

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 297

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

According to your 501(c)3 letter, in what town is your official office located?

Farmington

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

Farmington

Will this activity occur after August 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

169816-Roberts2022

Organization Name

Hill-Stead Museum

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

060646673

Principal Contact Name

Anna Swinbourne

Title

Executive Director and CEO

Email

swinbournea@hillstead.org

Phone

(860) 677-4787

Address

35 Mountain Road
Farmington, Connecticut 06032
United States
[Map It](#)

Website

<https://www.hillstead.org>

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 297

Amount requested this application

\$20,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

Hill-Stead Museum, a National Historic Landmark, serves diverse audiences in Connecticut and beyond as a welcoming place for learning, reflection and enjoyment. The museum develops, preserves, documents, displays, and interprets its exceptional Impressionist paintings, 1901 historic house, collections, and 152-acre landscape for the benefit of present and future generations.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Hill-Stead Museum (HSM) is the first architectural project of Theodate Pope Riddle (1867-1946), a pioneering female architect, proponent of historic preservation and caretaker of the family art collection, a stellar assemblage of French Impressionism. Her father was at the forefront of the late-19th-century collecting movement. Most of Pope's contemporaries gifted and dispersed their collections to major art museums. In contrast, Hill-Stead stands alone creating the sense that a significant historical era has not been cleverly recreated, but rather carefully and creatively kept true and relevant. Established in 1946 as a cultural resource for the public in perpetuity, the museum is one of the nation's few remaining representations of early-20th century Country Place Estates.

Though an art museum of international renown, with works by Monet, Degas, Manet, Cassatt and Whistler, HSM is first and foremost a cherished community haven and educational hub. For 76 years, it has served thousands of students and visitors through a vast array of public programs and superior educational opportunities. HSM holds tight to its unofficial mission: To reach those who hunger to experience, thirst to learn, and yearn to better understand with extraordinary cultural offerings and opportunities not readily available elsewhere.

HSM has remained relevant to modern audiences through engaging and memorable public programming. A commitment to cultural excellence anchors HSM as a vibrant place for artistic exploration and creative expression. HSM has witnessed a steady growth in visitation, programmatic participation and membership as a direct result of its arts- and humanities-focused offerings and commitment to creating and fostering community connections. Walk-in visitation increased an astounding 50%, year-to-date, December 2022-June 2023, boding well for long-anticipated post-pandemic recovery and affirms our new direction of developing and presenting scholarly exhibitions.

Describe the demographics of your audience/people served by your activities.

From the most recent visitor survey, 2015-16: Majority of visitors are women (73%), over 50 (75%), and white (92%); 61% of the visitors reside in CT, 38% from other states; significantly more new visitors (65%) than repeat (35%); Over half of the repeat visitors had not been to HSM within the past year (56%); Only 6% of visitors were members, while 12% of visitors had been to the museum within the last year. To date HSM has not begun to capture ethnicity. An updated survey is in process.

Describe your organization's governance.

HSM was established as an educational and charitable trust overseen by three Trustees. Persons other than Trustees are elected to serve as Governors by vote of the Board of Governors (BOG) at its annual meeting. While the BOG plays a big role in the control and management of HSM, all governance decisions lie with the Trustees. The BOG meets 6 times/year, with about 65% member participation (90% since meetings have gone virtual). Annually, 100% of BOG members make financial contributions to HSM.

Describe the diversity of your board.

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 297

The Trustees established the Board of Governors in 1984 to add depth, strength and talent to HSM's governance. The BOG is currently comprised of 20 people: 40% men and 60% women, 4 of whom identify as people of color, providing a respectable 20% ethnic diversity. As governors rotate off service, HSM is mindful of diversification while at the same time identifying the most capable individuals to serve governance needs, and to support the ultimate fiduciary responsibilities of the three trustees.

What percentage of your board makes personal financial contributions to your organization?

HSM is pleased to report that 100% of the organization's Trustees and Governors have made financial contributions to the organization for the past 8 years. All those who participate in the governance of the museum have a keen understanding of the great, continuing need for funding, as HSM must raise at least 90-93% of its operating revenue every year. While not a requirement for BOG membership, such philanthropy speaks volumes about the hearty support HSM enjoys of its mission and vision.

Project Name

Preliminary Research Phase for Mary Cassatt: A Consequential Woman

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

Yes

Will the artists associated with this project be financially compensated?

No

Project Description

The preliminary research phase is crucial for conceiving the scope and content of this exhibition. Work will include research in Hill-Stead's archives and numerous other repositories, as noted elsewhere in this application; development of a loan checklist and the ensuing work to begin the process of securing object loans; development of didactic materials and educational programming; and gallery design and installation planning. These processes and more, set against a mindset of annual operational budgeting, will inform future aspects of planning later in 2024 and into 2025 as we look to open the exhibition later that year or early the next.

