



Museums for America Grants

Sample Application MA-245628-OMS-20
Project Category: Collections Stewardship and Public Access

Baltimore Museum of Art

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$250,000
Amount of cost share:	\$250,181

The project description can be viewed in the IMLS Awarded Grants Search:
<https://www.ims.gov/grants/awarded/ma-245628-oms-20>

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing applications for the FY2021 Museums for America grant program differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2020 applications. Be sure to use the instructions in the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

1. Project Justification

What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?

The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) requests a grant of \$250,00 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to support the final two years of a two-phase, four-year project to support the inventory, digitization, move, and rehousing of its collection of prints, drawings, and photographs (Collection) led by project director Dr. Andaleeb Banta, Senior Curator and Head of the Prints, Drawings, and Photographs (PDP) Department. The project addresses the high-priority need to (1) produce accurate and standardized data for the entire Collection of over 65,000 works on paper; (2) minimize threats to the Collection posed by overcrowded/inappropriate storage conditions, including a lack of cold storage for the BMA's growing number of photographs; (3) reorganize and rehouse the Collection, recording all object locations in The Museum System (TMS) database; (4) photograph and digitize using the Rapid Capture process 80% of works to be added to TMS and Piction, the BMA's Digital Asset Management system, and, ultimately, to increase the Collection's presence online at artbma.org; and (5) pack and relocate all works to a new on-site storage and research facility.

Considered one of the nation's most significant holdings of works on paper, the Collection includes approximately 57,000 prints, 4,000 drawings, and 4,000 photographs from the 15th century to the present and constitutes 68% of the BMA's permanent collection. The core includes major bequests from Baltimore-based individuals—the largest from industrialist T. Harrison Garrett, with engravings, etchings, and woodcuts by Albrecht Dürer, Rembrandt van Rijn, and Francisco Goya; and George A. Lucas, an expatriate who built one of the most significant 19th-century print collections, with works by Honoré Daumier, Édouard Manet, Mary Cassatt, and James Abbot McNeill Whistler. The Collection also includes the single largest holding of Matisse works on paper in a public collection in the world, generously donated by Claribel and Etta Cone, and exceptional contemporary photography, with works by William Eggleston, Man Ray, Gordon Parks, James Welling, Rineke Dijkstra, and Carrie Mae Weems. Thanks to IMLS's past support, 8,000 Northern European prints in the Garrett Collection and 18,000 Lucas Collection works have been inventoried and rehoused. However, approximately 39,000 objects (60% of the Collection) remain virtually invisible and in need of similar care. There has also never been an initiative to systematically photograph and digitize the Collection, with only select master works digitized from the Lucas, Garrett, and Cone Collections.

The BMA identified this high priority need while building its larger strategy to increase access to the Collection. Currently, it is located in a 2,600-square-foot space on the third floor of the BMA's Cone Building. Designed in 1957, the space has not been updated since the early 1980s and no longer meets best practices for collection stewardship, with overcrowded boxes, over-filled flat file drawers, and closely packed framed works. The BMA is also relying on a domestic refrigerator to house a small fraction of its photography collection, putting works in color at risk of fading and deterioration. Limited financial and administrative resources under previous BMA leadership have resulted in episodic attention, with hundreds of works uncatalogued, unnumbered, and, in some cases, unaccessioned. To preserve the Collection for future generations and to make it more accessible than ever before, the BMA will open the Center for the Study of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs (Center) in fall 2021—a new 7,000-square-foot space on the first floor of the BMA's Pope Building that will include a dedicated exhibition gallery, enlarged study room, four augmented storage vaults, a conservation and photography space, and adjacent curatorial office space.

