

# MetLife Foundation

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## For Immediate Release

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### **MetLife Foundation Awards \$1 Million to Museums for Community Connections**

- Grants will support projects that promote understanding of different cultures and increase interaction between museums and their communities-

NEW YORK, November 29, 2007 - MetLife Foundation today announced the grant winners of its *Museums and Community Connections* program. Thirteen art museums were awarded grants totaling \$1,000,000, directly benefiting over 1.4 million people. Grants range from \$30,000 to \$100,000.

The purpose of the competitive program is to strengthen communities, broaden programming and promote museums as centers of education without boundaries. The winning museums will use the grants for exhibitions, artist residencies and programs that extend their reach into diverse communities and make art part of people's lives.

“MetLife Foundation has a long history of partnering with museums to support learning and development opportunities for people of all ages,” said Sibyl Jacobson, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. “Museums enrich our lives in many ways, increase understanding of our world and reflect important cultural traditions. MetLife Foundation is pleased to recognize these innovative projects.”

### **Examples of Winning Projects**

- The **Albright-Knox Art Gallery** will bring contemporary artists to Buffalo, NY to initiate art projects that will relate to and integrate the community – people, history

and environment – into their work. Artist Ingrid Calame will launch this community-based initiative with a major project using imagery that will be gathered in and around the city and developed into an exhibition. During her residency in Buffalo the artist will connect with local residents through presentations and workshops around the city and be involved in school-based residency for high school students. An oral history project related to Buffalo's industrial past, the inspiration of Ms. Calame's project, will compliment the residency and connect the past to the present.

- The **Boca Raton Museum of Art** will present *Visiones: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Latin Art*, an expansive collection of 60 paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures by artists representing seven Latin American countries. The museum will develop a comprehensive educational outreach program for middle and high school students in Broward and Palm Beach Counties, including hands-on demonstrations and lesson plans and workshops for teachers. In addition, a mini-grant program will allow schools to incorporate the museum experience into their curriculum by supporting transportation to the museum and on-site activities at participating schools.
- *Street Art, Street Life* at the **Bronx Museum** will be the first comprehensive exhibition to examine the street as a source of inspiration, subject matter, and venue for artists and photographers from the late 1950s to present. The exhibition will present works by over 40 diverse artists. The exhibition will allow the Bronx Museum to expand its connections with the community through live performances, panels, workshops, and family and school programs.
- *Grass Roots: Baskets of Africa and the American South* is being organized by the **Museum for African Art** in partnership with the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture at the College of Charleston, SC and through extensive input and participation of local basket makers. The exhibition will open at the Gibbes Museum in Charleston and tour nationally. It will be complimented with extensive education projects and a series of "Lowcountry Itineraries," geared for tourists, educators, and students in the form of maps, a brochure and an exhibition

Web site. A collaboration with the Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival, which will feature local basket makers, will connect audiences to the subject of the exhibition.

- The **Museum of Chinese in the Americas'** *Chinatown Film Project* will celebrate the diverse roles Chinatown plays in urban realities and imaginations. It will engage 20 filmmakers (10 from New York and 10 from around the world) to explore their own Chinatowns. The project will have an online component that encourages submission from the public on a dedicated YouTube channel.
- The **New Museum of Contemporary Art** will launch the "Museum as a Hub" project, a collaboration between Insa Art Space, Seoul, South Korea; Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico City, Mexico; Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo, Egypt; and Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands. The "Museum as a Hub" will be a flexible area to engage audiences through individual and group experiences via multimedia work stations, art installations, screenings, symposia, lectures and opportunities for public "talk backs." For the first two years, the project will focus on the theme of "neighborhood," which will enable each partner institution to introduce their own geographic context.
- The **Philadelphia Museum of Art** will present *Gee's Bend: The Architecture of the Quilt*. The exhibition will feature 65 handmade quilts by four generations of African American women from the rural community of Gee's Bend, an isolated spot in a bend of the Alabama River. A series of workshops, community programs and family-oriented activities will accompany the exhibition. The museum will also leverage the exhibition to engage African American and women's communities and collaborate with local quilters, libraries and churches.

### **Complete List of *Museum and Community Connections* Grant Recipients**

- Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo, NY)
- Asheville Art Museum (Asheville, NC)
- Boca Raton Museum of Art (Boca Raton, FL)

- Bronx Museum (Bronx, NY)
- Delaware Art Museum (Wilmington, DE)
- Museum for African Art (Long Island City, NY)
- Museum of Chinese in the Americas (New York, NY)
- New Britain Museum of Art (New Britain, CT)
- New Museum of Contemporary Art (New York, NY)
- Norton Museum of Art (West Palm Beach, FL)
- Philadelphia Museum of Art (Philadelphia, PA)
- Telfair Museum of Art (Savannah, GA)
- Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, NY)

### **Museum and Community Connections**

Supporting and increasing educational opportunities for people of every age is a key emphasis for MetLife Foundation. Museums play an important role in helping people experience and understand the world and are valuable assets for communities.

According to American Association of Museums (AAM), over 860 million people visit the 17,500 museums in the United States each year. Recognizing the important contributions and educational value of museums, MetLife Foundation has awarded grants totaling over \$25 million in recent years to museums across the country. To further its commitment to education and support for the museum field, MetLife Foundation created *Museum and Community Connections*, a grant program for art museums to reach out to large number of people of all ages and backgrounds through imaginative programs and exhibits.

An invitation to apply was extended to all art museums located in the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. The selection process was based on project outcomes, a project's potential for success in involving

diverse populations in the arts, demonstration of an organization's sustained commitment to community, innovation, and long-range implications.

### **MetLife Foundation**

MetLife Foundation was established by MetLife to continue the company's long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation supports programs that improve education, promote health, encourage parental involvement and family engagement, help revitalize neighborhoods and stress accessibility and inclusion. In recent years, a focus on Alzheimer's and aging issues has been added. MetLife Foundation stresses education in all its programs. Recognizing the vital role the arts play in building communities and educating young people, the Foundation contributes to arts and cultural organizations across the United States, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities for young people, reaching broad audiences through inclusive programming, and making arts more accessible for all people. For more information about the Foundation, please visit its Web site at [www.metlife.org](http://www.metlife.org).

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