

APPLICATION COVER SHEET FOR NEH GRANT PROGRAMS

1. PROJECT DIRECTOR OR INDIVIDUAL APPLICANT

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Major Field of Study: M1

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2. INSTITUTION INFORMATION

Name: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Address: 465 Huntington Avenue

City: Boston

State: MA Zip Code: 02115

DUNS Number: (b) (4) Employer ID Number: 04-2103607

3. TYPE OF APPLICANT

☒ Institution

☐ Individual

*Fellowships, Stipends, &
Faculty Research Awards*

Type: Museum

Citizenship: ☐ US ☐ Other

☐ University ☐ College Teacher /
Teacher Ind. Scholar

Status: ☒ Private Nonprofit

Country: _____

☐ Unit of State/Local Gov't

Month/Year: _____

☐ Jr. Scholar ☐ Sr. Scholar

4. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 8th

5. GRANT PROGRAM: We the People Challenge Grants

6. TYPE OF APPLICATION: ☒ New ☐ Supplement Current Grant Number(s): _____

7. PROJECT FIELD CODE: M1

8. PROJECT TITLE: Art of the Americas Wing -- American Colonial and Federal Art

9. PROJECT DESCRIPTION (use only space provided):

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA) requests a *We the People* Challenge Grant of \$1 million to support the construction, reinstallation, and interpretation of its new galleries and period rooms featuring American Colonial and Federal Art. An endowment created by the grant and matching funds will also support the conservation of works to be included in these galleries. This collection, which ranks among the best in the world, will be exhibited in a new four-story wing that will serve as the centerpiece of a building expansion project scheduled for completion in 2009. *We the People* support will allow the MFA to tell the story of the birth of the United States, in all of its richness, through its reinstalled collection of American Colonial and Federal Art and through a variety of interpretive elements that are integral to the galleries.

10. REQUESTED GRANT PERIOD: From: 9/1/04 To: 4/30/09

Narrative

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA) requests a *We the People* Challenge Grant of \$1 million to support the construction, reinstallation, and interpretation of its new galleries and period rooms featuring American Colonial and Federal Art. An endowment created by the grant and matching funds will also support the conservation of works to be included in these galleries. This collection, which ranks among the best in the world, will be exhibited in a new four-story wing that will serve as the centerpiece of a building expansion project scheduled for completion in 2009. *We the People* support will allow the MFA to tell the story of the birth of the United States, in all of its richness, through its reinstalled collection of American Colonial and Federal Art and through a variety of interpretive elements that are integral to the galleries.

The MFA has the good fortune to be located in a city rich in history where many events key to the formation of the United States took place. Therefore the efforts of early Americans to define themselves as citizens of a new nation can be traced throughout the MFA's collections. Today the Museum is one of the country's preeminent repositories of historic American artifacts – including John Singleton Copley's portraits of patriots Paul Revere and Samuel Adams, Gilbert Stuart's paintings of George and Martha Washington (jointly owned with the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC) and the monumental *The Passage of the Delaware* by Thomas Sully. The new American Wing will provide revitalized art exhibition space, vastly improved visitor accessibility, and new educational capabilities. With its completion, the MFA will be poised to become an international center for the study of American history, politics, and culture, where the public can learn about the birth of the democratic ideals and principles that helped to define our nation.

An Overview of Humanities Programming at the MFA

The MFA is an encyclopedic art museum and its approximately 400,000 works of art are organized into eight curatorial departments, each dedicated to the study and interpretation of its own holdings: Art of the

Americas; Art of Europe; Art of the Ancient World; Art of Asia, Oceania, and Africa; Contemporary Art; Textiles and Fashion Arts; Prints, Drawings and Photographs; and Musical Instruments. The Museum's Department of Museum Learning and Public Programs offers a rich array of humanities programming such as lectures, symposia, concerts, seminars, films, teacher workshops, and gallery talks. Diverse interpretive techniques complement the collection and play a crucial role in the Department's efforts to reach a wide audience. All exhibitions contain explanatory object labels and text panels, and many are also accompanied by brochures, gallery notes, maps, audio guides, and catalogues. The Department actively explores new methods of interpretation, such as interactive video and Web-based resources, and works to develop new ways to integrate technology into exhibition planning. (Please see Appendix A. for information on recent humanities programming.)

Humanities programming and publications are a collaborative effort among curatorial and museum learning staff as well as outside scholars and other members of the academic community. This type of collaboration enables diverse perspectives to inform interpretive programming. Planning for programs to complement a given exhibition or collection begins with a meeting of curators and educators to discuss concepts and goals, to define likely audiences, to articulate learning objectives, and to identify individuals and organizations the Museum might call on as advisers who may provide content or assistance in determining the most appropriate and effective ways of promoting events to identified audiences. Such contacts include artists, scholars, teachers, leaders of community-based organizations, and colleagues in other museums.

Art of Americas Collection

Ranking as one of the most important collections in the nation, the MFA's American art is especially strong in works created in New England, but its wide-ranging acquisitions allow the full spectrum and continuum of American art to be displayed. These diverse works are a rich resource illustrating the best in American aesthetics and craftsmanship, and the evolution of American history, attitudes, and values.

Among the strengths of the MFA's collection are its superb holdings of American paintings. These include an exceptional group of portraits from the seventeenth century (the earliest images of British settlers in America); the nation's most important colonial and federal masterworks (among them John Singleton Copley's *Portrait of Paul Revere* and Gilbert Stuart's likenesses of the founding fathers); superb folk, genre, and landscape paintings of the nineteenth century; as well as paintings by such notable American artists as John Singer Sargent and Winslow Homer. The Museum also has great strength in American modernism and Abstract Expressionism, bringing the story of American painting to the present.

