



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-30-15-0371-15
Project Category: Collections Stewardship
Funding Level: \$25,001-\$150,000

Portland Art Museum

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$98,674
Amount of cost share:	\$98,880

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing narratives for FY2016 applications differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2014 and FY2015 applications. Most obviously, the names of the three narrative sections and the order in which they appear have changed. Be sure to use the narrative instructions in the FY2016 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

Portland Art Museum

The Portland Art Museum, of Portland, Oregon, is requesting grant funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to support the purchase and installation of nineteen custom museum-quality mobile painting screens at the Museum's offsite storage facility. These mobile screens will maximize space and efficiency, increase the Museum's preservation capacity, improve storage conditions and advance the Museum's Strategic Plan for Collections Stewardship.

The Northwest art collection at the Portland Art Museum comprises works of art from the 19th, to 21st century. Thanks to an endowed curatorial chair, acquisition fund, and exhibition series dedicated to Northwest art, the Museum has the unique resources to serve as stewards for art from this region. Improved storage of works in this important collection will allow for better registrar and curatorial access, which will lead to enhanced assessment, study, and exhibition of works.

Guided by the strategic plan, the Museum is currently engaged in a multi-year project to upgrade display and storage environments as part of an integrated program of improvements to collections stewardship and overall environmental sustainability. After more than a decade of incremental storage improvements, the Museum's current priority is the installation of mobile painting screens. These screens will house works from the Museum's renowned collection of Northwest art. Based on the offsite facility's current screen capacity, and the size of the Northwest Art Collection, approximately 50 percent of the paintings at this location are now being stored in less than ideal conditions. The nineteen screens to be purchased with IMLS funding will allow for 100 percent of the current Northwest Collection to be stored properly, provide space for additional acquisitions, and complete furnishing the floor space allotted for storage in the offsite facility.

The Portland Art Museum's goal for this project is to ensure the safe storage of all works of Northwest art held by the museum. The specific results intended by the purchase of the nineteen screens is to maintain a 98 percent average of the number of pieces stored on museum quality storage devices at any given time (based on the current collections count). As the collection expands the Museum will work to ensure that every effort is made to maintain that average.

Project activities will take place over five months. In that time, the Museum will order and install the furniture, place works on the new screens, and perform condition reports, inventory, and other necessary documentation. Once complete, the Museum will publish project results online and share them at professional conferences.

The new painting screens will bring great improvements in storage efficiency, contributing to a more sustainable use of space in the Museum's storage area over the long term. A logical clustering of paintings of the same type, plus increased visual and physical access will make it much easier for Museum staff to track locations and to retrieve paintings for study, reducing staff time and benefiting curators, visiting scholars, and ultimately, all Museum audiences.

Portland Art Museum

MFA – FY15 COLLECTION STEWARDSHIP

At any given time, approximately 1,800 works are on display in the Portland Art Museum's galleries while 49,100 are housed in the three main storage-areas: the Main Vault, the Print Vault, and Offsite Storage.

In 2012, Offsite Storage (the focus of this request) was moved to a new facility that features 10,000 square feet for collections storage, the Museum's paper conservation studio, and crate storage. This new storage site is equipped with energy-efficient climate controls and state-of-the-art security features. Approximately 558 important paintings by Northwest artists are presently being stored at this location. This includes a recent gift of 308 paintings, not all of which will be acquired by the Museum. While the exact number of works to be accessioned is yet to be determined, it is the goal of this project to build strategically for present and future growth in this important collecting area.

The Main Vault (6,944 square feet), on the basement level of the Belluschi Building (the Museum's original building), has served as the Museum's principal storage space since 1932. In 2011, the Museum updated the HVAC system with the support of a \$100,000 grant from the City of Portland. The Print Vault (900 square feet), located in a separate section of the Belluschi Building basement, was added in 1993 and currently houses over 27,500 works of art on paper, including Western and Asian prints, drawings, and photographs.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Project Description:

The Portland Art Museum in Portland, Oregon seeks to improve and consolidate storage of the Museum's extensive collection of Northwest paintings. The Museum requests a grant of \$98,674 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to support the purchase of nineteen 12' x 24' custom museum quality mobile painting screens that will be installed in the Museum's offsite storage facility - increasing the total number of screens at this location from 8 to 27. The total cost of this project is estimated to be \$197,554.