Total estimated project budget

\$57,700.00

Project start/opening

10/01/2023

Project end/closing

09/30/2024

Project venue

Hill-Stead Museum

Project town

Farmington

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 297

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

We were thrilled to see that museum attendance during the previous exhibition, *Alfred Pope: An Evolution of Ingenuity* (December 9, 2022 – June 25, 2023), showed a 50% year-to-date increase over the same period 2021-2022. Combined with laudatory feedback on the show, the numbers bode well for future endeavors and affirm Hill-Stead's new direction in presenting scholarly exhibitions. We believe this exhibition will draw substantially higher attendance than the Alfred Pope show.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

We will publicly announce the groundbreaking exhibition that will explore lesser-known aspects of the artist's work, life and passions, timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of Cassatt's death in 1926, at an evening outdoor screening of the new documentary entitled *Mary Cassatt: Painting the Modern Woman* on Hill-Stead's west lawn on September 24, 2023.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

We will lay the foundation for this landmark show by exploring a wealth of repositories with scholarly rigor, including Hill-Stead's significant yet small unpublished primary sources, private and public archives of dealers and collectors such as Galerie Durand-Ruel, Knoedler Gallery, the Whittemore family, and Archives of American Art. We will consult with descendants of one of Cassatt's intimates, whom she advised for nearly 45 years; a renowned scholar; and an emerging authority on Cassatt.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

Recognition of Roberts Foundation support during the critical but exciting research phase will be included on all promotional materials and platforms (e.g., website, e-blasts and social media channels) and during the exhibition opening and related programs.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

HSM's Executive Director & CEO, Dr. Anna Swinbourne, honed her definition of artistic excellence while at The Museum of Modern Art, where she organized award-winning exhibitions. She now leads HSM in the temporary exhibitions program that has become part of its roster.

Dr. Swinbourne holds that artistic excellence is grounded in a wholehearted openness to the creative expression in question and is guiding HSM with this principle in the forefront. As the best artists often envision what most cannot yet "see," their artwork must be approached in the most unbiased fashion possible. That approach, however, must also include a rigor of analysis, and the asking of sincere and meaningful questions in interpreting the artwork's possible messages.

Excellence in presenting art is achieved through unwavering devotion to continuing cultural dialogue, and contributing to the scholarly record, at the highest and most ambitious levels, while always maintaining intellectual and creative integrity.

How does this project align with that definition, and how does it advance your mission?

This project aspires to present Mary Cassatt as a consequential figure of her times. Beyond her renown as an artist, she was a formidable tastemaker, exerting influence on the earliest American collectors of Impressionism, whose collections are the cornerstones of some of the greatest museum holdings in this country. Little known, though, is her social activism, engaging members of her milieu to support the nascent suffrage cause. Least known are her activities as a curious and devoted practitioner of spiritualism.

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 297

Hill-Stead's Senior Curator has had conversations with individuals familiar with an extensive private collection of material that includes Cassatt correspondence and an 1893 journal detailing meetings with Cassatt in Paris. Analysis of this material in conjunction with papers in Hill-Stead's collection will exponentially enhance our understanding of Cassatt and her connections to the Pope family and others in their contemporary circle, on artistic and cultural fronts.

How will your audience and the community benefit from this project?

Our fresh approach will explore her art advising and support for woman suffrage, illustrated through a "recreation" of the 1915 Cassatt-Degas exhibition held at Knoedler's Gallery in New York. An appeal was made to Ada Brooks Pope, Theodate Pope's mother, to lend works—she demurred due to her late husband's opposition to the movement, even though Theodate was a staunch supporter. The recreation will pair, with other works on loan, Hill-Stead's *Dancers in Pink* by Degas and Cassatt paintings from the Pope collection to illustrate what the show might have looked like had Mrs. Pope been agreeable to the request—a never-before seen assemblage.

At this early stage, Hill-Stead is exploring the possibility of partnering with fellow museums in the region to present various components of this fascinating story. While speculative, whether it comes to fruition will be determined through future negotiations as the project evolves.

How will this project be evaluated?

The most obvious measurement of success will be the response to the exhibition from HSM's constituency and the general public, quantified via Museum visitation and corresponding shop sales. Metrics will be developed to capture qualitative reaction from visitors. Public and school tours will be reconfigured, where appropriate, to disseminate the revised scholarship, with accompanying learning objectives.

From a purely scholarly perspective, perhaps more critically, will be evaluation by peers when we submit to the annual juried competitions within the field, such as American Alliance of Museums, which evaluates overall excellence of conception, creativity, and ability to express an institution's personality, mission, or special features in its one-of-a-kind national program, and American Association of Art Museum Curators that holds a comparable competition in exhibition excellence.

Cover letter

- [Cover-Letter-signed.pdf](#)

Board list

- [BOG-Directory_Jan-2023.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [Hill-Stead-Museum-IRS-501c3-letter.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [Hill-Stead-Museum-FS-12-31-22.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [2022-Budget-Sheet.pdf](#)

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 297

Current year operational budget

- [2023-Operating-Budget-vStandalone.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [063023-Balance-Sheet-v071123.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [Cassatt-Preliminary-Research-Budget.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

Yes

Annual report

- [Hill-Stead-Annual-Report-2022.pdf](#)

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Yes

Strategic plan

- [TAP-31July2023.pdf](#)

Does your organization have a formal policy or organizational commitment to ensure that visual artists are financially compensated?

Yes

Visual Artist Compensation Policy

- [Payment-to-artists.pdf](#)

Grant Report

- [Hill-Stead-Museum-Grantee-Reporting-Form- -Entry-294.pdf](#)

Please note that 2022 financials reflect the state of the markets and resulting losses to Hill-Stead's endowment and investments. However, operating expenses and day-to-day performance reflect strong management and an overall sound financial position with a modest surplus for the year.

Have you contacted the Executive Director by email or phone to discuss this proposal?

Yes

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 297

Is your cover letter signed by your senior executive? on your letterhead? with your official office address?

Yes