

**Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 462****Are you a 501(c)3 organization in good standing with the IRS?**

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, 2025?**

Yes

**Are you a recent grantee?**

Yes

**Enter your Report Code**

Roberts2022

**Organization Name**

Hill-Stead Museum

**Organization's IRS Tax ID #**

060646673

**Principal Contact Name**

Anna Swinbourne

**Title**

Executive Director &amp; CEO

**Email**[swinbournea@hillstead.org](mailto:swinbournea@hillstead.org)**Phone**

(860) 677-4787

**Address**

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

**Website**<https://www.hillstead.org>

**Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 462****Amount requested this application**

\$20,000.00

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

Hill-Stead Museum (HSM), 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 78 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 2019, 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.**

Annual attendance averages 63,000, with nearly two-thirds utilizing the grounds at no charge. While visitors have typically been over age 50 and white, recent years have seen an observational shift. Since 2019 HSM has welcomed more people of all ages and backgrounds. However, quantifying is challenging since POS software does not track age and ethnicity.

Diversifying visitor growth in all realms is a priority, especially Millennials and Gen Z, and a broader ethnic swath of the population.

**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.

**Please describe the diversity of your board by gender and ethnicity/race. Use percentages.**

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The Board of Governors (BOG) is currently comprised of 24 people: 63% female and 37% male; 84% white, 8% Black/African American, 4% Hispanic/LatinX, and 4% Multiracial. Three females identify as people of color, providing a respectable 16% 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 10 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**

The Great Wave: Japonisme at Hill-Stead

**Is this project related to the Visual Arts?**

Yes

**Will the artists associated with this project be financially compensated?**

No

**Project Description**

This exhibition explores the profound influence of Japonisme—the French term referring to Western adaptation and admiration of Japanese art and aesthetics—on cultural and artistic expression in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The show, with objects from HSM's collection and selected loans, will examine the influence of Japanese aesthetics on Impressionist artists, featuring works by Cassatt, Degas, Monet, and Whistler. Through thoughtful pairings of these pieces, with loans of representative Old Masters, we will trace how Japanese compositional techniques such as cropping, flat color planes, high horizon lines, and asymmetrical balance helped catalyze a revolutionary shift in Western art. This visual journey offers more than art historical perspective, it also explores a moment of true cultural exchange, featuring a wide variety of artworks, objects and textiles, when Europe's fascination with Japan sparked a new creative vision that shaped the trajectory of modern art.

**Total estimated project budget**

\$49,890.00

**Project start/opening**

12/11/2025

**Project end/closing**

04/30/2026

**Project venue**

Hill-Stead Museum

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### Project town

Farmington, CT

### Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

Exhibitions are included in admission, regardless of fee or day of week. We have been overjoyed that exhibitions to date, in the still-new gallery, have exceeded attendance expectations; in two instances 50% or more year-to-date. Similar to attendance for the Alfred Pope exhibition, we estimate over 3,000 attendees with around 10% COMP. There will be 107 total viewing days.

The start of spring school field trip season affords an impetus for tailored outreach to boost attendance.

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

Hill-Stead utilizes various marketing formats: social media (Facebook and Instagram), monthly eblasts consisting of Executive Director messages and “Three Things to Do” specifically related to programming, on-site programming fliers placed at museum entry points, ads in the popular quarterly Connecticut Explored magazine that highlight on-going or upcoming exhibitions. Lastly, if loans are successfully secured from the Wadsworth Atheneum, we will collaborate to cross-market this joint endeavor.

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

An exhibition highlight will be one of Theodate Pope Riddle’s dresses exemplifying our thesis: Western admiration and adaptation of Japanese aesthetics on artistic expression. The British-designed evening gown of multi-layered silk and tulle needs treatment by a professional textile conservator prior to display.

Further, professional framing is required to display the entirety of HSM’s woodblock print collection in the gallery.

Any remaining funds will offset shipping and insurance costs

### How will Roberts support be recognized?

Recognition of Roberts Foundation support will be included on all promotional materials and platforms (e.g., website, e-blasts and social media channels), prominently referenced together with any additional funders on the wall text panels in exhibition gallery, and verbally credited in Hill-Stead Executive Director’s remarks at 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 the temporary exhibition program that has become part of HSM’s 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?

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The Asian collections at Hill-Stead have received relatively little research and analysis compared to comparable efforts devoted to the French Impressionist paintings. The curatorial staff is currently researching the nearly 60 decorative arts, textile, and “souvenir” items amassed by the Pope and Riddle families, beyond the 30 famed woodblock prints, to determine historical and societal context and meaning. Following this review, we will consult experts and scholars as needed to further enhance our understanding of these objects.

The research phase of this project directly aligns with this phrase in Hill-Stead’s mission statement: “interprets its exceptional collections”. The scholarship derived from this project will directly result in enhanced interpretation not only pertaining to how the individual items are presented in the context of the exhibition, but also for how these items will be framed during museum tours and future programming.

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

Japanophilia is a solid, though little-known, part of Hill-Stead’s history underscoring the relevance and richness of the museum’s resources in educating and enriching our visitors. Interest in Japanese culture is flourishing, particularly among Millennial and younger generations. In fact, the cover article of the April 27, 2025 issue of The New York Times Style Magazine “T” is titled “J is for Japan: The country that changed modern culture and design, from A to Z.” From anime and fashion to design and cuisine, the enduring appeal of Japanese aesthetics continues to captivate. In the last two years, HSM has witnessed unprecedented interest in this regard. The Senior Curator has received numerous personal inquiries from art teachers to gaming enthusiasts to those seeking a respite amidst personal struggles to view our iconic Hokusai print, Under the Wave off Kanagawa (The Great Wave) from the series “36 Views of Mount Fuji,” underscoring the timeliness and relevance of this exhibition.

### How will this project be evaluated?

When we build well, they come—as evidenced by past exhibitions. In addition to quantitative museum visitation statistics, we will capture visitors’ qualitative reactions. Comments shared directly with staff is a significant indicator of success, as we have witnessed since exhibitions began at HSM in 2021, most notably with our 2022-2023 blockbuster Alfred Pope: An Evolution of Ingenuity, which the Roberts Foundation generously supported.

Specialty public tours and school tours with accompanying learning objectives/outcomes will be designed to disseminate the scholarship. Such tour bookings will assess interest in the subject and programmatic success.

Research to date has yielded heretofore unknown, fascinating, factual and contextual information about these collection objects. The rigorous process alone has been of immeasurable value in our overall grasp of the treasures we steward. The enhanced knowledge will be shared with visitors long after this temporary exhibition closes.

### Cover letter

- [Cover-Letter.pdf](#)

### Board list

- [Hill-Stead-Board-List-Grants-2025.pdf](#)

### IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

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

### Financial statement

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- [2023-Form-990-Hill-Stead-Museum-vPublic.pdf](#)

**Last year operational budget**

- [123124-Actuals-vs-Budget.pdf](#)

**Current year operational budget**

- [2025-HSM-Org-Budget.pdf](#)

**Balance sheet**

- [HSM-Balance-Sheet\\_Q1-2025.pdf](#)

**Project budget**

- [Japonisme-Exhibition-Budget.pdf](#)

**Does your organization produce an annual report?**

Yes

**Annual report**

- [Hill-Stead-Annual-Report-2023.pdf](#)

**Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?**

Yes

**Strategic plan**

- [Targeted-Action-Plan-2023-2025.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-.pdf](#)

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

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Yes

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

Yes