



public



property

reclaiming the  
institution &  
the museum

# a partnership is necessary

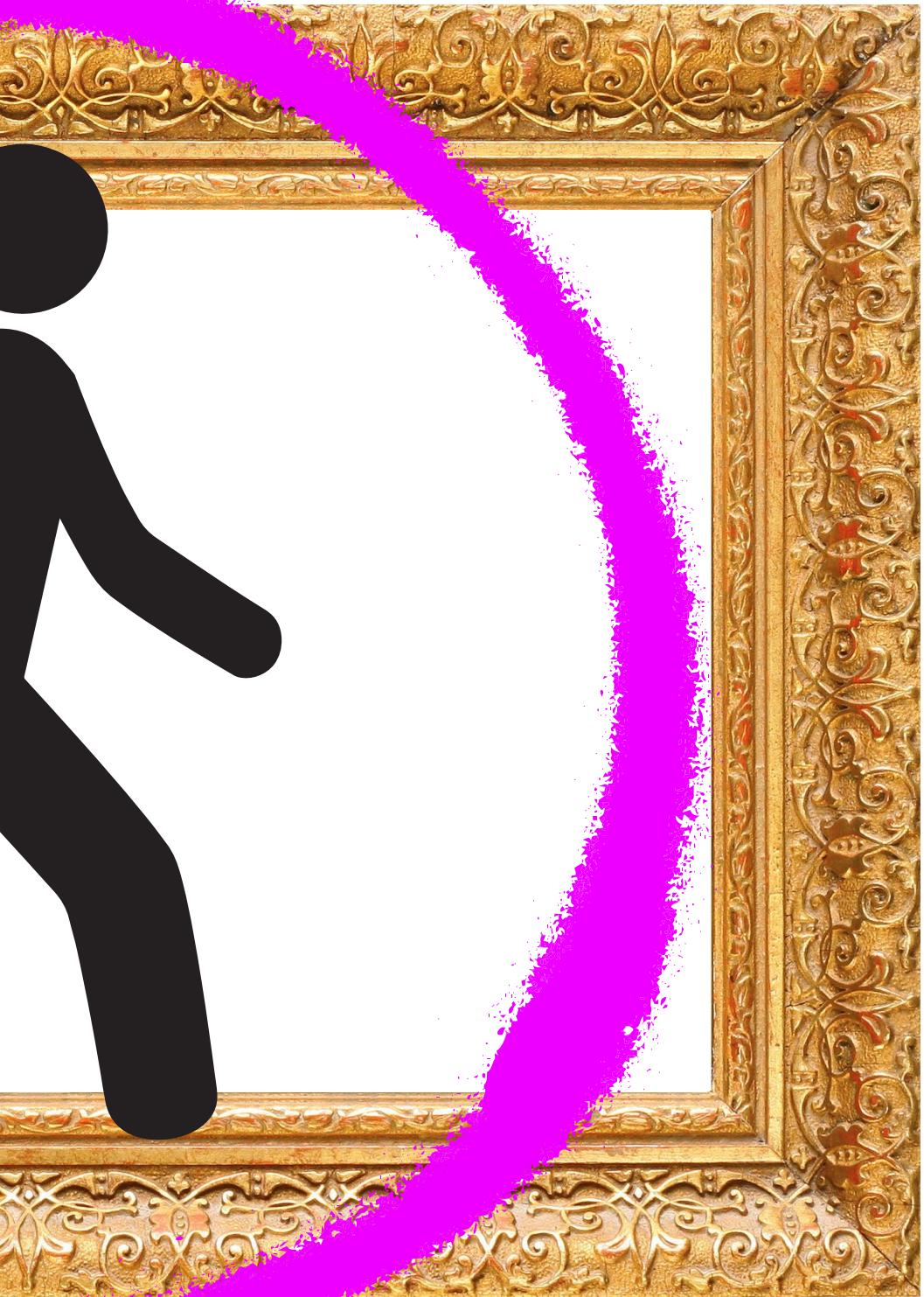


While the goals of Public Property exist beyond cultural institutions, a partnership with these organizations will jump start recognition for transparency in the field. Public Property calls on museums as cultural and educational hubs across the USA to start to refocus their audience from academics and art collectors, back to the public communities they were intended to serve.

