



**Press Contact for the M:**

Susannah Schouweiler  
651-204-0700  
[sschouweiler@mmaa.org](mailto:sschouweiler@mmaa.org)

**Press Contact for AAM:**

David Harrison  
410-804-1728  
[david@harrisoncommunications.net](mailto:david@harrisoncommunications.net)

**Minnesota Museum of American Art Selected by the American Alliance of Museums for Participation in Groundbreaking National Initiative to Increase Diversity and Inclusion on Museum Boards**

*St. Paul, MN – July 24, 2019* –Minnesota Museum of American Art (the M) has been selected by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) to participate in “Facing Change: Advancing Museum Board Diversity & Inclusion.” This unprecedented national initiative to diversify museum boards and leadership is taking place across 5 U.S. cities and includes a cross-section of museums of all types and sizes.

Backed by \$4 million in grants from three foundations (The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Alice L. Walton Foundation, and Ford Foundation), *Facing Change: Advancing Museum Board Diversity & Inclusion*, will provide the framework, training, and resources for museum leaders to build inclusive cultures within their institutions that more accurately reflect the communities they serve.

“Building a more inclusive museum field is achievable only with museums trustees and leaders committed to long-term change and improvement,” said Laura Lott, president and CEO of the American Alliance of Museums. “Museum boards, in particular, set the tone for their institutions and are well positioned to be agents of change. We commend the museum directors and trustees who have committed to this program for investing in their own operations and serving as models for all museums.”

The M’s Executive Director, Kristin Makhholm said, “While we are already making great progress in diversifying our board—arts aficionado and former KMSP-TV Fox 9 anchor Robyne Robinson was just appointed chair of the M’s board—we welcome the opportunity to embed practices of inclusion and equity into every aspect of our operations. Robyne and I are excited to dig deeper along with our colleague institutions in the Twin Cities through this unique and timely AAM initiative.”

Earlier this year, as part of the *Facing Change* initiative, AAM announced an [Excellence in DEAI Task Force](#) charged with developing recommendations to embed diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion more deeply into AAM’s excellence programs. AAM also named ten [DEAI fellows](#) who will work with AAM to implement trainings and support the museum boards in developing sustainable and measurable inclusion plans.

## **The Need for Action**

AAM's field-wide diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) initiative responds to extensive and multi-year research that underscores the need and desire for change.

In 2017, AAM and BoardSource examined museum board leadership and found a disconnect in the area of diversity and inclusion. The [survey](#) revealed that nearly half (46 percent) of museum boards are entirely white, 77 percent of museum directors believe expanding the racial and ethnic diversity of their boards is important to advancing their missions, but only 10 percent of museum boards have developed a plan of action to become more inclusive.

A [recent survey](#) by the Mellon Foundation demonstrated that employment in the US museum sector does not reflect the makeup of the communities these institutions serve, despite decades of local and national efforts.

### **About the American Alliance of Museums**

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. Representing more than 35,000 individual museum professionals and volunteers, institutions, and corporate partners serving the museum field, the Alliance stands for the broad scope of the museum community. For more information, visit [www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org).

### **About Minnesota Museum of American Art**

Minnesota Museum of American Art is one of the oldest visual arts organizations in Minnesota, with roots stretching back to the 19th century. Based in St. Paul, the M currently holds more than 5,000 artworks that showcase the unique voices of American artists, guided by the belief that art should reflect the constantly shifting landscape that defines the American experience. The M just opened its new museum facility in the Historic Pioneer Endicott in December 2018 and will expand further, with additional permanent collection galleries, in 2020.

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