

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 204

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

940758-Roberts2020

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://hillstead.org>

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Amount requested this application

\$15,000.00

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.

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. The majority 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 75 years, it has annually served thousands of students and visitors [state, national and international] through a vast array of public programs and superior educational opportunities. A legacy designated by a pioneering woman to be a cultural destination with an open door and a specific purpose, 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. Since 2015, 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.

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 10 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.

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The Trustees established the Board of Governors in 1986 to add depth, strength and talent to HSM's governance. The 2022 BOG is comprised of 17 people: 47% men and 53% women, 4 of whom identify as people of color, providing a respectable 23.5% 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 7 years. All those who participate in the governance of the museum have a keen understanding of the great, continuing need for funding, as HSM has to raise at least 90% 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

Alfred Pope: An Evolution of Ingenuity

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

No

Project Description

Alfred Pope: An Evolution of Ingenuity is slated for publication, autumn 2022, to accompany an exhibition of selected reunited works. The volume and installation in the historic house will culminate HSM's 75th anniversary.

We intend to illuminate a long-overlooked figure in the history of our museum and country. We will present Alfred Atmore Pope (1842-1913) as a bold and leading collector of European modernism and position him rightfully among his peers. Further, we will elucidate his devoted and generous service to others, indelibly influencing his only child, Theodate, in her pioneering life of creative and philanthropic work.

Roberts Foundation launched us in autumn 2020 by underwriting preliminary research that yielded fascinating insights into Alfred, Theodate and her decisions after his death to sell his art. She single-handedly shaped Hill-Stead and distorted his legacy. Ultimately, we endeavor to share these story-altering discoveries and finally celebrate Pope fully.

Total estimated project budget

\$73,900.00

Project start/opening

11/17/2022

Project end/closing

05/30/2023

Project venue

Hill-Stead Museum

Project town

Farmington

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Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

HSM will print 1,000 copies, with sale price \$45 each. The exhibition will be included with museum admission, Wed–Sun: **adults \$18, seniors \$16, students \$12, children 6-12 \$10, members and children under 6 FREE**. Typical Nov-Dec attendance is 2-2 ½ times that of Jan–Mar, due primarily to holidays. From Nov 2021-May 2022, walk-in attendance was 1,749. Attendance for same period in coming year will likely average 30% more, around 2,280 visitors, plus 1,100+ students and 300+ adult tour visitors.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

HSM will utilize a multi-faceted marketing campaign consisting of traditional print and digital platforms: website, social media, and e-blasts. Focused outreach will include lectures of varying lengths to community groups such as The Old Guard, Town & County Club, and University of Hartford's President's College. Disseminating the insights gleaned by essayists and new research findings will be a cornerstone of educational outreach to learners of all ages from school children to retirees.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Funding will underwrite catalogue production, encompassing such costs as honorarium for the non-staff essayist, publication permissions, photography, editing and proofreading, design and typesetting, printing and shipping. Specific figures for each aspect of production are included in the project budget attached.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

Recognition of Roberts for its staunch support of our groundbreaking research is included in the opening acknowledgment of the volume. Support will also be highlighted in any project press releases and promotion via electronic and print outlets. Additionally, a placard will be placed by the catalogues prominently displayed in the museum shop; it will state that this exhibition and publication would not have been realized without the leading support of The Edward C. & Ann T. Roberts Foundation.

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 as it adds temporary exhibitions to its programming 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?

From preliminary research to image color proofing, every aspect of physical production adheres to the highest standards, in keeping with HSM's advancement from highly regarded regional museum to becoming a small but mighty player on a world stage, with the addition of new galleries and a growing exhibition schedule rooted in our incomparable collection.

Our partners are a testament to HSM's evolution: McCall Associates provides inspired design for museums, commercial galleries, private collections, and publishers, whose prominent clients include Guggenheim Museum and Whitney Museum of

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American Art; Rebecca Roberts, Senior Assistant Editor, Department of Publications, Museum of Modern Art; and essayist George R. Trumbull, IV (one of HSM's Governors) is a scholar with impeccable pedigree.

Education for all, at the heart of HSM's mission, is the bedrock upon which we have undertaken this reexamine of what we thought we knew about Alfred and Theodate, and the museum as we know it.

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

Recent research has identified artworks previously unknown to HSM and revealed significant archival information about those already documented. In particular, there is a rapidly growing body of evidence about the ways Theodate's previously unknown activities have impacted understanding of her father's original, and by extension, HSM's current collection. These exciting findings promise a more comprehensive and nuanced picture to explore and interpret.

This endeavor also aspires to examine and challenge long-held beliefs about Pope's collecting strategies, practices and motivations. Pope, who hailed from modest means and had no formal background in the arts, has long been revered as self-taught and ruggedly independent in the building and refining aspects of collecting. It was believed that he acted without relying on an advisor in any official capacity. Recent scholarship has shown, however, that others did indeed exert influence, including close friend and artist Mary Cassatt

How will this project be evaluated?

The most obvious measurement of success will be the response to the catalogue from HSM's constituency and the general public, quantified via museum shop sales and corresponding visitation to the accompanying exhibition. 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 design excellence, 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 publication excellence.

Cover letter

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

Board list

- [BOG-Directory_July-2022.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

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

Financial statement

- [HSM-2020-Consolidated-Financial-Statement-and-Auditors-Report.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

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- [2021-Budget-Sheet.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

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

Balance sheet

- [2022-June-SOA.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [Project-Budget.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

Yes

Annual report

- [HSM-Annual-Report-2021.pdf](#)

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Yes

Grant Report

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

Other materials?

- [Swinbourne-CV-2022.pdf](#)
- [HillStead-APP-Budget-revised-9-1-22.pdf](#)

HSM's leadership, Trustees and Board of Governors is exceptionally proud to have run the museum with great fiscal responsibility, maintaining a slight annual operational surplus since 2014, except during 2018 when there was a minor deficit, despite the exceptional challenges presented during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the past two especially challenging years we managed to safely reopen the museum, and develop and launch an outdoor performing arts series, bolstering coffers, that is now in its third season. We also completed, on time and within budget, a transformational renovation project to create galleries for rotating exhibitions that will greatly expand and diversify both our programming and audiences served. As of this application, our second exhibition has been on view for one month of its five-month run.

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?

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Yes