
MUSCATINE ART CENTER PRESS RELEASE

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MUSCATINE ART CENTER REACCREDITATION PROCESS NEARLY COMPLETE

Peer review visit from reaccreditation commission scheduled this month



MUSCATINE, Iowa – For the last several years, the Muscatine Art Center staff and Board of Trustees have been at work preparing for reaccreditation review by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). Now, the organization is preparing for the next phase, a peer-reviewed virtual site visit to take place at the end of March.

The Muscatine Art Center was first accredited in 1993 and re-accredited in 2006. The reaccreditation process, ordinarily undertaken every 10 years, was modified by AAM leading to changes in the timetable for the Muscatine Art Center’s accreditation review. According to a press release issued by AAM in November 2020, AAM is “the only organization representing the entire scope of the museum community” and “of the nation’s estimated 33,000 museums, 1,087 are currently accredited.”

Through a “rigorous process of self-assessment and review by their peers”, museums that earn accreditation have demonstrated that “they meet standards and best practices, and are

educational entities that are appropriate stewards of the collections and resources they hold in the public trust.”

“Accreditation review is an important undertaking,” Melanie Alexander, Director of the Muscatine Art Center, said. “However, being accredited is not just about the work that takes place in the years and months before the review.

“The staff and board take seriously our duty to the public and our call to carry out the mission of the Muscatine Art Center,” Alexander said. “That’s why we continuously seek ways to improve our community engagement through delivery of programs and exhibitions, our care of collections and facilities, and our organization’s overall wellbeing through planning and professional management practices.”

The Muscatine Art Center is a department within the City of Muscatine, and Alexander gave a presentation to City Council about accreditation in January 2019. In a letter to the Accreditation Commission, Muscatine Mayor Diana Broderson stated:

“On behalf of the governing authority of the City of Muscatine, the parent organization of the Muscatine Art Center, I certify that it (City of Muscatine): values the museum as an intellectual and educational resource; sees the museum and its collections as essential components of what it does; is committed to the museum’s continued success in fulfilling its mission and meeting its public trust responsibilities, especially with regard to the collections; and, is committed to following American Alliance of Museums and museum field standards, particularly with regard to the museum’s collections and collecting and gift acceptance policies.”

A LITTLE HISTORY

On May 20, 1965, the Mayor of Muscatine, Robert Bosch, signed a city ordinance establishing a municipal art museum and gallery. The museum is governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees. The Muscatine Art Center collects, preserves, interprets and exhibits objects of historical and aesthetic importance for the benefit of present and future generations. Educational programs are provided for people of all ages.

The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for the Muscatine Art Center and engages professional staff to care for, preserve, and enhance the permanent collection, manage and maintain the facilities and grounds, and fulfill the educational mission and other objectives of the Muscatine Art Center.

The Laura Musser Museum, later renamed the Muscatine Art Center, has been an important gathering place for the Muscatine community. Laura Musser McColm's niece, Mary Musser Gilmore, and Laura's stepdaughter, Mary Catherine Atkins McWhirter, jointly offered the home to the City of Muscatine and established a trust to aid in the maintenance of the house.

Over generations, Muscatine children have participated in school and youth group programs and studio classes, families have attended cultural events, adults have further developed their artistic skills and deepened their knowledge of local history and art related topics. Since 1976, the Stanley Gallery has displayed countless changing art and history exhibitions. Today, first time visitors and longtime friends alike are captivated by the historic home, the collection, and the stories presented in exhibitions.

The Muscatine Art Center is located at 1314 Mulberry Avenue in Muscatine, Iowa. Hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Thursday 10 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Admission is free. Donations are appreciated. Visitors are asked to wear a mask, sanitize their hands upon entering the building (hand sanitizer is provided), practice physical distancing of six feet, and follow instructions provided by staff who monitor the number of visitors in each space and restrict movement into spaces that have reached capacity. Visit www.muscatineartcenter.org or call 563-263-8282 for more information about programs and events.