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# "Far Too Female": Museums as the New Pink-Collar Profession - An Introductory Analysis of Pay Inequity within American Art Museums

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“FAR TOO FEMALE”: MUSEUMS AS THE NEW PINK-COLLAR PROFESSION  
*AN INTRODUCTORY ANALYSIS OF PAY INEQUITY WITHIN AMERICAN ART MUSEUMS*

Taryn R. Nie

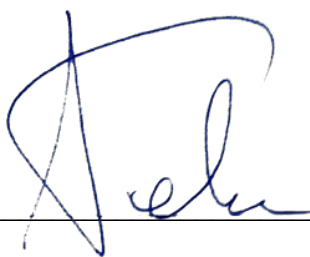
A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Museum Professions  
College of Communication and the Arts

Seton Hall University  
August 2017

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AN INTRODUCTORY ANALYSIS OF PAY INEQUITY WITHIN AMERICAN ART MUSEUMS*

Taryn R. Nie

Approved by:  \_\_\_\_\_

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## Abstract

This thesis seeks to unpack the intricate cycle of gender discrimination and pay inequity that plagues art museums, and calls for top-down solutions that will affect systemic change. The predominately female museum workforce has perpetuated salaries that often do not represent a living wage – women did not choose to enter a low-paying field, the field is low-paying because it is disproportionately female. Ultimately, the field should confront the ethical dimensions of substandard salaries, and director-staff wage gaps, by making significant changes at the board level and incorporating salary standard language into the AAM's Code of Ethics. Beyond this moral/ethical imperative is an economic one – pay equity leads to better workforce performance, thus better quality programs/exhibitions, and ultimately brings the field closer to their holy grail of a larger, more engaged, and diversified audience.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> While sub-standard salaries can be found throughout the museum field, research has shown that gender negatively affects the careers of women in art museums to an acute degree. Not only does a glass ceiling exist, but the sector is built on a model of “sweat equity” – low pay for labors of love – while the top six institutions’ net assets total \$18 billion. Executive-level staff at art museums tend to make more than their counterparts at other museums, but this does not carry over to entry- or mid-level staff. For further reading, see John Kreidler, "Leverage Lost: The Nonprofit Arts in the Post-Ford Era," *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 26, no. 2 (July 1996); Donna G. Herron et al., "The Effect of Gender on the Career Advancement of Arts Managers," *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 28, no. 1 (January 1998).

With utmost gratitude to family and friends, ever the buoys.

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## Introduction

Why are art museum staff salaries traditionally low? It is not purely because the sector is strapped for cash, as is so often touted. Low salaries, often not even representing a living wage, are in large part due to the fact that the field is dominated by women.

“You are far too young and far too female to have a curator ever report to you.”<sup>1</sup> This overtly sexist statement was made to Kaywin Feldman, Director of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, during an interview for a position at a large art museum in Texas when she was 31 years old. She felt the need to reiterate this belittling sentiment, which she has encountered repeatedly throughout her 22-year museum career, at the American Alliance of Museum’s (AAM) 2016 Annual Meeting because implicit sexism and gender inequity still dominates the profession. Yes, 2016 – 168 years since the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, 53 years since the Equal Pay Act of 1963, and 43 years since the AAM’s Women’s Caucus was formed in 1973. And a mere year prior to the Women’s March on January 21, in which more than one million participants across seven continents rallied for human rights.

Since the election of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States, the American public, and especially women, are at a defining crossroads – socially, culturally, politically, ethically. For many, Trump has become an icon of misogyny and his election has highlighted the ongoing need to defend women’s rights. But far too many others see in his actions, rhetoric, and appointment an unprecedented opportunity for their latent discrimination to frolic in the sun and become normalized.

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<sup>1</sup> Kaywin Feldman, “Power, Influence and Responsibility” (video of remarks, 2016 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo, American Alliance of Museums, Washington, DC, May 27, 2016), posted July 5, 2016, accessed March 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMCJU8I0IUM>.

