

**Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 125**

**Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?**

Yes

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

New Britain

**Where will your project be performed or exhibited?**

New Britain

**Will this activity occur after August 1, 2023?**

Yes

**Are you a recent grantee?**

Yes

**Enter your Report Code**

153853-Roberts2020

**Organization Name**

New Britain Museum of American Art

**Organization's IRS Tax ID #**

061422234

**Principal Contact Name**

Amanda Shuman-Bisson

**Title**

Associate Director of Development

**Email**

[shumana@nbmaa.org](mailto:shumana@nbmaa.org)

**Phone**

(860) 229-0257

**Address**

56 Lexington St  
New Britain, Connecticut 06052  
United States  
[Map It](#)

**Website**

<http://www.nbmaa.org>

## **Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 125**

### **Amount requested this application**

\$20,000.00

### **What is the organization's mission/vision statement?**

Mission: The NBMAA engages and enriches a broad public to explore and understand the unfolding story of America through its art and history. We collect, preserve, and present the finest examples of American art, fulfilling an educational role through dynamic exhibitions, publications, and programs that illuminate our nation's diverse heritage and artistic advancements.

### **Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.**

Acknowledged as the oldest museum in the country dedicated exclusively to the collection and exhibition of American art, the NBMAA traces its beginnings to 1903 when private citizens began an art collection for the enjoyment and education of the public. The collection today numbers nearly 9,000 oils, watercolors, drawings, graphics, photographs and sculptures representing works from 1740 to the present. Two capital campaigns—in 2006, the \$27 million Capital Campaign for the Chase Family Building, and in 2015 for the Art and Education Building—have poised the Museum for success with state-of-the-art galleries, programming spaces, and the home its collection deserves.

Core programming includes the display of selections from the permanent collection and 10+ special exhibitions per year. Programming is available for all ages, interests and abilities, reaching audiences of all ages and ethnicities, through age-appropriate educational programming, special events and member programs.

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

Major exhibitions draw visitors from the region and beyond. 40% participate in programming, with attendees coming from within a 45-minute radius. This community is ethnically diverse as New Britain itself boasts 40+ languages and ethnic backgrounds. Ethnic diversity matches economic diversity, with New Britain, surrounded by some of the wealthiest towns in Connecticut, being one of the poorest. On average, 27% of the membership and 19% of visitors come from the Roberts Foundation's service area.

### **Describe your organization's governance.**

The Museum's governing Board of Trustees meets bimonthly and includes up to 31 members; average meeting attendance is 50%+ (more now that meetings occur via Zoom). An Executive Committee meets monthly. Trustees serve three-year terms, with a maximum of three consecutive terms before a mandatory year off. Trustees are frequently recognized as Trustees Emeritus or Honorary Trustees following their service. 100% of Trustees support financially.

### **Describe the diversity of your board.**

NBMAA is committed to fulfilling its mission to tell the "unfolding story of America through its art and history" by including narratives of underrepresented cultures, viewpoints, and artists. DEAI task forces support efforts.

A Nominating Committee assesses and recommends new Trustees each year, taking a number of criteria, including diversity, into consideration. The Board of Trustees is currently 28 individuals: 46% female and 54% male; 92% White and the remaining 8% is Asian and Latinx.

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

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All (100%) of Trustees make personal financial contributions to the organization at an amount that is meaningful to them. Many also contribute via corporate or foundation funds or facilitate connections. Some provide additional in-kind services (ie strategic planning or legal fees) that are budget-relieving as well.

### Project Name

30 Americans

### Project Description

*30 Americans* showcases 50+ works by 30 of the most important African American artists of the last three decades, including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Kehinde Wiley, Nick Cave, Carrie Mae Weems, and Mickalene Thomas, and is drawn from the collection of the Rubell Museum. Occupying McKernan, Stitzer Family, and Vance Galleries and populating several permanent collection galleries, works span all mediums (painting, drawing, photograph, video, sculpture, and installation). *30 Americans* focuses on issues of racial, sexual, and historical identity in contemporary culture while exploring the powerful influence of artistic legacy and community across generations. On the heels of the NBMAA's 2020/20+ Women @ NBMAA initiative (including Roberts Foundation-sponsored *Some Day is Now*), and a major acquisition of 19 works by 13 women artists, *30 Americans* further concretizes the NBMAA's commitment to showing the diversity of America. The exhibition will be complemented by a catalog and programs.

### Total estimated project budget

\$65,461.00

### Project start/opening

07/14/2022

### Project end/closing

11/06/2022

### Project venue

New Britain Museum of American Art

### Project town

New Britain

### Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

The exhibition will be free with general admission/free for members. The Museum increases access by being free for visitors under 18 and has numerous opportunities for free/reduced entry. Exhibit will be open during NBMAA hours, Wednesday—Sunday. We are hopeful for 10,000 in-person visitors though pandemic impacts are still being seen, plus virtual program reach. Programs will be a mix of free and paid, and discounted for members.

### How do you intend to promote/market this project?

*30 Americans* provides an opportunity to continue broadening NBMAA audience by extending reach to the underserved while reengaging core supporters. The NBMAA will take a two-track approach: secure paid and earned media placements popular with our core traditional audiences; employ targeted platforms and digital geofencing to reach demographics identified as underserved—inviting new voices to engage with our content. See additional attachment for full marketing plan/strategy.