In the decorative arts, the Museum is known for its unrivalled holdings in early domestic and ecclesiastical New England silver; a major body of American furniture from the seventeenth century to the present; and substantial holdings in glass, ceramics, pewter, basketry, and base metals.

Accompanying the collection is a group of New England period rooms ranging in date from the late seventeenth century to the mid nineteenth century, including three extraordinary high-style rooms from Oak Hill (ca. 1800 estate in Peabody, Massachusetts), which are furnished almost entirely with original objects. Other components include a significant collection of pre-Columbian art, featuring a superb group of Maya polychrome ceramics unrivaled outside South America; a collection of Native American ceramics, baskets, jewelry, and other objects from the American Southwest, the Plains, the Northwest Coast, and other areas of North America; and a world-renowned collection of ship models and maritime art. The holdings of the Department of the Art of the Americas are intensified and amplified by the rich collections of American art housed in the Museum's departments of Textiles and Fashion Arts; Prints, Drawings, and Photographs; and Musical Instruments.

This collection has been prominently featured in a wide range of exhibitions, publications, and other scholarly projects in recent years. For example, the MFA has presented major retrospectives of the works of Winslow Homer, John Singleton Copley, Mary Cassatt, John Singer Sargent, and Martin Johnson Heade. It has also explored art and history in such acclaimed thematic exhibitions as "Paul Revere's

Boston” and “New England Begins.” In 2001, the Museum presented “A Studio of Her Own: Women Artists in Boston 1870-1940,” which examined the city’s rich history of female artists working in all media, while in 2003, “The Maker’s Hand” explored the studio furniture movement. The collection is accessible via the web and through a variety of publications. Children from schools throughout Boston and New England visit the MFA to enhance their understanding of U.S. history, institutions, and culture. The MFA offers a unique experience to them, providing opportunities unavailable elsewhere. It is the only museum in the world where, for example, students can learn about the critical events leading up to the Revolution by studying Paul Revere’s *Liberty Bowl* – one of America’s most cherished symbols of independence – alongside Copley’s portrait of Revere.

American Wing

In 2001, the Museum launched a \$425 million campaign to support the expansion and renovation of its building (\$180 million), the endowment of programs and positions (\$180 million), and operating expenses (\$65 million). The MFA’s Trustees were careful to establish the one-to-one match of endowment and capital funds to help to ensure the long-term fiscal health of the institution. Foster and Partners, a London-based firm led by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Norman Foster, has created a comprehensive plan and design for this expansion. The firm has completed such transformational projects as the Great Court at the British Museum and the new German Parliament at the Reichstag, in which contemporary architecture is boldly yet sensitively integrated into existing historic buildings.

This project will have a dramatic effect not only on the MFA itself, but also on the City of Boston and the New England region, creating unparalleled economic, educational, and civic opportunities throughout the community.

The project will include:

- a new wing to house the MFA's Art of the Americas collection;
- the construction of nearly 12,000 square feet of new space for the Department of Museum Learning and Public Programs;
- a 250% increase in space devoted to the 20th century and Contemporary Art collections;
- 30% more space for conservation facilities;
- renovated Art of Europe galleries; and
- the renewal of the original central axis through the Museum with the restoration of the main entrance on Huntington Avenue to the south and the reopening of the Fenway entrance to the north, reconnecting the MFA to Frederick Law Olmstead's Emerald Necklace.

At the completion of the expansion, the MFA's net building area will have grown by 130,000 square feet, with some 80,000 square feet of the existing Museum building renovated or refurbished.

The Building Project will bring coherence, flexibility, and an inspirational new aesthetic to the Museum, complementing the thoughtfulness and distinction of Guy Lowell's original site plan from the turn of the last century with the modern elegance and state-of-the-art engineering and technology of Foster and Partners' glass and steel architecture. The project will make all parts of the MFA more accessible to visitors by improving circulation through a more logically organized interior and providing a more transparent and welcoming building to the community.

The centerpiece of the plan is the new wing that will house the MFA's collection of Art of the Americas. Foster and Partners conceived the new wing encompassing four levels and 60,000 square feet of galleries in which to display the Art of the Americas collections from the pre-Columbian Olmec culture of 1150 B.C. through the first half of the twentieth century. Connected to the central axis of the existing building by a glass-enclosed courtyard, the new wing will relate seamlessly to new spaces for Museum Learning, special exhibitions, and the existing galleries for European and Ancient Art. (For a more detailed history of the Building Project, please see Appendix B.)

Timetable

The plans for the American Wing are well into the design development stage, and by early February 2005, the project will enter the construction documentation phase. Groundbreaking is scheduled to begin in 2005 and the wing is expected to open to the public in 2009. A great deal of internal preparation for construction has already taken place. Curatorial departments whose galleries are affected by the project have stored portions of their collections, while new gallery rotations highlight other segments of collections that will remain on view during construction. Curators and conservators have worked together to complete the delicate task of dismantling the period rooms for storage until they are reinstalled in their new, vastly improved space in the new wing.