Art museums, like all institutions and individuals, face the choice of complaisance with or resistance to the new order. This socio-political moment is exceptional, and all of America's cultural institutions will be tested – asked to critically evaluate their ethical obligations and active embodiment of equality, an ideal the entire nation should aim for. At face value, they seem to be doing so. “Inclusivity,” “equality,” and “diversity” have become buzzwords that define the future of museums.<sup>2</sup> The terms are cropping up at conferences, on blogs, and in strategic plans internationally – but nearly always in reference to audience. All the talk of equality by change-makers and visionaries in the field rarely turns the lens inward to address one glaring inconsistency – the treatment of museum staff. In this area, equality – particularly of pay – is hard to find. Women make up two-thirds of the art museum workforce, and not only are entry- and mid-level staff salaries lower than counterparts in other fields with the same educational background that do similar work (such as librarians or teachers), but in many museums a vast gender pay gap exists when it comes to remuneration at directorship levels.

While liberal attitudes and socially progressive discourse envelop an art museum's exterior, poor salaries reflect a patriarchal internal hierarchy. Unfortunately, museums have thus far turned a blind eye to the ethical dimensions of living wages and identified their shortcomings as external, not internal, problems. Institutions across the board – small to large, history to art to science – are striving to maintain relevance by upping the ante of visitorship. A focus on branding and marketing, relatable and relevant programming/exhibitions, and technology use have become the go-to solutions for increasing equal access and engagement with visitors across

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<sup>2</sup> AAM and its Center for the Future of Museums have numerous resources identifying these trends, most recently: *Gateways for Understanding: Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion in Museums* (2017 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo, St. Louis, MO, May 7-10, 2017); and Elizabeth E. Merritt, *Center for the Future of Museums: Trendswatch 2017* (American Alliance of Museums, 2017); available at <https://aam-us.org/docs/default-source/center-for-the-future-of-museums/trendswatch-2017.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.

all ethnic, racial, class, and gender backgrounds. Museums are increasingly embracing their social role, promoting themselves as a community's "third place:" a welcoming atmosphere ranking alongside home and work, which addresses the community's needs and where all voices are represented and respected. All are worthy ambitions. But such external espousals of high ideals seem disingenuous, and short-sighted, when the problems inside are ignored.

True change must come from within. Museums have the chance to become leaders in workplace pay equity. Yet, if historical trends continue uninterrupted, museums are poised to cement their status as a pink-collar profession with large armies of women in the underpaid lower rungs and a handful of (white) men in the highly-paid upper tiers. Employees are a museum's most valuable asset, and wage equity – at all levels – should be at the heart of museum discourse. However, even as comprehensive salary studies by AAM and the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) have become more regular, and a coalition of museum professionals have recently organized to thoroughly address the issue, it is still mired in myth and an aversion to the topic at the highest – and most influential – levels persists.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis seeks to unpack the intricate cycle of gender discrimination and pay inequity that plague the field, and calls for top-down solutions that will effect systemic change. Chapter 1 discusses the issue through a socio-science lens, for in order for museum-specific practices to be thoroughly understood they need to be framed in the clarifying context of gender discrimination entrenched within American society. The specific practices within the field – from volunteerism, to advanced degree requirements, to male-dominated boards – that perpetuate gender and pay inequity are the focus of Chapter 2.

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<sup>3</sup> Namely the Gender Equity in Museums Movement (GEMM), launched in January 2017 and discussed in Chapter 4.

In order to evaluate this gender imbalance and salary discrimination firsthand, primary research was conducted into the financial documents of the ten wealthiest American art museums. The results, with comparative analysis to national museum salary surveys and augmented by living wage metrics, are presented in Chapter 3. Current professional attempts to address these systemic issues are discussed in Chapter 4, while Chapter 5 and the Conclusion call for the ethical imperative of remedying pay inequity at the highest levels – institutional boards and an amendment to the AAM’s Code of Ethics. After a series of governmental legislation has persistently failed to close the pay gap, it is clear that mandates cannot be relied up to solely fix the problem. There are countless other areas in which museums hold themselves to a higher ethical standard than the law requires – why not this one?

