Colby College Museum of Art

STRATEGIC PLAN
2013–2017

Transforming lives through art
The Colby College Museum of Art is a collecting and teaching museum dedicated to the preservation, display and interpretation of the visual arts. We embrace within our collections works of art from diverse cultures and historical periods, with a focus on American Art, and commitment to collecting and exhibiting contemporary art. We manage these resources for the benefit of the Colby College community, the region, and the nation, and aspire to display works that embody the highest standards of achievement.

Colby College Museum of Art
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Late in the summer of 2011 as the Museum was preparing to break ground on its building expansion, the executive and governance leadership also set about launching a planning effort with the goal to guide the institution’s growth over the next five years.

With the help of outside counsel, the Museum conducted a highly inclusive and iterative planning process including a Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Governors led by Seth Thayer as well as a Staff Planning Team led by Sharon Corwin and Patricia King.

Early in the planning process the Board of Governors held a retreat at which important issues facing the Museum were discussed and every member of the board contributed ideas about the Museum’s future direction. As the process unfolded, the Museum conducted faculty and student focus groups as well as a listening session with the Art Department. Throughout the entire process, there were eighteen meetings with every key constituency.

The Board of Governors approved a draft version of this plan at its spring meeting in New York City on April 27, 2012.
Designed as a modernist glass structure on the predominately brick Colby campus, the architecture of the new Alfond-Lunder Family Pavilion announces that the Museum is a place where risks are taken and experimentation is encouraged. Similarly, the architectural design renders certain interior spaces—museum offices and art studios—transparent: a transparency that fosters reflection on the work that takes place in both the presentation and creation of artworks. After dark, these spaces will be illuminated, and the metaphor of the Museum as a lantern encapsulates our vision for the Museum as a site for intellectual and creative illumination. Moreover, with a larger footprint and greater visibility on the Colby campus, the Museum will become a central site for intellectual engagement and student activity. The Museum will sit at the cross-roads of interdisciplinary thinking and the modes of social encounters between students, faculty, and community members that make up the liberal arts experience.

As the Colby College Museum of Art embarks upon the next five years with the opening of the Alfond-Lunder Family Pavilion and the arrival of the Lunder Collection in 2013, it is well positioned to become one of the nation’s great college art museums. With its new wing, greatly expanded collection, and a vibrant exhibition program, the Colby Museum, and subsequently Waterville, will become a destination to experience great art.
The Museum is recognized for its outstanding collection and programs and its exceptional facility. Building from this foundation, we now want to be renown for our innovative partnership with the College, our leadership within the community, and our growing national profile.

The Colby College Museum of Art is poised to exemplify the ideal relationship with an outstanding liberal arts college. As a museum in this context, the Colby Museum assumes unique responsibilities and opportunities. The Museum is not a place where every object should be liked or every exhibition easy to comprehend, but rather a place where questions are posed, assumptions are challenged, and debate is encouraged.

Through scholarly, innovative, and risk-taking exhibitions and programs, the Museum will deliberately put into practice the fundamental goals of a liberal arts education. In a collegial partnership with the Art Department at Colby, the Museum is committed to the advancement and enhancement of visual literacy initiatives at the College. Serving as a visual laboratory through object-based learning, the Museum will assist students from all disciplines and encourage them to become engaged, curious, and critically aware viewers—we will provide them with a new lens for visually mediating their world and with new apertures for understanding art and visual culture.
The Museum will assume a leadership role on campus by bringing the visual arts and artistic expression to the center of the liberal arts experience at Colby. The College’s 2013 strategic plan makes a clear commitment to the visual arts and provides the overarching institutional context for this vision. By increasing its alignment with campuswide initiatives, most significantly with the Center for the Arts and Humanities, the Museum will become a hub of intellectual activity at Colby and a leader in crossdisciplinary study. We will bring arts-centered curricula into dialogue with the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

