

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CENTER FOR CURATORIAL LEADERSHIP

WILL TRAIN CURATORS TO BECOME MUSEUM DIRECTORS

NEW ORGANIZATION TO BEGIN JANUARY 2008

***Co-Founded by Agnes Gund, President Emerita, the Museum of Modern Art,
and Elizabeth Easton, Former Chair, Department of European Painting,
Brooklyn Museum***

New York, NY, June 29 – Is there an upcoming crisis brewing in cultural leadership at fine art museums across the country? A new organization, the Center for Curatorial Leadership, contends that the most successful new museum directors of the future should be chosen from the ranks of today's curators. Co-founded by Agnes Gund, President Emerita of the Museum of Modern Art, and Elizabeth Easton, the former chair of the Department of European Painting at the Brooklyn Museum, the Center for Curatorial Leadership will train curators to assume leadership positions in museums. The initiative is to be funded by Agnes Gund for three years through December 2009. Philippe de Montebello, Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and many other museum directors from across the United States have pledged their time, enthusiasm and support.

"The Center for Curatorial Leadership is the realization of my longstanding desire to empower and nurture the curatorial profession," says Gund. "By basing this program in New York, we can capitalize on the city's great cultural resources. The program will also provide unparalleled access to the country's diverse museum community, including its most gifted directors, trustees and administrators. We hope to prepare the next generation of leaders for the ever-evolving museums of the 21st century."

"There is clearly a need for curators to take initiatives toward educating themselves in business and management skills," notes Easton, who received countless emails from curators feeling a sense of frustration about professional advancement during her term as president of the Association of Art Museum Curators from 2003 to 2006.

The Center for Curatorial Leadership (CCL), located in New York City, will identify within the curatorial ranks individuals who have the potential to become leaders and will help them become curators who not only take charge of the art in their care, but who are also capable of assuming the leadership responsibilities essential to directing a museum. "CCL is premised on the conviction that there need be no contradictions between these two sets of obligations – indeed, that there must not be," notes Easton.

The Advisory Committee includes distinguished museum directors and trustees including Agnes Gund, President Emerita, The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Philippe de Montebello, Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Timothy Potts, Director, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth; Susana Torruela-Leval, Director Emerita, El Museo del Barrio; and Axel Rüger, Director, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. Other cultural leaders on the Committee include the Rt. Hon. Lord Smith of Finsbury, former Secretary of Culture for the United Kingdom, now director of the Clore Leadership Programme, which helps train a new generation of leaders

for the UK's cultural sector, and Darren Walker, Vice President, Foundation Initiatives, The Rockefeller Foundation.

At the founding of the Association of Art Museum Curators six years ago, Philippe de Montebello charged curators to consider as a high priority the crisis of the diminishing pool of future museum directors: "If we are to win the battle of the 'curator/director' over the 'administrator/director,' a profile with which increasingly boards of trustees are instinctively more comfortable, then it is essential to enlarge the pool of curators with the qualifications to be tomorrow's museum directors. It is essential, in order to *reassure* trustees that hiring curators as directors will not compromise the business-like running of a museum's affairs, in other words, their bottom line. Whether this is achieved through more exposure of curators to the functioning of the administration from within, or more schooling in business administration...it is absolutely critical that more should be done in broadening the professional development of curators."

CCL Program Overview

Ten fellows currently working in art museums at all levels of the curatorial profession will be chosen to participate in the program by a small committee of current and former museum directors. The selection of the fellows will be announced on October 1, 2007. Curators will learn management skills and benefit from mentoring by top-level administrators in the most important museums in America. Application forms will be due July 31, 2007. The costs of participation for the fellows will be fully funded.

Curriculum

Drawing upon the rich resources of museums and academic institutions in New York, the first class of fellows for the Center for Curatorial Leadership will begin on January 7, 2008, with a two-week intensive program combining mini academic courses in non-profit management, finance and budget analysis, fundraising, board development, cultural properties law, communications, conflict resolution and strategic long-range and short-term initiatives. The teachers will represent both the museum world and academia. This will be followed by a one-week residency at a major museum in the spring which will be different from each curator's home institution. The program will conclude with a final one-week of study in June 2008. A mentorship program will cover the overall six-month time span. However, the fellows will only need to take off a total of four weeks from their current positions.

Through the Center for Curatorial Leadership, curators will have direct contact and continuing exposure to the leadership of the major museums of the city and the rest of the country. In addition to the intensive study program, throughout the year CCL will hold executive leadership seminars where directors, trustees and curators will come together to share information about the most important issues facing the museum world.

Certificate

The Center for Curatorial Leadership will offer a certificate upon completion of the program. In addition, CCL will act as an unofficial clearinghouse and resource for directorial positions in the future.

Director

Elizabeth Easton earned her Ph.D. at Yale University, writing her dissertation on Edouard Vuillard's interiors of the 1890s. She joined the Brooklyn Museum in 1988 as Assistant Curator, and became Chair of the Department of European Painting and Sculpture in 1999. During her tenure, she was the curator for numerous exhibitions, including *The Intimate Eye of Edouard*

Vuillard; Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism; Monet and the Mediterranean; Brooklyn Collects; and many others.

She has written numerous articles and essays for exhibition catalogues and a variety of art journals. Ms. Easton has also given lectures across the country and abroad on such topics as "Degas and the Artist as Frame Designer" and "Transcending the Easel: Vuillard and Photography," which explore new areas of art historical inquiry. Ms. Easton is an adjunct professor at New York University, teaching a senior seminar on museums in the Art History Department. Among the many academic honors she has received, Ms. Easton was awarded a Fulbright and two Andrew W. Mellon fellowships.

She was the first elected president of the Association of Art Museum Curators (2003-2006), a national organization of over 700 curators from 150 museums. In this capacity she launched an inquiry into the professional development of curators, which led to the creation of the Center for Curatorial Leadership in 2007. She has served as a trustee of the Town School, the Spence School, Studio in a School, and on the advisory boards of a number of other cultural institutions.

Funding

The Center for Curatorial Leadership will be funded by Agnes Gund for three years through December, 2009. CCL will fund the cost of tuition, travel, room and board for the fellows. Additional information can be found on www.curatorialleadership.org.

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