Impact of Challenge Grant Funds

Level One of the American Wing/Curatorial Approach

The curatorial strategy for the American Wing at the MFA is to present works of art in a manner that is engaging, varied, and accessible to a broad spectrum of visitors. The basic organization of the four floors of the wing is chronological, beginning with the earliest historical period on the lowest level and proceeding to the twentieth-century collections on the top floor. *This proposal will focus on the American Colonial and Federal Art collection which will be featured on Level One of the new wing.*

The galleries on Level One are complemented by five period rooms representing the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Aspects of the collection that enable visitors to examine the career of an artist or artisan in depth will be featured in individual galleries, for example a room devoted to paintings, drawings, and prints by Copley or a gallery featuring silver by Paul Revere. Other galleries are arranged thematically, presenting works in the early Baroque or William and Mary period (ca. 1690-ca. 1720). On each level, one gallery is designated for regular rotations of light-sensitive objects. One gallery does

include Spanish Colonial works; this area is excluded from *We the People* funding. (Please see Appendix C. for a complete description of Level One galleries.)

Although there are several entrances to the wing, the primary entrance from the glass enclosed courtyard on Level One invites visitors into galleries devoted to Colonial Boston and the Arts of the New Nation. (Please see floor plans in Appendix D.) Central to this first gallery are Copley's famous portrait of patriot Samuel Adams and Revere's *Liberty Bowl*. The splendid collections of neoclassical furniture and the majestic painting showing Washington crossing the Delaware River by Thomas Sully are also featured on this floor. Each of these objects is a visible expression of a people's desire for popular sovereignty, one of the core founding principles of the early republic and the new nation.

In galleries combining paintings, furniture, silver, textiles, maps, prints, and currency of Colonial Boston and the early neoclassical period, visitors will experience a rich, contextual approach to the world of our founding fathers and can see first-hand their efforts to create a viable iconography to represent the United States. Visitors to the MFA will experience displays that manifest the founding cultural principles of our nation in a manner that cannot be replicated anywhere in the United States or the world. The MFA's collection documents the colonists' struggle for liberty in New England – the center of resistance to British rule. Pivotal events and important players in the history of the new nation are reflected throughout the galleries – Washington's victory at Dorchester Heights, the Boston Massacre, the War of 1812, and portraits of patriots and statesmen who were responsible for formulating the political principles that defined America. For example, the MFA owns Copley's 1768 portrait of Paul Revere, an unprecedented image in colonial portraiture. Whereas Copley usually posed his finely attired sitters at leisure, here he depicts the accomplished silversmith in his work clothes and with an undecorated teapot in his hand. In addition to alluding to Revere's talent as a craftsman, Copley's choice of the teapot may also have provocative political implications, as Revere was an active leader in the Patriot cause. This painting was made a year after the passage of the much-despised Townshend Acts, which imposed duties on tea and

other imports. The MFA's collection tells the story of colonial resistance outside of Boston as well. For instance, Charles Willson Peale's portrait of Timothy Matlack honors the sitter's distinguished public career in and around Philadelphia. A radical Whig, Matlack played an active role in Revolutionary events: he was the engrosser who hand-lettered the original Declaration of Independence; he led a rifle battalion at Trenton and Princeton; and he was elected to the Continental Congress. The items surrounding him in his portrait reflect his role in forging the new nation and include the great seal of Pennsylvania and the constitution of that commonwealth, which he helped draft. (Please see Appendix E. for images of these paintings, and other works that will be on view in the Level One galleries.)

The Colonial Boston gallery will be devoted to the art and material culture – the portraits, prints, furniture, silver, textiles, and other objects – of Boston in the Revolutionary era. The display will offer visitors an opportunity to see images of key figures and moments in the Revolution, as well as significant three-dimensional works of the era, including Revere's *Sons of Liberty Bowl* of 1768. The Liberty Bowl is frequently cited, along with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, as one of the principal icons of American independence (see Appendix E. for image). It commemorates the honorable and courageous decision made by ninety-two members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives not to crumble in the face of the "insolent menaces of villains in power," but to reject the Crown's demand that they rescind their circular letter to the other colonies protesting the Townshend Acts of 1767, which taxed tea, paper, glass, and other imported commodities. Revere engraved the bowl with various symbols of liberty and references to the "Bill of Rights" and the "Magna Carta," each a cornerstone text of freedom and liberty in the English tradition. Commissioned by fifteen members of the secret Sons of Liberty, the bowl has become a standard part of the American design vocabulary. It appears in conjunction with Copley's portrait of Revere, painted in the same year of 1768, as well as examples of Revere's domestic silver and his political prints, including his powerful and provocative image of the Boston Massacre of 1770.

Other key items in this gallery include Copley's portraits of Revolutionary leaders John Hancock, Samuel Adams, Joseph Warren, and its first historian, Mercy Otis Warren, daughter of James Otis, as well as those of other prominent Boston merchants, clergymen, and other patriots. Copley's ability to express not only the physical appearance but also the inner character of his sitters is revealed in his portrait of Adams, for example, in which one can sense the powerful and vigorous nature of this man known as "the Bostonian most responsible for perpetuating Colonial resistance in terms of ideology and action."

The New Nation

During the post-revolutionary period, the greatest paintings, sculptures, furniture and silver of the new republic demonstrate the enduring principles of the Constitution to "insure domestic tranquility" and "to secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity." In both subject matter and style, the art of the early republic tells the story of our nation's heroes and its enduring values. Foremost among the objects in the splendid New Nation gallery is Thomas Sully's monumental painting, *The Passage of the Delaware* (1819), commissioned for North Carolina's State House in Raleigh. Sully, the leading artist in Philadelphia during the first half of the 19th century, researched firsthand accounts of the momentous event on Christmas night, 1776, when General Washington and his troops crossed the ice-clogged Delaware River from Pennsylvania to New Jersey in a daring venture to surprise British forces. The artist chose to portray Washington as a composed and decisive leader, dramatically highlighted above the fray and poised to join his lieutenants in crossing the river. Noted for its combination of historic realism and inspirational patriotic spirit, Sully's *The Passage of the Delaware* was hailed in its day as "the finest picture painted in America." Today it is regarded as a major landmark in the Washington iconography; it will return from storage to take pride of place on an entire wall of the MFA's New Nation gallery. It has been off-display for more than a decade due to of lack of adequate exhibit space. (b) (4)

[REDACTED] The treatment costs have been excluded from this proposal.)