The project will include (1) an in-depth inventory of 100% of the Collection with all TMS object records updated with new/corrected descriptive data and object locations; (2) stabilization and rehousing as needed, with issues identified for Conservation staff; (3) the Rapid Capture of approximately 52,000 objects (80% of the Collection) with the long-term goal of adding them to the BMA's public online collection search at artbma.org; (4) the final inventory, packing, and relocation of all 65,192 objects to the Center. Phase One (in-depth

inventory and Rapid Capture) began in March 2019 for the Collection to be ready to move in summer 2021. As of September 30, 2019, approximately 13,400 objects (21% of the Collection) was fully inventoried, with data added to TMS, while 7,000 objects (11% of the Collection) were photographed and digitized. IMLS funds, if awarded, would support salaries for a temporary Collections Inventory Specialist (CIS), a temporary Rapid Capture Photographer (RCP), and rehousing and storage equipment expenses during the final four months of Phase One (September 1 to December 31, 2020) and all of Phase Two (January 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022).

Are others addressing this need? What studies/best practices have you used in developing your project?

Looking to peer institutions with similar projects has been useful. Consultation with staff from the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) Prints, Drawings, and Photographs Department—who engaged in a similar collection move from 2006 to 2008—has helped get a sense of the project’s overall scope. PMA staff also recommended O’Brien Business Systems, Inc., who have been instrumental in helping the BMA develop a future storage plan. Additionally, PDP curatorial staff (project director, Dr. Banta; Dr. Leslie Cozzi, Associate Curator; and Dr. Joanna Karlgaard, Curatorial Research Associate) have 37 years of combined experience caring for similar collections. All three have participated in collection inventories and/or moves in their previous roles at the National Gallery of Art, Harvard Art Museums, and the Hammer Museum, UCLA. Drs. Banta and Karlgaard are members of the Print Council of America, a national organization of print specialists, and regularly attend meetings to stay abreast of the field. The BMA’s project will also reflect best practices in collection inventory and management set by the American Alliance of Museums Collection Stewardship Standards.

Who or what will benefit from your project?

As custodian of one of the country’s finest holdings of works on paper, the BMA is committed to making the Collection as publicly accessible as possible. First, the Center will offer dynamic exhibitions and programming to engage the widest audience. The project will directly benefit curators, conservators, scholars, educators, students, and artists, as well as local, national, and international visitors. The Collection’s digitization has vast potential to reach an even broader audience, adding images of approximately 52,000 works (80% of the Collection) to TMS and Piction for the first time, and artbma.org in the long-term. Creating a virtual catalogue of the Collection will make it visible to remote visitors and researchers, while helping scholars, curators, and educators to maximize their time in the Center. For example, teachers can preview the Collection in advance to best tailor visits for their students. Finally, the Collection itself will benefit. Currently, only 9% is available online. The creation of improved records and digital surrogates will reduce unnecessary handling—a huge benefit given the Collection’s fragile, light-sensitive nature. The Collection’s physical rehousing will also extend its longevity, as the new storage vaults will result in 50% more space than is currently allotted, and, for the first time, a proper cold/cool storage room will house the BMA’s fast-growing photography collection.

How will your project advance your institution’s strategic plan?

Inventoried, digitizing, moving, and rehousing the Collection is a perfect manifestation of all four core strategies of the BMA’s newly updated strategic plan: (1) become a model of best financial practices for museums, maximizing use of the BMA’s collection; (2) become a model for putting the values of excellence, equity, and inclusion into professional practice at every level; (3) become an indispensable part of the social and cultural fabric of the Baltimore region by increasing and diversifying our audience; and (4) become a recognized leader in the collection, presentation, and interpretation of excellent post-WWII art by under-represented artists to expand the art historical canon. Improved digital records and physical storage for the Collection will result in financially sound and responsible stewardship. With the Collection encompassing two-thirds of the entire permanent collection, the project is a cornerstone in the BMA’s goal to increase physical and intellectual access to its rich holdings—making it readily available to a wider audience, which in turn furthers the BMA’s mission to emphasize access and inclusivity, especially for the local community. Finally, PDP

curators have been actively growing the Collection's holdings of works by underrepresented artists across the temporal spectrum, particularly those by women artists.

How will your project address the goals of the Museums for America program (as described above in Section A.1) and the Collections Stewardship and Public Access project category?

