepped forward at key moments in the Gallery's history to help launch transformative projects. Together with Paul Mellon and Ailsa Mellon Bruce, the Mellon Foundation contributed funds for the construction of the East Building designed by I.M. Pei, which opened in 1978. In the mid-1980s, the Mellon Foundation made a leadership gift to the Gallery's first-ever national capital campaign for the Patrons' Permanent Fund, a \$50 million endowment for art acquisition. The Mellon Foundation made another substantial gift in 1991 to endow three senior positions in honor of the Gallery's 50th anniversary, thus securing these vital positions for the long term. In 1994, the Mellon Foundation made a leadership gift for unrestricted endowment to help launch the Gallery's \$105 million New Century Fund campaign.

Founded in 1969, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation endeavors to strengthen, promote, and defend the contributions of the humanities and the arts to human flourishing and to the well-being of diverse and democratic societies by supporting exemplary institutions of higher education and culture as they renew and provide access to an invaluable heritage of ambitious, path-breaking work. Additional information is available at mellon.org.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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Questions from members of the media may be directed to the Department of Communications at (202) 842-6353 or pressinfo@nga.gov

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