Painters, sculptors, and designers drew heavily upon the model of Greece and Rome as they forged a meaningful identity for the new republic that would be consistent with the nation's founding principles. They also used symbols to create a historical record of the Revolution. The MFA's collections vividly document the refashioning of images of Washington and the founding fathers as virtuous republican leaders. The unfinished portrait of George Washington and his wife Martha may well be the most famous paintings in America. Commissioned from celebrated artist Gilbert Stuart, the MFA's portrait served as the model for more than 60 paintings of the heroic leader and today appears on the dollar bill. As noted by a nineteenth-century French visitor to the United States, "Every American considers it his sacred duty to have a likeness of Washington in his home, just as we have images of God's saints." Washington's appearance on our currency today recalls his continued stature in our nation's iconography and the important role played by the Constitution, which included stipulations for the creation of a national coinage that would help to unify the nation. The display of a recent gift of historic American coins and currency will document the dissemination of Washington's public image in a popular medium.

The republican symbols of ancient Greece and Rome also inspired the styles and symbols of the new nation's decorative arts. American artisans borrowed the forms of Grecian couches and chairs from antiquity, but they elaborated upon those earlier motifs to suit their own vision and market. Sculpted and carved icons of the New Nation often featured the eagle, an ancient symbol of power and victory, established as the national emblem by an Act of Congress in 1782. One of the most spectacular eagles of this period, attributed to Samuel McIntire, was carved to crown the cupola of Elias Haskett Derby's mansion in Salem, Massachusetts. Derby's daughter, Eliza, and her husband Captain Nathaniel West, would later decorate their own home, Oak Hill, with the finest furnishings in the neoclassical style. Displayed in the Museum's current East Wing following their acquisition in the 1920s and until their recent dismantlement, the Oak Hill rooms will again be recreated in the new American Wing. These rooms, among the most significant surviving federal rooms in the nation, are replete with carvings of urns, garlands, and cornucopia overflowing with fruit. All of these icons speak optimistically of

America's prosperity after the Revolution. Likewise one of the masterpieces from Oak Hill, a chest-on-chest designed by McIntire, exhibits a carved female figure who symbolizes the new nation's ideals – truth, virtue, and power. These extraordinary objects reflect the remarkable success of the Derby-West fortunes and demonstrate the growing strength and maturity of the nascent American nation.

Interpretive Approach

In-gallery interpretive strategies will be crucial in involving visitors with the historical implications and significance of the works on view. Descriptive labels, a handheld multi-media guide, and other electronic means will bring the words and thoughts of these historical figures together with the images and objects that link us to them. In-gallery interpretation will follow a tiered strategy, allowing learners to deepen their knowledge about events, themes, and principles inherent in the story of our nation's beginnings, using the Museum's collection of Colonial and Federal period art as both a reference and an entry point to this dialogue. Topics to be addressed might include, for example, the tension between the idolatry of authoritative figures such as Washington, and the democratic, egalitarian principles of a government stewarded by citizens instead of monarchs.

First Tier – Interpretation that describes, explains, or makes direct reference to a specific object or objects, providing visitors with a basic understanding of the work. Primarily provided in explanatory labels, wall texts, and a handheld multi-media guide that would allow for audio and video description.

Second Tier – Interpretation that provides object-specific context for works while addressing different levels of interest, knowledge, and learning styles. Provided through a multi-media guide and in-gallery interactives such as the Symbolic Detail tool described below, which would be accessed through small-scale interactive stations installed near the work of art featured for interpretation.

Described below in some detail are examples of first and second tier interpretation for key objects in the story of the formation of the United States. Other objects will be interpreted with a focus on such aspects as craftsmanship, patronage, and the transmission of artistic style, to present a full picture of the arts in America at this time.

John Singleton Copley, *Samuel Adams*, oil on canvas, 1770-72

First tier: (label and multi-media guide) Explains the political moment in which Adams confronts the royal governor of Massachusetts after the Boston Massacre, demanding the expulsion of British troops from Boston. The multi-media guide would bring Adams to life as an actor's voice reads from his description of his meeting with Governor Hutchison.

Second tier: (multi-media guide) Explanation that the unconventional portrait was commissioned by John Hancock and later translated into a print by Paul Revere, thus playing a role as a political icon. Commentary from a historian discussing Adams's particular role as a political organizer in the years preceding the Revolution.

Samuel McIntire and others, chest on chest, mahogany and pine, 1796

First tier: (label) Establishes the quality of this piece of furniture and that its ornament reflects a neoclassical vocabulary drawn from ancient Greece and Rome, symbols of democracy for the new nation.

Second tier: (multi-media guide and gallery interactive) The multi-media guide will offer the visitor both a period quotation demonstrating the strong identification of the new nation with classical civilization or a discussion by a woodworker of specific details of craftsmanship, indicating the mastery achieved by American cabinetmakers at this time. An interactive video screen will invite visitors to explore the iconic significance of detail and the role of symbols in the formation of a shared American story through the Symbolic Detail interactive. This Flash-based tool will enable visitors to see and learn about the works through different interpretations and digitally enhanced ways of viewing, such as magnification and

filtering. In this instance, visitors will be able to select specific details of the carving – urns, cornucopias, the crowning female figure – and learn their meanings and origins.