Today, the eight existing screens located in the offsite storage facility are full – holding approximately 120 paintings. Purchased in 2013 with support from the Ford Family Foundation, these screens are dedicated to art by Oregon artists. At the time of their installation, 130 paintings by Northwest artists remained safely, but not ideally, stored in commercial bin boxes and warehouse shelving. In the year that followed, gifts, bequests, and purchases of paintings by Northwest artists have been similarly stored. The nineteen screens to be purchased with IMLS funding will allow for 100 percent of the current Northwest Collection to be stored properly, provide space for additional acquisitions, and complete the Museum's near-term storage plan for the off-site facility by fully utilizing available square footage in the conditioned storage area at the offsite facility.

The Portland Art Museum is fortunate to have significant endowment support for the Northwest Art Collection. Currently endowments provide support for:

- A Northwest Art Curator
- Northwest Art Acquisitions
- Northwest Art Exhibition Funding

Because of these endowments and the presence of a Northwest-specific curatorial department, the Museum has been able to significantly expand the scholarship and exhibition of Northwest art and bolster public programming and outreach. The Collection features works by artists from Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming.

The permanent collection of historic, modern, and contemporary works rotates through the museum's dedicated Northwest Galleries twice per year. Additionally, three to four changing exhibitions of contemporary Northwest art are offered annually in the Arlene and Harold Schnitzer Center for Northwest Art, a 9,652 square foot space comprising two floors in the Museum's Hoffman Wing, and the Museum's 9,000 square foot main exhibition gallery also host special exhibitions featuring Northwest art. Compared to other organizations in the five-state region, the Portland Art Museum stands alone for its dedicated space and funding for Northwest art, making the Portland Art Museum the premiere cultural center for the celebration and cultivation of Northwest art.

The Museum is currently engaged in a multi-year project to upgrade display and storage environments as part of an integrated program of improvements to collections stewardship and overall environmental sustainability. This project began based on the recommendations found in a Storage Space Assessment conducted in 2000 by Heritage Resource Management of Ottawa, Ontario. Due to the significance of the collection, the Museum's prominence in the region as a collector of Northwest art, and following the successful 2012 furniture upgrade for the storage of three-dimensional Northwest objects, the rehousing of the paintings by Northwest artists is the Museum's highest storage priority. The rehousing of the Northwest painting collection also complements the Museum's ongoing digitization efforts, which include a current initiative to catalogue and publish online its entire collection of Northwest Art. The digitization project is being funded through a \$171,000 NEH grant award.

The screens to be purchased will have dual-faced, woven steel mesh, allowing artwork to hang on both sides. These mobile screens will be installed on a hand-controlled, manual system, which will maximize space and efficiency through compact storage. These new painting screens will increase the Museum's preservation capacity and improve storage conditions. Should the Museum decide to move or rearrange the layout of the storage space in the future, the carriage system can be reconfigured.

Pending funding, project activities will take place from November 2015 through March 2016. The installation of 19 mobile painting screens will greatly increase the offsite facility's storage and preservation capacity. The screens will allow for easier access for collections staff, including researchers, scholars, and curators. Additionally the screens will provide earthquake safeguards, a necessary feature for museums on the west coast. A more logical arrangement of paintings with increased visual and physical access will make it much easier for Museum staff to track locations and to retrieve paintings for study, reducing staff time and benefiting curators, visiting scholars, and ultimately, all Museum audiences.

Northwest paintings come in a large variety of shapes, sizes, materials and mediums. Many paintings have heavy impasto that extends out three or more inches resulting in a high probability of accidental damage if not stored properly. (*Supportingdoc4 _Art Samples.*) In addition to improving the storage conditions for these and other oversized paintings, the proposed new screens will allow the Museum to properly store and care for smaller works that have remained in approximately 30 boxes and bins since the relocation to the new offsite storage facility, 26 works that have been acquired since the relocation but are resting against walls due to a lack of Museum-quality storage furniture, as well as any new works accessioned from the recent gift of 308 Northwest paintings.