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### How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Funding provided by the Roberts Foundation will directly support exhibition expenses, including but not limited to curatorial fees; preparation and installation expenses such as framing, paint, lighting, vinyl; marketing expenses to conduct a two-track marketing approach; and programming stipends to employ high-quality presenters, artists, and scholars.

### How will Roberts support be recognized?

The Roberts Foundation will be recognized in the exhibition credit line that appears on the exhibition title wall, website, NBMAA newsletter, and exhibition invitation/announcement. The credit line will also appear on all print and digital materials associated with the exhibition, as space allows.

### What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

Excellence is a hallmark of the NBMAA, which strives to be one of the nation's most dynamic art museums by providing engaging and intellectually accessible exhibitions and programming, creating opportunities for interactions with art. Museum leadership, combined with experienced staff and overseen by the Board of Trustees with vast non-profit and arts and culture experience, sets the Museum apart as being a cultural cornerstone of the region. In its 2011 AAM reaccreditation, NBMAA was cited: **Collections:** "impressive;" **Exhibitions:** "top notch." **Programming:** "vibrant and accessible." **Management:** "well run, forward-looking." Its masterpieces and originating exhibitions have been displayed nationally and worldwide.

NBMAA stays on-par with industry best practices with regard to exhibitions, collections, and programs, and employs a skilled, and knowledgeable team of museum professionals. Further evidence is seen in consistently high attendance and membership figures.

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

Since its inception at the Rubell Collection, *30 Americans* has visited 20+ venues across the United States and received positive reviews and press coverage combined with high visitation and programming participation at each. Individually venues have approached the exhibition differently due to curatorial judgement and spatial limitations— some museums have shown the works as a collection in one gallery, while others have interspersed the works throughout its own permanent collection to deepen the narratives. NBMAA hopes to use this as a unique opportunity to do both – the majority will be shown as a collection, while some works will be shown among the first floor's permanent collection spaces and engage an outside scholar/curator for perspective (to be determined).

*30 Americans* directly ties to both the NBMAA's mission and vision of illuminating our nation's diverse heritage and representing multidimensional American perspectives.

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

In 2020, not only did the NBMAA develop DEAI groups at both the staff and Board levels, but also culled together a Community Advisory Group representing individuals from throughout the Museum and greater New Britain to come together and impact change. The group was instrumental in bringing the Museum's Juneteenth Celebration back following a 5-year hiatus. These three groups will be directly involved in exhibition-related program creation, interpretation, and delivery to reach existing and new audiences, to enhance accessibility for all, and to encourage conversations and awareness among our constituents regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. Education remains at the core of the NBMAA's mission and we will seek to provide a full complement of educational and interpretive activities for all ages that serve the area's diverse population.

### How will this project be evaluated?

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We anticipate great interest and success of *30 Americans* due to the artists represented and themes of their work, combined with NBMAA's trajectory of well-received exhibitions and programs. Evaluation will include:

- **Attendance:** We are hopeful for 10,000 visitors during the duration of the exhibition.
- **Program participation:** Adult programming (tours, lectures, and studio classes) will be monitored during the exhibition and may be a combination of in-person, virtual, or hybrid models.
- **Museum Store and Café:** Sales will be monitored on a weekly basis and tracked against past exhibitions.
- **Membership sales and interest:** We anticipate an increase in memberships at all levels; sales will be monitored via constituent management database.
- **Feedback** through the front Desk and program evaluations, as well as through social media and travel sites. A visitor survey will be asked at the Front Desk. Press coverage will be monitored as well.

### Cover letter

- [1.-NBMAA-Cover-Letter-Signed.pdf](#)

### Board list

- [FY21-Board.pdf](#)

### IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [501c3-Letter.pdf](#)

### Financial statement

- [FY20-New-Britain-Museum-of-American-Art-Inc.-FS-Audit-Final.pdf](#)

### Last year operational budget

- [FY20-Final-condensed-detailed.pdf](#)

### Current year operational budget

- [NBMAA\\_Financials.pdf](#)

### Balance sheet

- [NBMAA\\_Balance-Sheet.pdf](#)

### Project budget

- [NBMAA-Project-budget.pdf](#)

### Does your organization produce an annual report?

Yes

### Annual report

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- [2020-NBMAA-Annual-Report.pdf](#)

### Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Yes

### Strategic plan

- [Final-NBMAA\\_StrategicPlan\\_2019\\_11.04.19.pdf](#)

### Grant Report

- [New-Britain-Museum-of-American-Art-Grantee-Reporting-Form-.pdf](#)

### Other materials?

- [Marketing-Narrative-30-Americans.docx.pdf](#)

#### Exhibition checklist:

Available here: [NBMAA Proposal 30 Americans full checklist](#)

The full checklist from the Rubell Collection includes all works available as part of *30 Americans*. The NBMAA will not be including all of these works in its presentation (due to spatial limitations). We are currently evaluating which works to be included, which we expect to include at least one work by each artist represented. We would have happy to share progress on this selection as it develops.

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

Yes

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

Yes