Based on the BMA's Collection Management Manual and AAM accreditation guidelines, the project addresses the Museum for America's Collections Stewardship and Public Access project category by enabling the BMA to better serve the public by providing an unprecedented level of access and visibility to the Collection. The project will dramatically improve its physical conditions and result in the creation of digital surrogates and improved metadata in TMS, Piction, and artbma.org. As such, the project's outcomes directly align with the goals of the Collection Stewardship and Public Access project category. Working in tandem, both outcomes will maximize the Collection's long-term preservation while strengthening the BMA's ability to provide access for the largest audience in the Museum's history. Opportunities for cross-disciplinary engagement will also increase its utilization within publications, college courses, and high school curriculum.

2. Project Work Plan

What specific activities, including evaluation, will you carry out?

During a four-year period, the project team will complete the inventory, move, and relocation/rehousing of 100% of the Collection, as well as the digitization of 80%, in two phases—Phase One (Detailed Inventory and Rapid Capture: March 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020) and Phase Two (Cross-check Inventory, Ongoing Rapid Capture, Move, and Expansion: January 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022). Work will take place in the BMA's current PDP study center and storage space on the third floor of the Cone Building, until the physical move and post-move reconciliation, which will take place in the new Center beginning in fall 2021. The work will be done by an inter-departmental team from PDP, Digital Asset Management, Conservation, and Registration.

The two-year IMLS grant period will include the last four months of Phase One. During the full Phase One, 100% of the Collection will be inventoried; BMA staff estimate that approximately 17% of all Phase One work will take place between September 1 and December 31, 2020. Specific activities include an item-level housing assessment that starts with a TMS-generated container report. Staff then verify the container's contents, update/correct TMS records, create new records for objects without one, and ensure that every object has a location noted in TMS (13,000 objects are currently without one). The CIS is the lead on creating content lists for the Collection's 2,020 containers (boxes, drawers, shelves, and bins). Physical housing is assessed, and new folders and/or interleaving added as needed to safely house the Collection; any works with condition issues are flagged for Conservation. Due to limited space in the current PDP vaults, works will temporarily remain in existing containers. Future rehousing needs will be noted and completed after the move to the Center. Tracking of inventory progress is maintained through an internal Excel spreadsheet, which also list current storage locations, future storage requirements, and Rapid Capture status. Once a container has been inventoried, the RCP uses TMS to determine if the works have been photographed. If needed, the RCP photographs the works, creating JPEG files, which are cropped/rotated as needed for ingestion into Piction, which pushes them to TMS, which in turn pushes images to artbma.org. During Phase One, only works in solander boxes (approximately 58% of the Collection) may be Rapid Captured due to size constraints of the current copy stand set-up.

At the start of Phase Two, a loan moratorium will begin (18 months/external; 12 months/internal) and Rapid Capture will be paused. The RCP will continue to digitize cached images of photographed works and collaborate with Digital Assets Management staff to update Piction, TMS, and artbma.org. The RCP, CIS, and PDP and Registration staff will conduct a cross-check inventory from January to June 2021. All containers will be checked against TMS and sealed; all framed works, artists books, and portfolios will be packed. Overseen by

Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA)

Prints, Drawings, and Photographs Collection Inventory, Digitization, and Move

Registration staff, the move will take place from July to September 2021. PDP and Conservation staff will then begin the Collection's expansion into four new storage vaults. The CIS will manually update object locations in TMS and reissue container lists for the entire Collection. Rehousing objects that were flagged during Phase One will also take place, with staff expanding or "splitting" overcrowded boxes and flat file drawers, and rehousing works that can be unframed. Once the expansion/rehousing process is well underway, Rapid Capture will begin again in January 2022, allowing an additional 22% of the Collection to be digitized before the end of the grant period in August 2022. The BMA plans to install an expanded copy stand in the Center to allow for the Rapid Capture of larger works that cannot currently be handled, with the shift to larger works accounting for the slower Rapid Capture pace during Phase Two. Framed and oversized works (approximately 20% of the Collection) will be photographed as time permits by the BMA's Senior Photographer; however, that work will extend beyond the grant period. Progress will continue to be tracked on the internal Excel spreadsheet.

