

**NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART  
INTRODUCTION  
FY 2010**

The National Gallery of Art's mission and goals were set in place with the initial correspondence between founder Andrew W. Mellon and President Franklin D. Roosevelt and in the subsequent Joint Resolution of Congress signed in 1937 establishing the Gallery, which states in part:

“The faith of the United States is pledged that...the United States will provide such funds as may be necessary for the upkeep of the National Gallery of Art and the administrative expenses and costs of operation thereof, including the protection and care of works of art acquired by the Board, so that the National Gallery of Art shall be at all times properly maintained and the works of art contained therein shall be exhibited regularly to the general public free of charge. For these purposes there are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary.”

In accordance with its enabling legislation, the Gallery is under the direction of a Board of Trustees comprised of five private members and four ex-officio members: The Chief Justice of the United States, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

The National Gallery is considered one of the world's premier art museums with a renowned collection of American and European masterworks. Sustaining the high standards of excellence, achievement, and service to the nation, which was established at its founding, continues to be the National Gallery's highest priority. That priority is reflected in the Gallery's mission, which is to serve the country by preserving, collecting, exhibiting, interpreting and encouraging the understanding by the American public of original, great works of art.

The architecture of the National Gallery's two landmark buildings is dignified and monumental in keeping with their location on the National Mall. The West Building, designed by the preeminent neoclassical architect John Russell Pope, is one of the most acclaimed art museum buildings in the world for the display and security of the works of art held in trust for the nation. A gift to the nation from Andrew W. Mellon, it opened on March 17, 1941. Renowned 20<sup>th</sup> century architect I. M. Pei designed the East Building, and it has entered the canons of architecture as a masterpiece of design. A gift to the nation from Paul Mellon, Ailsa Mellon Bruce, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the East Building opened on June 1, 1978.

On May 23, 1999 the National Gallery Sculpture Garden, given to the nation by The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, opened to the public. The Sculpture Garden provides a distinctive setting for major sculptures by masters of 20<sup>th</sup> century art. In this unique outdoor space, visitors are surrounded by indigenous North American trees and plants and can enjoy a reflecting pool with a fountain in the center that converts to an ice skating rink in winter. The Sculpture Garden has quickly become one of the most popular outdoor spaces in Washington, D.C.

The Gallery is committed to protecting and maintaining its two landmark buildings, the Sculpture Garden and the grounds. Major repair, restoration, and renovation of the buildings and infrastructure is necessary to keep the complex functioning efficiently, securely, and safely and to ensure that they continue to serve as examples of the Gallery's high aesthetic standards.

A major aspect of the National Gallery's programming is its special exhibitions, which offer the American people a wide range of visual experiences. The Gallery organizes and presents special exhibitions that augment the strengths of its collection and that focus on works of art of exceptional merit from other cultures and periods lent from public and private collections around the world. The dynamics of continued high museum attendance is directly related to special exhibitions which introduce many people to art for the first time. The Gallery's mission is further extended by featuring many of these exhibitions on its web site for millions more to enjoy.

Providing the public with increased and continual access to the collection, special exhibitions and educational materials, using the newest technological advances, is a central component of the Gallery's high standards of excellence in education. To achieve this goal, the Gallery's information technology initiatives that align key IT projects with the Gallery's mission and goals are a high priority.

The Gallery's role as an educational institution on a national level extends through its wide variety of education programs and resources specially developed for adults, students, families, and scholars. This broad spectrum of offerings includes tours, gallery talks, lectures, symposia, and film series, among other events; numerous tours offered on its web site of the collection and architecture, as well as virtual tours of the Sculpture Garden and selected special exhibitions; and specially designed workshops and resources for teachers such as school tours and online programs for all grade levels.

The National Gallery's Conservation Division is one of the largest and most comprehensive of the world's art museums, with laboratories for conserving paintings, sculpture, works on paper and textiles as well as for scientific research. The most dramatic advances in art conservation take place in the Gallery's Scientific Research lab using highly advanced technologies and sophisticated equipment. By utilizing carefully researched conservation techniques, the Gallery also fulfills its mission of protecting the over 115,000 works of art in its care.

A key element of the Gallery's commitment to scholarship in art history and the consequent enrichment of higher education across the country is the Art Research Library, one of the finest and most respected art libraries in the world. The comprehensive, in-depth collection comprises some 360,850 volumes on the history, theory, and criticism of art and architecture as well as the rare book collection with more than 8,400 volumes. The Art Research Library is used by staff, visiting fellows, professors, and scholars associated with the Gallery's Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, as well as by some 2,200 members of the public each year.

The Strategic Plan for the National Gallery of Art identifies the following general goals and objectives:

- The Gallery will continue to seek out the finest works of art available for donation or for purchase with private funds to strengthen the core collection donated by Andrew W. Mellon.
- In order to maintain the very highest standards, the Gallery will consistently hire and retain the best available curatorial, conservation, educational, and management staffs.
- Day-to-day operations will support the Gallery's mission through the care, maintenance, and security of the works of art and the facilities at optimum levels.
- The Gallery will serve as a model for other museums from coast to coast, offering its expertise and educational resources, including loans of works of art and special exhibitions from the collection.

The Congressional Budget Request for FY 2010 strives to support these Strategic Plan goals and objectives.