Art in the Center for Northwest Art rotates between six to eight times per year and the purchase of new painting screens will greatly benefit the time, workload, and efficiency of both collections staff and curators. Currently, if the Northwest curator would like to view paintings for research or in preparation for a gallery re-installation, the curator and collections manager must cull through boxes, bins, and other temporary locations. This process is time-consuming and laborious, and requires the unnecessary handling and movement of many extra works (see *supportingdoc 3_StorageConditions* photos). With the installation of proper museum-quality painting racks, future viewing sessions will be faster, safer, and more efficient.

The Portland Art Museum's goal for this project is to ensure the safe storage of all works of Northwest art held by the museum. The specific results intended by the purchase of the nineteen screens is to maintain a 98 percent average of the number of pieces stored on state-of-the-art storage devices at any given time (based on the current collections count). As the collection expands the Museum will work to ensure that every effort is made to maintain that average.

The Museum's commitment to improving storage conditions was reaffirmed in the 2014 - 2017 strategic plan update, which identified "Enhance collections through securing new acquisitions and reintroducing existing collections" as a strategic goal, with the specific indicator of: Enhance storage by use of more efficient shelving and racks. (see attached *Strategic Plan Summary*). Since implementing the original strategic plan in 2010, the Museum has invested \$150,000 in capital improvements in security and climate control, doubled its offsite storage space, cut travel time from the Museum to the storage site in half, and updated its collections care procedures and practices. With these accomplishments in mind, the Museum revisited the strategic plan and confirmed the importance of improved storage for the museum's Northwest Art Collection.

In 2011 and 2012, grants from the Ford Family Foundation in Roseburg, Oregon, targeted toward the preservation of works by Oregon artists, funded new high-density storage equipment and new painting screens. These funds have improved access for staff, scholars, and students, thereby enhancing visitor experience and facilitating scholarly research and exhibitions. With the support of IMLS, the Museum hopes to continue improving the storage conditions for all of its Northwest paintings.

The rehousing of the Northwest painting collection also complements the Museum's ongoing digitization efforts, which include a current initiative to catalogue and publish online its entire collection of Northwest Art. As the Museum moves works to the new storage furniture, the objects will be professionally photographed using the Museum's mobile photography studio. Both storage and access are prominent features of the Museum's Strategic Plan, and the Museum sees improved storage for its art collection and the digitization of these collections as equally important and complementary steps towards preservation.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

The decisions regarding the equipment purchase and implementation process have been made in accordance with the American Alliance of Museums' Standards and Best Practices regarding Collection Stewardship. The project schedule has been coordinated with the Museum's exhibition schedule to maximize the registrars', conservator's, preparators', and curator's availability while minimizing the project's disruption of special exhibition installations and deinstallations.

In November 2015, the collections manager will order nineteen Moving Painting Storage Units. The units will be:

- 12'0" height x 24'0" width
- Single Row Configuration
- 12.0" on-center spacing

The screens will have dual-faced, woven steel mesh, allowing artwork to hang on both sides. Each screen is designed to hold approximately 15 works of art. These mobile screens will be installed on a hand-controlled, manual system, which will maximize space and efficiency through compact storage. The screens will operate on a floor supported system. Should the Museum decide to move or rearrange the layout of the storage space in the future, the entire system can be de-installed and relocated as needed.

The system is made of aerospace grade aluminum and will require little to no maintenance. According to manufacturer specifications, the vertical diamond pattern enables stainless steel "S" hooks to fit securely into the narrowest point of the opening, establishing security for the work of art that is hung. This prevents horizontal movement. On-center spacing of the units is completely flexible and can be adjusted after installation to meet changing collection needs. The system can be de-installed and relocated as needed.

A floor-to-ceiling plastic drape will be installed around the perimeter of the workspace to isolate the activity and any dust or dirt that may be created when drilling. All cutting will take place outside the storage area. In January 2016, earthquake reinforced painting screens will be installed by a Crystalizations Systems, Inc. specialist and Museum preparators, and under the supervision of the collections manager.

