



MetLife Foundation



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Three Museums Selected for Third Round of National Innovation Lab for Museums

Programs focus on changing demographics, youth education and participatory experiences

August 20, 2013—**The Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, the Museum of International Folk Art of New Mexico and the Oakland Museum of California** have been selected to participate in Round 3 of the national *Innovation Lab for Museums* – a unique incubation and prototyping program to foster programmatic and organizational innovation in the museum field. The *Innovation Lab for Museums* is presented through a partnership between the American Alliance of Museums' Center for the Future of Museums and EmcArts, funded by a generous \$500,000 grant from MetLife Foundation.

The *Innovation Lab for Museums* is a three-phase program of up to 12 months and builds on the long-standing success of the Innovation Lab model, designed and managed by EmcArts. The Lab provides each museum with sustained process facilitation to research, prototype, evaluate and disseminate an innovative response to a major adaptive challenge. As part of the program, each museum is awarded a \$40,000 grant to help accelerate the prototyping of its project.

Richard Evans, President of EmcArts, comments on the third Round of the *Innovation Lab for Museums*:

"EmcArts' national Innovation Labs provide a timely response to the rapid and unprecedented change in the operating environment for the arts and culture field. Now, more than ever, adaptive change – not just tweaking business-as-usual – is essential if organizations are to remain relevant and thrive in this new era. Our approach has proven its value to the museum field, fostering the design and testing of significant innovations that otherwise would likely not have reached the public. We are grateful for the continuing strong support of MetLife Foundation, which has recognized the urgency and importance of this work on a national scale."

Elizabeth Merritt, Director of the Center for the Future of Museums (CFM), noted:

"Museums need to innovate in order to successfully navigate the rapidly changing landscape of the 21st Century. The American Alliance of Museums is pleased to continue work with MetLife Foundation to make the EmcArts Innovation Lab program accessible to museums in order to encourage experimentation and risk-taking. The lessons the Lab museums learn will benefit the museum field as a whole, and pioneer the successful strategies of the future."

Dennis White, President and CEO of MetLife Foundation, comments:

“MetLife Foundation is pleased to continue its longstanding commitment to ensuring the vitality of the museum field. We are glad to foster innovation and experimentation in museums through the Innovation Lab program and support projects that will engage community members in the rich landscape of American museums.”

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Jane Addams Hull-House Museum (Chicago, Illinois): *The Slow Museum Project*

Museums and their visitors move too fast. In a climate of competing entertainment options and increased financial pressures, museums endeavor to maintain visitors’ interest with rapidly changing exhibitions, media and technology, participatory activities and cafes. These quick fixes may capture visitors’ fleeting attentions, but they also contribute to the larger problem of an overworked and oversaturated society. The *Slow Museum Project* draws inspiration from the Slow Food movement to re-envision the museum as a transgressive site of leisure, recreation, reflection and respite from the busyness of life. An exploratory program series that centers on visitor participation, the project seeks to slow down institutional processes and programs in order to create deeper learning and reflection, cultivate relationships across lines of difference, and increase the intrinsic value of museums. These efforts will ultimately result in a museum that is more sustainable and socially engaged. If it is true that leisure is the basis of culture, then a slower and more thoughtful approach to museum work may reveal the essence of cultural institutions. This project will occur at the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, an historic site that interprets the Hull-House Settlement. Hull-House historically advocated for an expansive definition of citizenship and human rights that included, among other things, access to leisure and play as critical modes of learning, socialization and freedom.

Museum of International Folk Art (Santa Fe, New Mexico): *Museum/Market Alliance Project*

The Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, NM seeks to break new ground in how museums learn to collaborate with community partners by forming a strategic alliance with the other major folk arts organization in Santa Fe, the International Folk Art Market. Together, these two organizations bring hundreds of international folk artists, thousands of volunteers and over 125,000 invigorated and previously underserved visitors to the Museum’s front door each year. The *Museum/Market Alliance Project* seeks to harness the social entrepreneurial power of the marketplace with the educational authority of the museum to more effectively address the needs of changing audiences and artists alike. The project looks to establish an ongoing platform for artists to engage with the museum and each other about critical issues that affect their arts and their lives: how to pursue dignified and sustained livelihoods, preserve valuable yet endangered cultural traditions, increase local and global opportunities for exposure, education and advocacy, and connect more fully with each other, with the global marketplace, and with leaders engaged in positive social change through the power of the folk arts.

The *Museum/Market Alliance Project* will share each institution’s recent successes to re-envision a new combined role that more accurately addresses the changing place of arts organizations in the public sphere – as platforms for education, entertainment, advocacy and engagement all at the same time.

Oakland Museum of California (Oakland, California): *Exceptional Learning: Transcending the “Common” in Youth Education*

In order to respond to the dramatically changing context of public education in California and the introduction of a new common curriculum, the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) will bring together staff, school administrators, and docents to redefine museum education practice. As California adopts the new common core curriculum in 2015, schools are seeking new resources that will address the same societal changes that museums are also adapting to, including demographic trends, the use of new technologies, and expectations of personalized learning. While steps have been taken to evolve OMCA’s educational program into a more inquiry-based approach, many tours and workshops remain similar to what they have been for years. This project will evolve the program beyond the traditional field trip experience to include new resources, trainings, and learning experiences that blend classroom and home instruction in order to transform OMCA’s educational role from being simply a one-time destination to one that serves as an innovative resource for youth education.



About EmcArts

Recognized as the leading not-for-profit provider of innovation services to the arts and culture sector nationwide, EmcArts (www.EmcArts.org) serves as an intermediary partner for arts and culture funders, and as a re-granting agency and service organization for the arts and culture field around innovation. Our innovation programs support the development and implementation of mission-centered new strategies by cultural organizations of all sizes. The programs range from directly incubating specific innovation projects to introductory programs that enable new thinking and build a culture of innovation across local cultural communities. EmcArts is a 501(c)(3) organization.

About AAM’s Center for the Future of Museums

The Center for the Future of Museums (CFM) helps museums explore the cultural, political and economic challenges facing society and devise strategies to shape a better tomorrow. CFM is a think-tank and research and design lab for fostering creativity and helping museums transcend traditional boundaries to serve society in new ways. For more information, visit www.futureofmuseums.org.

About AAM

The American Alliance of Museums has been bringing museums together since 1906, helping to develop standards and best practices, gathering and sharing knowledge, and providing advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community. With more than 18,000 individual, 3,000 institutional and 300 corporate members, AAM is dedicated to ensuring that museums remain a vital part of the American landscape, connecting people with the greatest achievements of the human experience, past, present and future. For more information, visit www.aam-us.org.

About MetLife Foundation

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 to continue MetLife’s longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation’s commitment to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide is reflected in its dedication to empowering older adults, preparing young people and building livable communities. Since it was established, MetLife Foundation has provided more than \$530 million in grants and \$70 million in program-related investments to nonprofit organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact in their communities. For more information, visit www.metlife.org