John Neagle, *Pat Lyon at the Forge*, oil on canvas, 1826-27

First tier: (label and multi-media guide) Explains that this Philadelphia engineer chose to have himself portrayed as the lowly blacksmith he once was rather than the successful businessman he later became and that he also had included, in the view from the window, the jail in which he was once unjustly imprisoned.

Second tier: (multi-media guide) Offers a historian's comments on the new image of democracy as embodied in the common man, which became popular in the Jacksonian period.

Learning Galleries

In response to visitor research findings that indicated people want more information on context and the human connection, the American Wing interpretive strategy includes the development and implementation of thematic learning galleries that will allow adult learners to explore in more depth several themes related to the American collection. These spaces will present the **Third Tier strategy** – Interpretation that provides general political, social, and historical context for objects in the collection. Third tier interpretation will be delivered primarily through on-line resources and in the learning galleries described below.

Most learning galleries will have one or more interactive computer kiosks, with network connection for accessing the Museum's online collection database, as well as custom-designed content. Didactic displays, hands-on materials, "looking drawers" containing small objects such as coins and ephemera, a timeline of historical events and developments in art, and looking guides for family use are additional possible approaches. These spaces will also provide a chance for visitors to relax, and will include books and the opportunity to listen to music that evokes the world in which the objects were made. Learning

gallery installations will follow principles of universal design, providing the widest possible usability for all visitors, and appealing to a range of learning styles and sensory modalities. For example, timelines might include a transparent overlay on which features are raised to allow tactile exploration, and might have an associated multi-media guide stop.

The MFA is seeking funding for computer kiosks in one of the two learning galleries on Level One entitled **Moments in the American Story**. The other learning gallery on Level One will be focused on **Materials and Techniques**. A range of interpretive devices in this space will provide visitors with insight into the process of creating decorative arts during this period. Activities in this learning gallery will be funded outside the challenge grant funds.

- **Moments in the American Story**

This learning gallery will contain in one area computer kiosks that provide access to the Web site, in particular to features designed for in-museum use that will help to deepen visitors' understanding of the ways in which art has been used to articulate, celebrate, and disseminate American ideals, goals, and identity. These features focus on moments in American history in which imagery in various media supported and reinforced a national political goal or movement and would carry visitors beyond the Colonial and Federal periods. Visitors will be able to print out or download a screen showing details of works on this particular theme currently on view, so that they can continue their investigations in the galleries. Web technology will allow for the linking of major icons in the collection with less familiar pieces and for the investigation of a wide range of visual and verbal imagery. Related computer interactives would allow visitors to participate imaginatively in history or to link these moments to their own experience.

For example, a thematic feature on "Symbols for the New Nation" might include a section on the veneration of George Washington, focused around Gilbert Stuart's painting *Washington at*

Dorchester Heights, and one on the image of Liberty, focused on Augustus St. Gaudens's twenty-dollar gold piece, designed for President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. A bank of images on each theme in many media, from high art to folk art, would allow for identification of key elements and extensive comparison; other sequences would allow for comparison of the new symbols with the prototypes on which they were based, such as royal portraits, classical coins, and the like. Access to quotes from newspapers, letters, documents of various periods – mourning Washington's death, debating the inclusion of the motto "In God We Trust" on the gold piece – would deepen historic context. An interactive feature on the use of symbols in portraiture would allow visitors to further explore the topic by selecting and placing symbols in their own portraits. A feature on "The New Land" would explore American landscapes as they established the identity of the nation and contributed to the vision of Manifest Destiny, again comparison to related images and connection to verbal sources. The remaining area of this learning gallery will provide activities and materials related to understanding other dimensions of the American art collection; these activities will be funded through other sources.

Web site and other New Media Learning Interactives

The MFA will develop a Web site to complement the galleries on Level One, incorporating the features on the learning gallery computer kiosks and interactives throughout the galleries into a larger framework. Visitors will be able to use this resource to deepen their exploration of the collection, and investigate through multiple formats the ideas and principles of democracy. The main interface will be an interactive timeline that introduces key concepts and areas of discovery, and links them to the entire collection. The interface will allow visitors to weave easily in and out of narrative exploration, simulation, and learning interactives or to go quickly to a specific object. There will be unmediated access to the collection for visitors to search and explore objects, or they can enjoy interpretive tracks that help contextualize the objects and their significance. A Learning Resources section will provide special interactives for K-12 teachers and students.

The learning interactives developed to interpret the American collections will allow discovery both at the Museum and beyond. Of the many components available on the Web site, appropriate features will be highlighted on kiosks in the learning galleries (see above), while others, such as the Symbolic Detail tool, will be accessible on interactive video screens or by handheld device in the galleries in conjunction with specific objects. These new media resources are being developed by Tana Hargest, the Museum's Manager of New Media Learning. Her position was partially endowed by an NEH Challenge Grant awarded in 2002. Ms. Hargest is in the process of launching the MFA's New Media Learning Program (NMLP) that she has designed. Straddling the intersection of art and science, the NMLP seeks to expand the on-line, in-gallery, and studio-based learning opportunities for the Museum's diverse audiences. As described above, the NMLP will be an integral part of the American Wing interpretive project, complementing traditional interpretive methods such as object labels and text panels with new media technologies that engage learners both on-site and on-line. New Media interpretive strategies will be particularly adept at telling the American story from multiple entry points, providing multiple layers of information, allowing learners to network with each other, and providing learners with many options for self-directed inquiry. Through the further development and application of New Media resources, the *We the People* grant will enable the MFA to build on the successes of a prior NEH Challenge Grant.