Ongoing through both Phases will be discussions with educators, scholars, and artists about collaborative initiatives. Drs. Banta and Karlgaard will meet twice a month throughout to review progress and ensure that established benchmarks are met, adjusting the workflow as needed to stay on track. They will prepare a final report, summarizing the Collection's scope and final condition to share with other BMA departments and senior administration. Final project results and lessons learned will be shared with the scholarly community through staff presentations at national conferences, such as the Print Council of America and other field-specific outlets.

What is your project's maturity level (i.e. exploratory, piloting, scaling, or mainstreaming)?

The BMA's project has successfully moved through the Piloting Phase, with staff having conducted extensive time tests and assessments of the Collection. Seven months into Phase One of the detailed inventory and Rapid Capture, the project is now in the Scaling Phase as staff have increased the scale of their activities—from select parts to the Collection as a whole—while maintaining a high level of integrity for the quality of data and images produced. As Phase Two begins, the maturity level will move from Scaling to Mainstreaming with the expansion into and opening of the Center. PDP curatorial staff, in tandem with BMA Education and Public Programs staff, are already discussing future uses of the Center with intermediary organizations in Baltimore and beyond, such as Johns Hopkins University and Howard University.

What are the risks to the project; have you identified ways to monitor or mitigate risk in the work plan?

The project will require a significant amount of personnel and financial resources to be completed by the move-out date (September 2021). The BMA has made an initial investment and hired a temporary, full-time RCP (start date: October 2019) and will hire a temporary, full-time CIS (anticipated start date: January 2020). However, additional support is needed to retain both positions through August 2022. Their assistance throughout will have a tremendous impact on the project's successful completion as envisioned by PDP staff and BMA leadership, particularly during the post-move stage. The BMA is actively fundraising to ensure that both positions may be retained through August 2022. There is also the potential for changes to the work plan due to two factors. First, while PDP staff have done many time tests, there remain pockets of the Collection that have not been touched in a generation. Unanticipated finds of particularly fragile works may slow down the process. To address this, staff have built a work plan with a brisk pace while adding a cushion of time to allow for the inevitable container that may take three days instead of the average pace of two hours. Next, as with any construction project, the timeline is subject to change as a result of external factors (weather, unforeseen architectural difficulties, etc.). Allowances for delays up to six weeks have been accounted for in the work plan.

Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

The project will be jointly planned, implemented, and managed by staff from the PDP, Digital Asset Management, Conservation, and Registration Departments. Project director, Dr. Banta, will coordinate access to

the Collection, provide programmatic and budgetary oversight, and be responsible for making sure the project meets benchmarks according to the schedule of completion. She will also keep BMA senior staff apprised of the project's progress and outcomes. Dr. Banta will work closely with Dr. Karlgaard and the CIS on reporting throughout to accurately capture data on the inventory, Rapid Capture, move, and rehousing.

How does the makeup of the project team and/or partners and collaborators provide an opportunity for the project to benefit from diverse perspectives, shared networks, and best practices?

Internally, the PDP staff are active in the professional community of curators who care for works on paper, and they connect to other curators who have engaged in similar projects. Within the BMA, Conservation, Digital Asset Management, and Registration staff provide a variety of perspectives on the physical and material aspects of the Collection's works, as well as their digital potential as public-facing assets. Finally, extensive discussions with area scholars, artists, and educators has made clear that the Collection's usefulness relies significantly on increasing public visibility of the works themselves. The creation of both the Center and digital surrogates for the Collection will foster collaboration and exchange with partner organizations across Baltimore and beyond.

How will collaborations you have proposed be structured in a way that is equitable and mutually beneficial in order to strengthen your project?