What can happen, for instance, when a mathematics professor offers a lesson on chaos theory in relation to an abstract painting in the Museum? Connections are made across the curriculum, and students are able to perceive math and art differently: each discipline offers a unique perspective on the other that opens new avenues of intellectual and creative inquiry that can spark critical thinking and problem-solving. Through cross-campus partnerships and deeper integration into the curriculum, the Museum will engender these types of intellectual and creative exchanges across disciplines.
A CONTEXT FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The past decade has seen tremendous growth in the Museum’s collection. During this period, the number of objects in the collection has more than doubled to now include more than 7,000 works of art. Included in this figure are the more than 700 objects that make up the Lunder Collection. The Lunder Collection greatly enhances the Museum’s stature in the field of American Art and brings important works of Asian art into the collection through the Lunder-Colville Chinese Art Collection. In recent years, the Museum has also significantly augmented its holdings in contemporary art, due in large part to gifts from the Alex Katz Foundation. We have expanded the photography collection through generous gifts from the William and Nancy Tsiaras Collection and the Norma B. Marin Collection. Printmaking has enjoyed support through the Lindsay Leard Coolidge Print Fund and Paul J. Schupf’s gift of more than 150 Richard Serra prints.

Through a partial gift, partial purchase, the Museum also holds the complete print oeuvre of the artist Terry Winters, who continues to add new prints to the collection. Meanwhile, additional major gifts and purchases have entered the collection through the generosity of Board members and endowments dedicated for acquisitions. In short, the focus on building the collection over the past decade has achieved unparalleled results, making the Colby Museum one of the most significant collections of American and contemporary art in a liberal arts setting.

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With this extraordinary growth, come expanded responsibilities. The opportunity to make the collection more visible and accessible is one area that we must continue to develop. The digitization of nearly 3,000 objects in the collection was a major initiative achieved during our last strategic plan. Currently available through the Museum’s searchable online database, this digital collection represents a major advancement in access to the collection. Moreover, through a partnership agreement with the Mellon Foundation’s ARTstor, the Museum’s digital collection is now searchable through ARTstor’s interdisciplinary database of more than one million images. We plan to continue our digitization efforts, with a goal of nearly complete collection digitization, in order to fully embrace collection access and use in the 21st century.

Not surprisingly, as we continue to improve access to the collection, we will subsequently experience increased collection use in the form of loan requests, rights and reproduction requests, and class visits to view works in the collection. This latter use presents potentially the greatest challenge to our current resources: with increased outreach to the College inevitably comes increased demand on the collection and the collections management staff. In recent years, the Museum has made great improvements in the areas of collections policy and procedures and implemented stronger risk management controls. We reassert our commitment to make collection safety and care our number one priority. Implementation of a realistic balance between collection care and increased access and use of the collection is a fundamental requirement of our strategic plan. An exhibition program that focuses on greater impacts with fewer exhibitions will help us achieve this goal. Moreover, we must ensure that our staffing resources in the area of collection care and management are sufficient to the level of use that we are experiencing.

Slated to open in Summer 2013, the Alfond-Lunder Family Pavilion will bring newly expanded spaces for exhibitions and programs. With a total increase of 26,000 SF, including 10,000 SF of additional gallery space, the Museum will become the largest in the state of Maine and the largest among its peers in terms of square footage. The expansion will also provide new classroom space for K-12 visitors and related programs, a new teaching gallery for Colby class visits and study of the collection, a new Sculpture Terrace, and an expanded lobby. With the new lobby/sculpture gallery, we see an opportunity to create a new type of space for Colby students and all Museum visitors, where they can
meet socially, study in groups or alone, or experience contemplative or intellectual engagement with artworks on view.

Importantly, this expanded facility will provide new conditions in which to execute our mission, and the plan that follows takes this greatly expanded platform as its central and catalyzing force. The establishment of the Schupf Wing for the Works of Alex Katz in 1996 and the Lunder Wing in 1998 helped to focus the Museum’s presentations of its collection. At present, special exhibitions typically occupy the Davis Gallery and the Jetté Galleries and, much more occasionally, the Lunder Wing. The new Alfond-Lunder Family Pavilion has the potential to further focus the Museum’s collection installations overall while alleviating the too frequent exhibition turnover that the Museum currently experiences. Through the planning effort we have asked ourselves how we can make better use of the core collection to create exhibitions that rotate less frequently yet remain fresh and relevant.

