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***Betsky to Step Down after Seven Years of Director of the Cincinnati Art Museum***

*Enhanced and Expanded Museum's Programs, Educational Activities, Collections and Facilities While Maintaining a Balanced Budget, Building the Endowment and Mounting Capital Campaigns
Trustees Announce Formation of a Search Committee to Identify a Successor*

Aaron Betsky today announced that he will be stepping down as Director of the Cincinnati Art Museum effective when his successor is named.  During the past seven years as Director Mr. Betsky has significantly enhanced the museum's collections, exhibition program, and physical facilities while balancing the budget each year and increasing the endowment by 18% despite the challenging financial environment.  In 2011 the 132-year old museum had its second highest attendance and in 2010 it's third highest visitor attendance in recent history.

"The museum now has the programming and staff in place, and the financial stability that will allow me to openly pursue my next position," noted Mr. Betsky. "I feel that I have accomplished the goals that I and the Board had envisioned when I first arrived and would like to explore opportunities that may include or combine my academic interests and institutional experience."

In 2008, the Art Museum's Board approved a master plan for the museum's facilities spearheaded by Mr. Betsky.  The first phase of the comprehensive renovation of and addition to the historic campus was completed in Spring 2013.  The new Longworth Wing (formerly the Art Academy Building) houses the museum's library and offices freeing up 20,000 square feet of space for programming in the Art Museum’s building. Mr. Betsky led the campaign that raised over $13 million to fund the project, which opened on time and under budget. Mr. Betsky's master plan also preserved the historic Art Academy Building, which a previous facilities scheme had planned to demolish.  More than 80% of the funding has already been raised for the $5.7 million second phase of the campus and facilities upgrade and expansion, which will add more than 16,000 square feet of galleries and education space and will open in 2014.

Mr. Betsky oversaw the renovation of several permanent collection galleries, including the Asian Wing and *6,000 Yea*rs, an open collection display.  He also created the innovative Icons display, which displays eighteen of the Art Museum’s most iconic pieces in a chapel-like setting.   Under his leadership the museum added major works by Augustus Saint Gaudens, Georgia O'Keeffe, Robert Rauschenberg, Tom Wesselmann, major pieces of Chinese painting, and, most recently, over eighty pieces of African art, as well as many others to the collections.

Moving away from large-scale “blockbuster” exhibitions, Mr. Betsky pioneered the creation of highly focused presentations of works of art, such as three Rembrandt portraits (*Three Faces of Rembrandt*, 2008), *Thomas Gainsborough and the Modern Woman* (2010), *Reflections: Monet at Giverny* (2012), and, forthcoming, a display focusing on Grant Woods’ *American Gothic* next to the Art Museum’s *Daughters of Revolution* (2014) and an exhibition on van Gogh’s “undergrowth” paintings (2015). Larger exhibitions based on the Art Museum’s collections (*Wedded Perfection*, 2011, *The American Circus Poster*, 2012), and focused “nodes” supplemented these displays.

Mr. Betsky also spearheaded the reinvigoration and expansion of the museum's educational programs, enhancing its community-wide Art for Life efforts, supporting the development of new programs such as the Articulate conversations with local artists and the Art after Dark monthly social and educational event. As a result, educational visits now exceed over one hundred thousand a year.  He also initiated and completed the reconceptualization of the museum's website and online activities. During this period, Mr. Betsky insured balanced budgets every single year.

"It is remarkable what Aaron has been able to achieve for the Art Museum and the community," stated Martha Ragland, President of the Board of Trustees.  "He has reinvigorated this venerable institution and opened it up for future generations.  On behalf of the Board, staff and people of Cincinnati I'd like to thank him for all that he has done."

"Aaron has effectively led the Cincinnati Art Museum through one of the most challenging periods in our history and did so while adding new facilities, growing our program, attracting record audiences, and raising money both for capital projects and our endowment," added Dave Dougherty, Chairman of the Board of Trustees.  "He brought a vision, energy and acumen that will continue to serve the museum into the future."

"Aaron's contributions to the museum have had a tremendous impact on the arts and their accessibility in Cincinnati," added Mary McCullough-Hudson, CEO of the community funding organization ArtsWave.  "He will be greatly missed."

The Board has announced that it will be setting up a search committee and Mr. Betsky will assist in identifying his successor.

Betsky came to Cincinnati in 2006 from Rotterdam, where he was the Director of the Netherlands Architecture Institute. Trained as an architect, he was also Curator of Architecture, Design, and Digital Projects between 1995 and 2001. While Director of the Cincinnati Art Museum, Betsky has continued to write, teach, and lecture. He teaches at the University of Cincinnati and around the world, writes a twice-weekly blog for Architectmagazine.com, his collected essays were published in 2012, and in 2008 he was Director of the 11th International Architecture Biennale Venice.

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**About the Cincinnati Art Museum**

Hours of operation are Tuesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Art Museum is closed on Mondays. The Art Museum is FREE, EVERYDAY! The Art Museum is located at 953 Eden Park Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45202. For general information, call (513) 639-2995 or visit www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org.

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to the ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as our members.