The BMA places a combined commitment to artistic excellence and social equity at the center of every decision. This drives internal collaborations, with ongoing exchange between PDP staff and other departments to successfully complete the project. Externally, community partnerships are central to the BMA's goal of becoming an indispensable resource for Baltimore. Through researching, presenting, and interpreting the Collection, and by listening to the needs of its audiences, the project will embody the BMA's commitment to excellence, fairness, relevance, and social justice. The Center will bring the Collection into public view—accessible to all by appointment and on view in a dedicated gallery. Conversations for institutional collaborations are ongoing with area colleges and non-profits to bring diverse perspectives into the Center.

When and in what sequence will your activities occur?

September 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020: If awarded, IMLS funds would support the final four months of Phase One. During the full 22-month period (March 1, 2019–December 31, 2020), all 65,192 objects will be fully inventoried and content lists created, with the final 17% completed between September and December 2020. Rapid Capture of works will continue throughout Phase One for all works in solander boxes (58% of the Collection), with approximately 14% completed during Phase One of the grant period.

January 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021: Phase Two will begin in January 2021 with the loan moratorium and the temporary halt of Rapid Capture. The cross-check inventory will take place from January to June 2021, with all containers checked against TMS lists and sealed, and all loose works packed. In late summer 2021, new specialized storage equipment and furniture for the Collection's containers will be moved into the Center.

July 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022: The move will take place from July to September 2021, and expansion into the Center and the post-move reconciliation will continue through August 2022. The study room is anticipated to open to the public in fall 2021. An inaugural Collection installation will be on view in the new PDP gallery by the end of 2021, with a new rotation every six months. Rapid Capture is expected to resume in January 2022 and continue in tandem with the rehousing of the Collection through August 2022.

What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?

Significant commitments of both financial and human resources are needed to successfully complete the project. In October 2019, the BMA hired a temporary, full-time RCP to photograph and digitize works and

anticipates hiring a temporary, full-time CIS in January 2020 to assist with the inventory and move. If awarded, IMLS grant funds will support the salaries of both temporary staff members throughout the grant period. The BMA will use pre-existing equipment including carts for staging and moving materials, computers, and computer workstations and will purchase, through a combination of grant funds and cost share, archival storage boxes, folders, and interleaving; specialized storage equipment for the Center's storage vaults/cold storage; and an expanded copy stand. In addition to the project director, project-specific staff include three full-time PDP staff members—Curatorial Assistant, Curatorial Research Associate, and Associate Curator—and staff from Digital Asset Management, Registration, and Conservation Departments. Graduate students from Johns Hopkins University, Maryland Institute College of Art, and Morgan State University will assist as well.

How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?

The project director will work closely with the project team to track ongoing progress. Using data recorded in the internal Excel report, Dr. Banta will meet twice a month with Dr. Karlgaard to evaluate the inventory and Rapid Capture's progress to meet necessary benchmarks are met and adjust the workflow as needed. Based on progress made to date, the average pace of inventorying is 2.4 boxes/day and the rate for Rapid Capture is four boxes/day. During Phase Two, approximately 320 containers will be packed/month in order to meet the move-out timeline. The project team will produce quarterly reports utilizing the internal Excel report, cross-checked against TMS-generated reports, that will track the number of container lists created; the number of new records created; the number of records updated; and the number of works photographed, digitized, and online.

How and with whom will you share your project's results?

The BMA will share the project's results with diverse audiences, including local, visiting, and remote researchers; museum professionals; artists; high school and college groups; and the general public. The opening of the Center itself will greatly advance the Collection's accessibility—literally bringing it to the BMA's ground floor. At its completion, approximately 80% of the Collection is anticipated to be online at artbma.org as well. Each year, artbma.org receives 400,000 unique virtual visitors from around the world, all of whom will be able to access a substantial part of the Collection there for the first time. Project staff will spread awareness of the project through the Museum's online blog, *BMA Stories*, a new platform that not only lets BMA staff share their work but also actively seeks feedback from the local and global community. Once online, it is the hope of project staff to engage both the general and scholarly public for information they may be able to contribute to object and artist histories, particularly for local Baltimore artists. Project team members will present the outcomes and lessons learned at professional conferences, for example the Print Council of America.