With the new Center for the Arts and Humanities as well as other curricular changes, the opportunity to re-examine the role of the arts in general, and the Museum in particular, will be important elements in charting Colby’s future course. Subsequently, the enhanced role of the Museum in the liberal arts mission of the College emerges as the single most defining aspect of our planning work. One of our guiding questions is how can the Museum be more effectively and systemically integrated into the liberal arts experience at Colby?

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The Museum now welcomes more than one thousand students from eighty Colby courses each year to study exhibitions and objects from the core collection. Opportunities to expand this number are great, however, we want to be cognizant of making the deepest impacts on student engagement while not overreaching in terms of our resources and care of the collection. Thus, we are looking for ways to more effectively partner with faculty to forge links with the curriculum that will achieve sustainable programs. Our natural partners in this endeavor are our colleagues in the Art Department. In addition, the proposed faculty line in American Art will allow us to expand curricular engagement with the core collection even further than we are presently able. The Center for the Arts and Humanities also presents excellent opportunities to more closely align the Museum’s programs with teaching and research across disciplines. Similarly, we see potential to enhance current collaborative programs with the Goldfarb Center for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement.

The Museum’s exhibition strategy will also reflect this desire to position the Museum as a platform of learning within the liberal arts model at Colby. We see opportunities to enhance our current exhibition program with regard to faculty- and student-organized exhibitions, a greater interest in cross-disciplinary initiatives, and increased consideration of loan exhibitions that address historical periods and geographic regions beyond the collection’s purview. While the Museum’s impressive core collection is used extensively in teaching, it does not fully address the diverse teaching needs of the faculty. Through long-term loans, strategic

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acquisitions, and traveling exhibitions, we recognize great opportunities to expand and diversify the types of objects that are available for faculty teaching and research. The opportunity to partner with peer institutions as well as larger scale institutions to diversify the types of objects that we are able to exhibit can greatly strengthen our reach into the curriculum and take fuller advantage of faculty expertise. We continue to ask ourselves where there are opportunities to effectively execute our mission and achieve our goals through collaboration and partnership with others—at the College, in our community, and with our peers in the field.

We also recognize the partnership opportunities that exist in our community and the subsequent potential to position the Museum as a cultural leader in Waterville and Maine. Currently, there is great momentum behind community arts initiatives. A recent CEED grant (Creative Economies = Economic Development) to the City (in partnership with the Museum) from the Maine Arts Commission represents the type of collaborative initiatives that we can pursue. The Museum also offers a broad range of educational programs and services to the surrounding communities in Maine. The Museum works with schools, libraries, and other organizations to serve the needs of local teachers and school children. We welcome approximately three thousand teachers and pupils to the Museum each year for gallery tours and activities led by student and volunteer docents.

During the summer, we offer extended workshops for school children. To be able to offer these services to a traditionally resource-challenged community strengthens our commitment to the region and, importantly, also serves as a
crucial link between the College and the community that can help bridge this divide. While it is the largest museum in terms of square footage in its peer group, the Colby Museum is relatively small in its organizational structure by comparison to many college and university museums. Our size poses both challenges and opportunities. Even as we consider modest growth in some areas, our scale offers significant advantages that should be sustained in the future: we have the ability to collaborate and innovate rapidly and with impact. We offer an intimate platform for collaboration with College faculty and other partners; we can integrate multiple objectives across our programs and activities. At times, our smallness forces us to focus our ambitions more strategically, and in some instances, our size limits the fulfillment of our potential. As we anticipate the growth in facility, collection, and staff that the new addition will bring, we are poised at a tipping point of sorts. We seek to maintain the collaborative character of our team, while recognizing the need to review our organizational structure to be sure that we are meeting our goals as effectively as possible. Moreover, the trust placed in us by the College, our many generous donors, our members, and our visitors requires us to continuously find ways in which we can assess and measure the quality and depth of impact of our efforts. In some cases this will be through independently determined standards and measures and, in other instances, we will employ a range of specific, and sometimes qualitative measures to determine how well we are doing in terms of quality and impact.