After installation, the collections manager will assign appropriate numbers to each carriage for tracking, as deemed appropriate within the current Museum numbering system. Once numbers have been assigned, paintings will be unpacked and hung by preparators and the collections manager, with consultation with the conservator and curator as necessary. Registrars and the conservator will conduct condition reports. Paintings will be organized by size; the largest/heaviest paintings will be located towards the base of the screens with the smaller/lighter works above. As the paintings are placed on the new racks, their locations will be updated in the Museum's collections database MimsyXG. The rehousing project will be completed by the end of March 2016. Complementing the project activities, the Museum's collection photographer will capture high-res digital images of the paintings as they are installed.

Project Personnel:

Donald Urquhart, Director of Collections Management and Exhibition Initiatives, will serve as project director (12% of his time). In this capacity, he will oversee the project budget, schedule, evaluation and staff team. He is a member of the Museum's senior management team and a graduate of the Getty Leadership Institute. Mr. Urquhart has an MA in Museum Studies from the University of Washington, Seattle. He also has a strong project management background, including storage construction and renovation.

Heather Bouchey, Collections Manager, will function as the project manager (50% of her time), working closely with Mr. Urquhart, the chief preparator, the conservator, curator, and collections staff, managing all aspects of the

rehousing project. She will ensure that the project meets deadlines, the proper people are consulted and informed, and will oversee and assist with the packing, moving and rehousing of artwork. Ms. Bouchev has a MA in Museum Studies with an emphasis on Collections Management. She has prior experience in storage projects and moves at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Washington County Museum in Portland, Oregon and other IMLS funded storage upgrades at the Portland Art Museum.

Bonnie Laing-Malcolmson, Curator of Northwest Art, will lend her expertise on Northwest art to aid in the successful rehousing and organization of works covered by the project (15% of her time over eight weeks). She will check in with the collections management team daily during the rehousing process. Laing-Malcolmson has more than 30 years of arts experience in the Northwest and has developed strong relationships with local and regional artists. Prior to joining the Portland Art Museum, Laing-Malcolmson served as president of Oregon College of Art and Craft for ten years.

Matthew Juniper, Chief Preparator, (12% of his time) will oversee all aspects of the preparatory staff. He will manage the full-time and temporary preparators who will be assisting with the moving of artwork.

The Portland Art Museum, Conservator (12% of his/her time over six weeks), will serve as consultant to the project assist in condition reporting, conservation assessment, and will create treatment proposals as needed.

Ann Eichelberg, Registrar (12% of time) will assist with condition reports and data entry.

Preparators: (21 days / 7 hours per day) Two preparators will help pack, move, and hang the works on the new storage furniture. Two preparators will assist with the installation of the new storage furniture.

Timing and Sequence of Activities:

1) Order supplies and screens: November 2015 (week 1)
2) New screens arrive and are installed: Dec (week 3) and Jan (week 1-2)
3) Move paintings from boxes, bins, and temporary locations to new screens: January (week 4) through March (week 2)
4) Perform detailed inventory and update collections database: concurrent with moving and rehousing of objects
5) Perform Condition reports: January (week 4) through March (week 4)
6) Ongoing digitization of objects: after rehousing of paintings
7) Project reporting and dissemination April – October 2016

Project Budget:

A \$98,674 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services will support the purchase and installation of nineteen painting screens (total cost of: \$163,800 – *see supportingdoc 1 -MaterialsSpec*). The Portland Art Museum will fund the remainder cost and staff time from its operating budget.

Project Work Plan Evaluation:

Donald Urquhart, Director of Collections Management and Exhibition Initiatives, will be responsible for the project evaluation and ongoing monitoring of collection stewardship. Mr. Urquhart will meet weekly with both the Curator of Northwest Art and the Collections Manager during the planning, rack installation and rehousing phases. The process, including obstacles and lessons learned, will be discussed and appropriate modifications in actions steps will be made. Additionally, Mr. Urquhart will meet monthly with the Board of Trustees' Collections Committee to report on the project's progress.

After the installation and rehousing is completed, continued evaluation will be handled by the Curator, Collections Manager and the Board Collections Committee. Maintaining a consistent 98 percent average of the Collections' works being stored properly will be the focus of periodic evaluation activities. These activities will include semi- annual inventory counts and unannounced tours of the facility by the Collections Committee.