“Museums serve the public through the preservation of art as emblematic of the belief that there are things from the past that are worth saving for the future. Engaged with that act of saving, there is supposed to be a research arm dedicated to knowledge production.”

— Helen Molesworth





# where

# to go

# next

“What kind of knowledge do art objects have? How is knowledge activated by an encounter with that object? What kinds of knowledge are needed in any given moment?”

— Helen Molesworth



The following demands must be met to confirm a partnership with public property

# acknowledging problematic histories and cul- tural biases of the current collection

The means, and criteria of all past and future acquisitions, and the origin of work must be clearly displayed on a wall tag adjacent to the piece in reference.

The museum as a structure of knowledge production is embedded in its colonialist past. What do you do about objects held in the public trust that have come as a result of looting? What do you do with objects that uphold the taste of a trustee class rather than the public's? What do you do with institutions that are supposed to be knowledge generators but have succumbed to the language and metrics of entertainment: blockbusters, gate, populism?

The salary as well as promotion of positions must accommodate an economically broad audience. At least 25% of seasonal workers, staff, and board members must consist of female, queer, POC, or other identifying minority personnel.

In 2018 only 16 percent of art museum leadership positions were held by people of color, despite the fact that 38 percent of Americans identify as Asian, Black, Hispanic or multi-racial.

"For museums to be truly inviting public spaces, they must better reflect the communities they serve. Achieving diversity requires a deeper commitment: To hire and nurture leaders from all backgrounds. This initiative creates the opportunity for museums to build a more inclusive culture within their institutions," said Alice Walton, founder and board chair of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art."

## Diversifying the staff, interns, and board of trustees

Substantial  
monetary backing  
for acquisitions of new  
work, particularly from  
local artists(POC &  
Minority Artists)

Many professionals worry about "threshold fear," the idea that museums intimidate visitors who were not raised in a museum culture and feel unwelcome and unrepresented in their galleries. This phenomenon must be addressed by museum personnel.

Competition with other leisure-time activities, the diversity and accessibility of images through ubiquitous media channels, dwindling corporate and government support, and rapidly changing demographics (particularly in the United States) all threaten to undermine the comfortable and central role art museums have played in cities and communities, as well as their continuous growth over a century.

"I don't believe in this either/or scenario: that you can either have this collection of masterworks or you can have a well-paid staff and a diverse collection. If you want staff diversity, equity and better wages, then the trustees sitting around the table have to get on board with that. I appreciate that there might not be \$55 million sitting around the BMA trustee table right now. But that money exists and things can always be re-budgeted. Budgets reflect ethics — so redo your budget."

**50% of the annual budget must be devoted towards these new acquisitions. The verification for these works will be assisted by a member of Public Property.**

# Accessibility for low income com- munity members

All instate residents must be offered free admission to the museum at least 7 days a month. The museum must function as a non-profit organization.



"The for-profit logic of the corporate world entered the not-for-profit space of museum boardrooms. This huge culture change happened over the past 30 years, meaning the power dynamic of museum staffing mirrors the wealth disparity you find in corporate culture in America at large. And we know historically that moments of great income disparity produce great cultural, social and political strife."



The traditional functions of art museums—to collect, preserve, interpret, and present works of art, and to inspire and educate the public—are constantly in flux.

"If we're doing our job well, we're caring for the person who made that object; we're caring for the people who look at that object; we're caring for the ideas contained within that object"

All instate students must be offered free admission, all national higher-education students must be offered free admission. At least one day a month must offer specific education based programing.

Refocusing the museum to prioritize education and educational programming

Public and internal  
installation,  
publication, and  
additional visual  
acknowledgment  
of the partnership  
of the museum  
with Public Property

A visual installation must be approved for installation inside the museum, this will include accompanying publications, wall tags, and other agreed upon signage. An public promotion must also be approved, this can exist either in physical and digital space.

"This is a good time for museums to dig deep into their working methods and their budget processes, their codes of ethics and engagement, rather than trying to rush to reopen and get back to a normal that was clearly unsustainable."