Learning Research Evaluation

The MFA has conducted extensive learning research and evaluation over the past two years, and these findings have been fully integrated into the interpretive and curatorial strategies for the American Wing. For instance, in September 2003 the MFA conducted preliminary front-end evaluation for this project in the form of two focus groups – one composed of frequent adult museum visitors, the other composed of infrequent adult visitors. Individuals in each group spent time in the Museum's galleries of American art before convening for a facilitated discussion. Results of this research suggest that learners in the American galleries look for the human connection – information about the artists, subjects, and cultural

and historical context – to help them engage with works of art. They are interested in a variety of interpretive methodologies, but want them placed where they will not distract from private, individual enjoyment of the art in the galleries. At the same time, wherever possible, they want to be able to look at the original object while engaged in a learning activity. Finally, they want choices and the ability to select their own paths to learning. These findings were integrated into the development of the plan for in-gallery interpretation and learning galleries as described above.

This evaluation was supplemented by a series of studies and analyses, both qualitative and quantitative, of the MFA's visitors and their needs that were conducted by the Museum's Manager of Market Research and Analysis. For instance, a year-long series of entrance and exit surveys has been analyzed to obtain a profile of the Museum's visitors. Information gathered from these studies will also help to inform the installation and interpretation plan of the American Wing.

Several staff members from the Art of Americas and Museum Learning departments have served on the American Wing Interpretation Team for the past two years. The team has conducted benchmarking research by visiting other national museums and local cultural organizations to learn their best practices and identify programs that could be adapted by the MFA. As described above, they have also undertaken formative evaluation of programs and activities that will be developed for the new wing.

This institution-wide commitment to evaluation will continue to impact this project throughout the grant period and beyond. The Museum has engaged the Institute for Learning Innovation, a non-profit learning research and development organization, to work with MFA staff on articulating learning outcomes related to the Colonial and Federal collections, conducting prototype testing for interpretive components, and fully integrating learning and evaluation research into the implementation of interpretive strategies for the American Wing. (A letter of commitment from the Institute is attached.)

Diverse Audiences

The MFA is particularly concerned about its ability to attract and retain underserved audiences, including people of different ethnic, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as people with disabilities. Over the past few years, the Museum has devoted significant staff time and resources to its diversity initiative, which calls for increased recruitment of underrepresented minority employees and volunteers, including Trustees and Overseers. The Museum continues to develop new approaches for attracting underrepresented audiences to exhibitions and programs and to build the collections to reflect a broader spectrum of artists. The Museum's Diversity Council – comprised of staff and Trustees from across the institution – has worked with consultants to develop a Diversity Action Plan that outlines the future direction for the MFA on issues of diversity and inclusion. The Plan called for the creation of a new position – Manager of Community Outreach. The MFA recently hired Marta Rivera to fill this position and work to develop and sustain new and existing relationships with community-based organizations as well as identify and include community advisors in implementing programs. Ms. Rivera will work closely with Museum Learning and curatorial staff to develop programming for a wide range of community groups that will complement the Level One galleries.

One aspect of attracting and retaining diverse audiences involves providing individuals from many backgrounds with opportunities to make personal connections with art in the Museum's collection. In particular, the MFA recognizes that many of the players in the story of the Level One American galleries are individuals with significant political and/or financial influence, and that this represents only one dimension of the American experience during the colonial period. The MFA will use the three-tiered interpretive strategy outlined above to acknowledge and address other dimensions of the founding and early days of our nation, including the experiences and contributions of individuals and groups across the social, racial, and economic spectrum. Such issues will be discussed in some of the interpretive resources on this level, which can address, for example, how high-style imagery and iconography reached a wider audience through popular printed media. Of course, the Level One galleries are complemented by the

MFA's diverse holdings of art displayed on the other three levels of the wing. (Please see Appendix C. for a detailed description of the entire American Wing.)

Conservation and Installation

The Department of Conservation and Collections Management will be responsible for treating and reinstalling the approximately 600 works of art slated for display on Level One of the American Wing. More than 50 specialists in conservation, scientific research, art handling, movement, and installation work in this Department.

Staff members will treat paintings, decorative arts, works on paper, and textiles. Many three-dimensional objects will require the creation of special mounts that will serve the dual purpose of protecting the works against the threat of earthquakes and displaying them to provide the visitor with optimal views. The furniture and frame division of the department will direct and coordinate the reinstallation of paneling and wooden elements of the five period rooms and three architectural doorways. Conservators and curators will work together to ensure that the rooms are outfitted with historically appropriate architectural features. They will oversee the installation of wood floors, carpeting, ceilings, wall coverings (including original eighteenth-century wallpaper in one case), and curtains. The MFA conservators will also treat all of the furniture to be included in the galleries and will complete non-intrusive reupholstery on a large number of pieces of American seat furniture. By avoiding the use of nails or tacks, this method does not compromise the structure of the furniture. Numerous paintings and frames will also require conservation, including works that have been on view consistently for many years as well as those that have been in storage because of condition problems. For instance, a seminal, large-scale colonial portrait that requires extensive conservation is *The Greenwood-Lee Family* by John Greenwood. This work does not look the way the artist intended – it suffers from darkened yellow varnish and discolored inpainting – and it would benefit enormously from conservation treatment. Conservation needs extend to sculpture and decorative arts as well. A large selection of silver will be cleaned and coated; marble sculptures require cleaning and

compensation. A polychrome wood figure of *Liberty* (1790-1800) is in an extremely fragile state. The paint is flaking, and is actively separating from the wood. Conservators will stabilize the work by consolidating the compromised paint layers, and the surface will be carefully cleaned. This treatment will result in a renewed sculpture, safely displayed, and preserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