Once the installation is complete an article including recognition of funders, along with photographs of the new storage system, will be published in the Museum's quarterly publication – Portal. This magazine is distributed to 23,000 Museum members and will also be available online.

The results of the Museum's storage upgrade will also be disseminated through the Collections staff's participation at professional conferences, including annual meetings of the Oregon Museum Association and the Western Museum Association. Curators, Trustees and the Executive Director will all be well informed of this important project and able to share its results whenever opportunities arise.

By enhancing access to this part of the collection, the new painting screens will lead to increased use in exhibitions, publications and academic research, each offering a new opportunity to share project results and inform constituents of the importance of access and preservation.

PROJECT RESULTS

The Crystalizations Systems' Moving Painting Storage System will improve the Portland Art Museum's off-site storage facility by providing devices that will:

1. Meet best practice guidelines of the American Alliance of Museums' Standards and Best Practices regarding Collection Stewardship.
2. Store all paper based work at least 1 foot above ground level to decrease the potential for water damage.
3. Reduce movement and handling of objects
4. Decrease horizontal movement and provide flexibility to mitigate potential earthquake damage.

Additionally the new system will speed the process of cataloguing the collection. This will allow for more curatorial research, variety in exhibition materials and increased efficiency of museum staff.

The following specific indicators, data sources, and target outcomes have been established for the Northwest Art Collection storage site:

- Indicators: The number of art pieces moved from boxes or floor storage to state of the art museum storage racks.
Data Source: Inventory conducted semi-annually by curator.

Target Outcome: Within 6 months of the installation increase the percent of artwork stored on approved racks from the current 52 to 98 percent.
- Indicator: Improved access to the art works for exhibitions, research, and lending.
Data Source: Museum staff reporting.

Target Outcome: Within 6 months decrease from 30 minutes to 8 minutes the average amount of time spent searching for specific pieces of art.

Target Outcome: Within 36 months of installation increase the number of Portland Art Museum's Northwest Art Collection pieces on exhibit (at the Museum or on loan to other museums/galleries) by 20 percent.
- Indicator: Artwork will be stored in accordance to the Portland Art Museum's Collections Stewardship Plan.
Data Source: Unannounced inspections by the Board of Trustee's Collections Committee.

Target Outcome: At any given time 98 percent of all art will be stored in a method deemed current best practice to protect against water damage, earthquake, pest, dust, theft, humidity, and improper handling and movement.

The purchase of storage racks for the offsite facility is a one-time expense, and the number of racks requested in this proposal, fills the square footage currently designated for storage at this location. The Portland Art Museum selected Crystalizations Systems Inc. Moving Painting Storage racks in part due to the quality and longevity of the product. Many of the racks installed by CSI have been in use by Museum's around the world for more than 20 years. The proper storage of the Northwest Art Collection paintings will result in less handling of the pieces, less contact with environmental hazards that could damage the art, and fewer opportunities for accidental damage. Eliminating these potential hazards will be greatly beneficial in the Museum's efforts to sustain the valuable works of art in this collection.

The Portland Art Museum Board of Trustees has incorporated funding of routine expenses related to maintenance of the storage systems into the general operating budget. Additionally, the Museum's Trustees and staff have incorporated improved preservation and storage of all art pieces into the museum's Strategic Plan. This issue has been recognized as one of the Museum's highest priorities, and commitment, by both board and staff, to acquire and continually maintain state of the art storage systems is strong.

Portland Art Museum - Project Schedule

	November 2015 Weeks:				December 2015 Weeks:			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Activity:								
Order screens from Crystalizations Systems, Inc.	X							
Prepare facility for installation							X	X
Accept furniture delivery								X

	January 2016 Weeks:				February 2016 Weeks:				March 2016 Weeks:				April 2016 Weeks:			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Activity:																
Dust settlement and cleaning of installed area			X													
Installation of Screens	X	X														
Unpack, Rehouse Paintings and Place onto Screens				X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Perform Inventory & Condition Reports, Update MimsyXG				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Ongoing Digitization of Northwest Art Collection Paintings					Long-term ongoing project facilitated by the new screens.											