

July 27, 2017

Elizabeth McGraw, President
Van Shields, Executive Director
The Berkshire Museum
39 South Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Dear Ms. McGraw and Mr. Shields:

We are writing to join those requesting that the Berkshire Museum reconsider the sale of 40 works of art from its collection. As artists and members of the cultural economy of the Berkshires, we know firsthand the impact that the visual arts has on our community. Many of us spent our youth in front of some of those very paintings, sparking our imaginations and our creativity, inspiring us to become artists and cultural workers. Others were introduced to the museum as adult art professionals, and our practice was enriched by its intersection of art, history, and natural science. It breaks our hearts to think that the next generation of young people and community members would be deprived of that opportunity.

As members and supporters of the Berkshire Museum, we understand the board and staff were faced with a difficult decision, and we all want the museum to grow and thrive and remain relevant. However, we strongly believe that the visual arts should be an integral part of that vision. As others have pointed out, monetizing these priceless and irreplaceable works of art is considered unethical and risks the future success of the museum, alienating the larger museum community and future donors.

Instead, we propose that the leadership of the museum think of these works of art not as a disposable asset but as a means to strengthen the mission and future vision of the museum, thereby garnering support from the arts community, whose devotion to the Berkshires has already been well proven. We would like to invite the leadership of the museum to meet with us and discuss how we might work together to create a stronger future for the Berkshire Museum that includes the visual arts.

Respectfully,

Daniel Bellow, Artist, Great Barrington
Michael Boroniec, Artist, Lanesboro
Susan Bronson, Executive Director, Yiddish Book Center, Former Director of Development and Interim Director, Berkshire Museum, Monterey
Laurie Burdick, Science Educator, Lanesborough
Agnes Cartier, Museum Member, Pittsfield
Sarah Clark, Educator, Pittsfield
Todd Clark, Business Owner, Pittsfield
Stephen Cimini, Educator, Pittsfield
Sarah Davis, Art Historian, Sandisfield
Eric Drury, Artist, Designer, Pittsfield
Karen Chase, Poet, Writer, Lenox
Donald Clark, Archivist, Writer, Springfield
Lynn Villency Cohen, Art Historian, Stockbridge

Carrie Jean Converse, Artist, Pittsfield
Michelle Daly, Artist and Educator, North Adams
Carol Diehl, Artist and Critic, Housatonic
Paul Dodds, Artist, Pittsfield
Renee Dodds, Business Owner, Pittsfield
Peter Dudek, Artist, Windsor
Leslie Ferrin, Gallerist, North Adams
Charles Flint, Art & Antiques Gallery, Lenox
Warner Friedman, Artist, Sheffield
Jared Gelormino, Artist Educator, Stockbridge
Paul Graubard, Artist, Lenox
Laurie Green, Museum Facsimiles, Pittsfield
Charles Guiliano, Critic, North Adams
Katherine Haig, Artist, Pittsfield

Ali Hermann, Artist, Lenox
Susan Himmell, Artist, Albany NY
Grier Horner, Artist, Pittsfield
Lyn Horton, Artist, Worthington
Magda Gabor Hotchkiss, Librarian, Lenox
Margit Hotchkiss, Museum Deputy Director,
Dalton
Astrid Heiner, Writer, North Adams
Jeanet T. Ingalls, Artist, Lenox
Kathy Johnson, Guest Services Associate, Becket
Linda Kaye-Moses, Art Jeweler, Dalton
Jennifer Kimball, Artist, Pittsfield
Dawn Klein, Educator, Adams
Kurt Kolok, Art Consultant, North Adams
Susan Frisch Lehrer, Museum Educator, Lenox
Susan Lyman, Esquire, Lenox
Maggie Mailer, Artist, New Lebanon, NY
David Peter Moser, Art Historian, Dalton
Melanie Mowinski, Artist and Educator,
Cheshire
Christina Olsen, Museum Director,
Williamstown
Sienna Patti, Gallerist, Dalton
Edward Pelkey, Artist, Pittsfield
Amy Pollack, Collector, Stockbridge
Daniel Porter Stevens, Artist, Sandisfield
Lisa Provencher, Science Educator, Artist,
Berkshire Museum Volunteer, Pittsfield
Leonardo Quiles, Artist, Educator, Dalton
Kimberly Rawson, Communications Consultant,
Pittsfield
Janet Rickus, Artist, Great Barrington
Susan Sauve, Educator, Pittsfield
Evan Soldinger, Art Photographer, Dalton
Monika Sosnowski, Artist, Windsor
Rosemary Starace, Artist, Pittsfield
Danielle Steinmann, Museum Educator,
Pittsfield
Ute Stebich, Gallerist, Collector, Plainfield
Wendy Tarlow Kaplan, Curator, Lenox
Leigh Uqdah, Educator, North Adams, MA.
Cynthia Wick, Artist, Lenox
Patricia Angell Barbalunga, Pittsfield
Alfred A. Barbalunga, Pittsfield
Elizabeth Weinberg, Lenox
Lucy Holland, Founding Chair, IS183 Art School
of the Berkshires, Lenox
Yura Adams, artist, Great Barrington, MA

Alan Hayes, artist, Buffalo NY (formerly
Pittsfield)

As of 9:00 am on September 12, 2017

cc: The Berkshire Eagle