Finally, we are well positioned to advance the profile of the Museum to the next level. Future opportunities will present themselves as soon as 2013 with the opening of the Alfond-Lunder Family Pavilion and the planned exhibition of the Lunder Collection. We are increasingly aware of the need for a strategic marketing plan that will carry us through the opening and into the following years. Through focus groups with Colby students, we have also identified the need to better understand and more effectively market the Museum to the student population at Colby.

As we consider innovative ways to reach our public, we are increasingly aware of the role that technology will play in our efforts. The ways in which we seek and engage with information have changed dramatically over the past decade, as have our expectations for how we seek to mediate knowledge. In turn, we must respond thoughtfully to these technological and sociological imperatives to provide access to a greater range and depth of information, to meet both the needs of the student and faculty member on campus, the community member, and the institution or scholar on the other side of the globe.
GOALS FOR FY 2013–2017

Informed by the vision and with consideration of the Museum’s context, there are thirteen principal goals in five areas to be achieved over the life of the plan:

PROTECTING AND STEWARDING THE COLLECTION
1 Establish and maintain a realistic balance between collection preservation, access, and use.
2 Further shape and focus the content, quality, and relevance of the Collection.

ENGAGING WITH THE COLLEGE AND THE LIBERAL ARTS
3 Become an integral part of the Liberal Arts education at Colby College.
4 Establish an exhibitions strategy based on collection strengths that fully supports the teaching needs of the college.
5 Expand visitation among the Colby community.

REACHING THE COMMUNITY AND THE PUBLIC
6 Serve as an educational resource that responds to the needs of the community of Central Maine.
7 Deepen the Museum’s relationships with community stakeholders and partners.
8 Enhance educational experience for the visitor.

BUILDING THE PROFILE OF THE MUSEUM
9 Strengthen the Museum’s public identity as a leading college art museum known for its strengths in contemporary and American art.
10 Enhance public visitation and knowledge of the collection.

SUSTAINING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
11 Create and maintain a more effective and efficient work plan for Museum Staff.
12 Ensure adequate capacity and capabilities to execute the Museum’s mission.
13 Continue to evolve and strengthen Museum governance.
**HISTORY**

**1950s-1980s**

Founded in **1959** and now comprising five wings, nearly 8,000 works and more than 38,000 square feet of exhibition space, the Colby College Museum of Art has built an important collection that specializes in American and contemporary art with additional, select collections of Chinese antiquities and European paintings and works on paper. The Museum serves as a teaching resource for Colby College and is a major cultural destination for the residents of Maine and visitors to the state.

In the early **1950s**, Adeline and Caroline Wing gave paintings by William Merritt Chase, Winslow Homer, and Andrew Wyeth to Colby College. In **1956**, Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton M. Jetté donated their American Heritage Collection, consisting of 76 works by American folk artists. The next year, the College received the Helen Warren and Willard Howe Cummings collection of American paintings and watercolors. Two years later, in **1959**, the Museum opened its first official galleries in the Bixler Art and Music Center. The Jetté Galleries, a major addition designed by E. Verner Johnson and Associates, opened in **1973**.

In that same year, Norma B. Marin and John Marin Jr. gave 25 works of art by John Marin. The John Marin Collection at the Colby College Museum of Art remains the largest collection of Marin’s work in an academic museum in the country. In **1984**, the Museum celebrated its 25th anniversary with the exhibition, Portrait of New England Places, which covered a span of nearly 200 years in American art.