3. Project Results

What are your project's intended results and how will they address the need you have identified?

At the project's close, the entire Collection will have undergone a complete, systematic inventory and rehousing. This will result in standardized tombstone information (maker, material, and size) and location data recorded in TMS; the move and rehousing of the Collection into larger, custom-designed storage vaults and cold storage; and the digitization and online presence of approximately 80% of the Collection. The Collection's physical rehousing and digitization will improve its long-term care and stewardship, reducing the need to handle these fragile, light-sensitive works. Long hampered by a lack of visibility, even within the scholarly community, the digitization will provide the first comprehensive look at the Collection, while the physical move to the BMA's ground floor will dramatically increase the Collection's visibility within the Baltimore community.

How will the care, condition, management, access to, or use of the museum collections/records improve?

The project will ensure the Collection's long-term preservation, and the many vulnerable materials it includes, against physical damage. Conservation will address any issues, and the item-level inventories will create a more

efficient means of tracking and retrieving works for view, making ongoing collection stewardship more manageable on a day-to-day basis. Internal TMS users will have more reliable information, which will let them share higher quality data with the public and utilize the Collection more often. Ultimately, improved physical storage and a coherent organizational scheme will allow for increased use of the Collection while the digitized portion of the Collection will open new avenues for global audiences.

What barriers might there be for others who may wish to learn from and/or adapt your results?

The uniqueness of individual collections can make it difficult for direct translation of exact processes across museums and institutions. Additionally, due to security and collection safety concerns, this type of work has historically happened behind the scenes and therefore details about the process are typically not made public. Most useful external information sharing happens within a relatively small professional group setting, such as sessions within larger conferences or study days, or through one-on-one interactions.

What data will you collect and report to measure your project's success?

On the macro-level, the project team uses a Gantt chart to assign tasks and track progress. Each project member is included with projected timelines for their specific role. On a micro-level, Dr. Karlgaard's Excel spreadsheet system tracks inventory and Rapid Capture progress. The number of newly created records in TMS and the number of images created will be tracked as well. This data will dramatically increase the usability of TMS, increasing the accuracy and usefulness of TMS reports on the Collection for all BMA curatorial departments. Regular meetings within PDP and with collaboration staff to review this data will allow for updates, progress checks, and troubleshooting throughout to ensure a successful, on-time completion.

What tangible products will result from your project?

The project will result in a properly inventoried and housed Collection of over 65,000 historical works of art that will be more easily available to the public for digital and physical study. Physically, each work will have sturdy and renewed archival/conservation-grade housing appropriate to its individual needs, a systematically formatted database record in TMS with a location recorded; approximately 80% will also have an image in TMS. Virtually, the greatly improved online collections search will provide an increased number of works, with tombstone information and availability for study. The accessibility of these products will result in increased use of the Collection by a more diverse range of audiences and an increase in awareness of the BMA's holdings. Internal reports will be created that track the project's volume and pace and will be valuable tools for sharing lessons learned with others. BMA staff will also produce online blog posts, via *BMA Stories*, to engage the public with the project's progress and build awareness of the Center before and after it opens.

How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project?

The creation of a newly renovated, centrally located facility within the BMA, thoughtfully designed to house and display the Collection, will make it more readily available to wider audiences than ever before while sustaining the long-term benefits of the Collection inventory and rehousing. The project is central to the BMA's mission to emphasize access and inclusivity and, as such, appropriate staff and financial resources will be allocated to maintain its many benefits. At over 7,000 square feet, the new Center will provide visitors with physical and intellectual access to this important resource through a dedicated exhibition gallery, an enlarged study room, augmented and improved storage, a conservation technician preparator space, and curatorial offices. The addition of images of 52,000 works to TMS, Piction, and artbma.org will be maintained as part of the BMA's commitment to increasing online access to its entire permanent collection. The preservation of digital assets is a continuous project that the BMA will continue to administer, and the Museum has procedures in place to ensure the long-term preservation of digital resources.