The installation of the works will be overseen by Matt Siegel, Collections Manager, in collaboration with the curators. Mr. Siegel, who supervised the move of more than 50,000 works of art, including the complete deinstallation of 18 period rooms in preparation for the demolition of the MFA's current East Wing, has the experience necessary to ensure the safe reinstallation of these works in the new wing. He will work closely with the curators, and the MFA's facilities and collections management staff, to move the objects from their current locations in galleries or storage to the new American Wing.

Long-Range Institutional Planning

The new wing and all of the MFA's humanities programming is the outgrowth of careful, long-term institutional planning. In light of the significant progress made on the MFA's 1997 strategic plan *One Museum - New Museum - Great Museum*, and the Museum's expansion and major fundraising campaign, the MFA's leadership felt it important to establish a renewed vision to guide the Museum through the completion of the building project. The following ten major goals were developed that form the basis of *New Museum - Great Museum - Your Museum*, the new strategic plan that was adopted in 2004:

1. Continue to improve the quality of the collection
2. Improve the management, care, and knowledge of the collection
3. Provide and promote worldwide electronic access to the collection
4. Engage, educate, and delight visitors
5. Retain and expand audiences by understanding their needs
6. Schedule an exhibition program that meets a variety of objectives
7. Enlarge and improve the physical plant
8. Pursue fundraising required by the Master Site Plan and other strategic goals
9. Ensure fiscal stability
10. Adapt an audience-aware, results-oriented, experimental attitude, and realign the organization to support these strategies

The construction of the American Wing will help the MFA to fulfill several of the goals outlined above, as well as other institutional strategic priorities. For instance, as called for in the MFA's *One Museum* strategic plan, the Museum released a Five Year Plan for the Department of Museum Learning and Public Programs in June 2000. Among the recommendations of the plan were: to ensure that the Museum's audience for education programs is diverse; to broaden access to education programs, including creating a more flexible schedule of programs; to emphasize interactive teaching and learning methodologies; to increase the use of the World Wide Web and other interactive digital technologies; to increase collaboration, coordination, and visibility within the community; and to conduct a rigorous evaluation of all current and potential programs in order to thoroughly understand visitor experiences and program effectiveness. A *We the People* Challenge Grant in support of the construction, reinstallation, and interpretation of the American Colonial and Federal Art collection would serve as a logical outgrowth of this planning and enable the MFA to implement several key recommendations from these plans.

How Challenge Funds will be used/Budget Narrative

The MFA requests a \$1 million NEH *We the People* Challenge Grant, which will be matched by \$3 million raised through the Museum's comprehensive Campaign. A portion of the total project budget – \$1 million – will be reserved for an endowment that will fund conservation and collections management costs for Level One. Income from the endowment will support supplies, materials, and equipment needed for the preservation of works in these galleries, as well as a percentage of a collections care specialist's salary and benefits (see attached for job description). The remaining project budget will be dedicated to the construction of the American Colonial and Federal Art galleries, the reinstallation of works of art to be displayed on Level One, and the interpretation of these works, specifically components of one learning gallery, the multi-media guide, and other in-gallery interpretive expenses. As noted in the budget, the total cost for Level One is \$9.6 million. Other fundraising through the MFA's Campaign will support the remaining expenses for this floor, as well as the rest of the American Wing. All construction costs are in

compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act, and a letter from the Massachusetts Historical Commission stating the effect of this project on the building is included in Appendix F.

Fundraising

Launched on July 1, 2001, the MFA's Campaign is expected to run until 2008. The public phase of the Campaign started in September 2004, signaling the Museum's fundraising shift from its Board and long-time supporters to a broader donor base. To date, the MFA has raised more than \$250 million, or about 59% of the total, with support from nearly 100% of its Trustees and Overseers. Challenge grants have been very valuable to the MFA during this monumental fundraising effort, and the Museum has been particularly successful in raising matching funds. For instance, a \$70 million challenge gift from a small group of philanthropists was matched at the end of last fiscal year. The Museum has also raised \$1,019,166 of the \$1,480,000 needed to fulfill the NEH Challenge Grant for the Manager of New Media Learning position, and is fully expecting to close out this challenge on schedule. Matching funds were raised from a diverse group of individual donors and foundations.

All matching funds raised for the *We the People* Challenge Grant will count toward the MFA's Campaign. Staff will seek support for the challenge from the MFA's broader donor base, including leadership gift prospects and annual fund donors. The Museum has formed a Campaign Committee, comprising Trustees and Overseers, who will assist in the identification, cultivation, and solicitation of prospects. The Campaign Committee consists of smaller committees dedicated to different groups of individual donors, including the Principal Gifts Committee (responsible for soliciting gifts of \$1 million or more), the Leadership Gifts Committee (responsible for soliciting gifts of \$100,000 or more), and the Cultivation Committee. These committees hold monthly meetings to screen prospects, develop solicitation strategies, and identify new donors for the Museum. Donors at all levels of the giving spectrum will be asked to contribute to the Campaign, including the Museum's more than 78,000 members. The MFA also plans to enlist the support of local, national, and international foundations;

corporate foundations in particular will be pursued aggressively. The Museum has already garnered seven-figure Campaign grants from Bank of America, Liberty Mutual, and Citizens Bank. The MFA is planning a submission to the (b) (4) in the fall of 2005, and has been actively cultivating the Henry Luce Foundation for a major grant to the American Wing.