**1990s**

In **1991**, the Museum expanded again, increasing the collection storage facilities and adding the Davis Gallery designed by Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott of Boston. In **1992**, the Museum received a gift of 414 works by Alex Katz from the artist. In **1996**, the Museum inaugurated the Paul J. Schupf Wing for the Works of Alex Katz to house this collection. The collection now holds over 800 works by the artist.

In **1999**, with a lead gift from Peter and Paula Lunder, a new wing opened for the exhibition of Colby’s growing collection of American art. The Lunder Wing, designed by architect Frederick Fisher, comprises 13 galleries and 9,000 square feet of exhibition space for the Colby Museum’s growing collection.
2000–present

In 2000, Richard Serra’s monumental 4-5-6 was installed in the Paul J. Schupf Sculpture Court. This three-part Corten steel sculpture dramatically anchors the courtyard and main entrance to the Museum. In 2002, on the Museum’s east lawn, Seven Walls, a concrete structure by conceptual artist Sol LeWitt, was installed with support for its construction provided by the Jere Abbott Acquisitions Fund.

In 2004, through a partial gift of the artist and Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE), the Museum became the sole repository of the complete print oeuvre of Terry Winters. In 2006, Paul J. Schupf promised the Museum his collection of more than 150 works on paper and one sculpture by the renowned American artist Richard Serra. This gift makes the Colby Museum one of the largest repositories of Serra’s works on paper. In 2007, Peter and Paula Lunder, longtime benefactors of the Museum, promised their outstanding collection to Colby College. The gift included more than 500 works of art, the majority of them by American artists, as well as the forty exceptional examples of ritual and mortuary art that comprise the Lunder-Colville Chinese Art Collection. In 2009, the College approved the designs for the Alfond-Lunder Family Pavilion, named in recognition of a gift from the Harold Alfond Foundation and the partnership and friendship between Harold Alfond and Peter Lunder. This same year, the Museum marked its fiftieth anniversary by presenting the exhibition Art at Colby: Celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Colby College Museum of Art.

In July 2013, the Colby Museum inaugurated the Alfond-Lunder Family Pavilion. Refined and minimalist in design, the glass pavilion completes a circuit with the four existing wings of the Museum. The pavilion provides a spacious lobby that includes a sculpture gallery and terrace, as well as new exhibition galleries, classrooms, expanded collection storage, and staff offices. A three-story wall drawing by conceptual artist Sol LeWitt occupies the glass-enclosed stairwell. The pavilion’s upper floor is dedicated to the College’s art department, providing new studios for photography and fine art foundation classes.
Museum Staff Planning Team
Sharon Corwin, Hannah Williams Blunt, Beth Finch, Stew Henderson, Patricia King, Lauren Lessing, Elizabeth Spear, Matthew Timme, Karen Wickman, Gregory Williams

Strategic Planning Committee
Barbara Alfond, Ted Alfond, Catherine Besteman, Sharon Corwin, Jennifer Diamond, Bevin Engman, Beth Finch, Hilary Hoopes, Patricia King, Lauren Lessing, Paula Lunder, Sandy Thayer, Steve Wurtzler

Faculty and Student Participants

Martha Arterberry (Psychology), Kim Besio (East Asian Studies), Catherine Besteman (Anthropology), Lyn Brown (Education), Todd Coulter (Theatre and Dance), Valerie Dionne (French and Italian), Bevin Engman (Art) Jim Fleming (Science, Technology and Society), Gary Green (Art), Paul Greenwood (Biology), Whitney King (Chemistry), Michael Marlais (Art), Harriett Matthews (Art), Garry Mitchell (Art), Lydia Moland (Philosophy), Luis Millones (Spanish), Tarja Raag (Psychology), Scott Reed (Art), Kevin Rice (Chemistry), Laura Saltz (American Studies), David Simon (Art), Katherine Stubbs (English), Scott Taylor (Mathematics), John Turner (History), Ankeney Weitz (Art), Steve Wurtzler (Cinema Studies)

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