In an effort to meet the NEH Challenge, the MFA's development staff will work to identify individual, corporate, and foundation donors who are interested in American art, education, and/or technology. Donors will be provided with printed material that will include information about the NEH Challenge Grant. Development officers will be briefed on the project, and encouraged to discuss its significance with prospects. The Manager of New Media Learning position will be cited as an example of a prior NEH Challenge Grant that has greatly enhanced the MFA's ability to provide resources and programs to educate its visitors and make the Museum an even more vital force for learning.

Although the NEH *We the People* Challenge is one part of a larger Campaign, it will be represented to donors as a discrete project, and the monies will be isolated from the larger building project. An NEH *We the People* Challenge Grant would attract increased national recognition to this project, and provide the imprimatur of a prestigious federal agency that would help to leverage other gifts from a diverse range of individual and institutional donors.

The Museum has a history of implementing successful campaigns that expand the donor base and galvanize the community. In 1992, a major MFA Campaign was launched to raise endowment funds to secure essential positions and programs and to sustain and broaden the Museum's services to the community. The Campaign, which concluded in September 1998, raised \$137 million (exceeding its goal of \$110 million). It garnered support from 29,000 people and included 37 gifts of \$1 million or more. Patricia Jacoby, Deputy Director, External Relations, managed the last Campaign, and is responsible for the current fundraising effort. She has more than 30 years of development experience. The co-chairs of

the current Campaign, Roger Servison, Stokley Towles, and Barbara Alfond, are Trustees with significant fundraising experience.

The Project Team

The Project Director, Elliot Davis, the John Moors Cabot Chair of Art of the Americas, will work closely with staff from the Conservation, Project Management, and Museum Learning departments, to oversee the creation of these galleries. Dr. Davis came to the MFA in 2001 from the Metropolitan Museum of Art where she served on the curatorial staff for eight years. An expert in nineteenth-century American drawings and prints, Dr. Davis has contributed to a wide range of scholarship. Susan Longhenry, the MFA's Alfond Director of Museum Learning and Public Programs, will be responsible for interpretation. Ms. Longhenry joined the MFA in 2001 after having served as the Director of Education at the Indianapolis Museum of Art since 1995. Arthur Beale will oversee the conservation and reinstallation portion of this project. Mr. Beale has more than 40 years of experience as a conservator and administrator, and he has served as project director on numerous NEH-funded projects. David Lewis, Director of Project Development and Construction, will oversee the construction of the galleries. Mr. Lewis has more than 20 years of experience managing complex construction projects. Prior to coming to the MFA, he oversaw the construction of the Frank Gehry-designed Ray and Maria Stata Center at MIT. (A list of qualifications for all project staff is attached.)

Conclusion

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston is at an exciting and crucial crossroads in its history. With the construction of the American Wing, the MFA has the potential to become a leader for the study of American history, politics, and culture – nationally and internationally. An NEH *We the People* Challenge Grant will enable the MFA to construct revitalized exhibition space, conserve and reinstall one of the world's greatest collections of American art, and provide new educational resources to help the public gain a deeper understanding of American history, with a focus on the birth of the nation in

revolutionary New England. This special collection is uniquely suited to teach Americans about their national heritage, and for the first time, the MFA will be able to display and interpret these works of art to their fullest potential, placing them in the context of the story of the founding of these United States. The prestige of an NEH *We the People* Challenge Grant will help to attract a diverse range of donors to this project, including people intimately familiar with the Museum and those learning about the MFA for the first time.

The MFA Trustees and staff are grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities for its past support of the Museum's programs and for its consideration of this proposal.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

We the People Challenge Grant Budget*

Total NEH funds requested:	\$1,000,000
Year 1:	\$250,000
Year 2:	\$250,000
Year 3:	\$500,000
Total non-federal contributions:	\$3,000,000
Total grant funds (NEH and match)	\$4,000,000

Direct Expenditures

American Wing – Level One Galleries and Period Rooms

Construction ✓

General Conditions	21,000
Sitework	191,000
Concrete	167,000
Masonry	55,000
Metals/Wood/Plastics	294,000
Thermal Moisture Protection	40,000
Doors/Windows	328,000
Finishes/Specialties	335,000
Equipment/Furnishings	30,000
Special Structures	21,000
Conveying Systems	44,000
Mechanical	303,000
Plumbing	25,000
Electrical	146,000

Reinstallation X

Curatorial/Exhibitions	150,000
Facilities	150,000
Design	100,000
Casework	200,000
Graphics	100,000

Interpretation X

Learning Gallery Computer Interactives	100,000
Multi-Media Guide	50,000
In-gallery interpretation (labels, wall text, interactives, publications)	150,000

Endowed

Invested in endowment:	\$1,000,000	✓
Annual expendable income (5 percent)	\$ (50,000)	
Collections Care staff (% of time spent on Level One spaces)		(\$25,000)
Conservation materials, supplies, equipment		(\$25,000)

MFA Endowment Management Policy

Currently, the Museum maintains a 5.2% spend rate. Any total return over and above the spend rate is reinvested for the long term purposes of the fund.

*All figures rounded. Total cost to outfit Level One (construction, reinstallation, conservation, and interpretation) is \$9,619,292. Other Campaign fundraising will supplement NEH Challenge funds.