The substantive original research component of this topic is raw fiscal data, which has been independently harvested from a variety of financial documents affiliated with the respective institutions that form the comparative base – IRS Form 990s, audited financial statements, annual and trust reports, budget requests, consolidated statements of activities, and so on. Supporting these primary statistics are numerous secondary sources communicating recent literature convening one or more of the topics of museums, gender, salary, and biases.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> An initial component of primary research was an originally developed survey on the gender-salary connection within art museums. Despite widespread distribution, the salary had nominal response, likely due to the sensitive nature of the subject. The survey draft language, however, is in Appendix A.

## Chapter 1

### Myth No. 1: The Gender Pay Gap Does Not Exist

#### *Entrenched, Not Erased: Putting Museum Practice in Context Through a Socio-Science Lens*

While sub-standard salaries can be found throughout the museum field, research has shown that gender negatively affects the careers of women in art museums to an acute degree. A glass ceiling is compounded by a sector built on a model of “sweat equity:” low pay for labors of love, or what Elizabeth Merritt calls the “museum sacrifice measure.”<sup>5</sup> The top six institutions’ net assets total \$18 billion – and while senior staff members reap the benefits of such fiscal prestige, predominantly female entry- and mid-level employee salaries remain stagnant and substandard.<sup>6</sup> While art museums must take responsibility, they are not alone. Economical gender discrimination is entrenched within American society, and it is precisely through this socio-science lens that museum-specific practices can be thoroughly understood.

Take the example of Museum of Modern Art director, Glenn Lowry, who raked in \$2.2 million in 2016 while an entry-level museum shop worker scraped by with a paltry \$29,000 – before taxes. A senior visitor-services assistant kept barely afloat, just \$48 between her and the poverty line on a monthly basis.<sup>7</sup> But with upper-management dominated by men and women filling out the lower-paid ranks, MoMA’s employee gender distribution is sadly representative of the field. The majority of art museum workers are gravely underpaid, to the point of not earning

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<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth E. Merritt, “The Museum Sacrifice Measure,” *Museum*, Jan/Feb 2016, 46-51, accessed March 2017, <http://www.aam-us.org/docs/default-source/resource-library/the-museum-sacrifice-measure.pdf?sfvrsn=0>.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>7</sup> Emma Whitford, “MoMA Employees Protest ‘Modern Art, Ancient Wages’,” *Gothamist*, June 3, 2015, accessed March 2017, [http://gothamist.com/2015/06/03/moma\\_employees\\_protest.php](http://gothamist.com/2015/06/03/moma_employees_protest.php).

a living wage, due to implicit gender bias and discrimination. The *2015 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation: Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey* found that females make up 60 percent of museum staff. In some institutions, that number rises as high as 94 percent. When it comes to director positions, 43 percent are female but with significant salary inequalities – and only two women hold director positions at large encyclopedic museums with budgets over \$30 million. Furthermore, it appears the field will continue to become more female-dominated over time based on the gender of its younger employees – what the Mellon Foundation refers to as the “youth bulge” (we will avoid the sexist connotations of that very phrase).<sup>8</sup>

A sector that overwhelmingly consists of underpaid women is termed a “pink-collar profession,” and with that disparaging designation come a number of issues. Because a high number of women are employed in museums, it seems that gender equality has been achieved and the field can move on to other hot-button issues. Right? Wrong. One cannot associate gender equality with sheer employment numbers, but one must look at the *quality* of employment, particularly when it comes to fair salaries. Simply put, pink-collar professions – a politically correct way of saying “women’s work”<sup>9</sup> – have been devalued by the American labor market and see lower salaries on the whole. Art museums have become a woman’s profession in numbers, and if widespread sub-standard salaries persist the field will soon solidly join the pink-collar ranks. What must be unpacked, then, is why women have come to dominate the field and accept the low salaries offered. In order to do so, one must step back and view the art museum as part of

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<sup>8</sup> Roger Schonfeld et al., *The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation: Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey* (Andrew W. Mellon Foundation: July 28, 2015), 10, accessed March 2017, [https://mellon.org/media/filer\\_public/ba/99/ba99e53a-48d5-4038-80e1-66f9ba1c020e/awmf\\_museum\\_diversity\\_report\\_aamd\\_7-28-15.pdf](https://mellon.org/media/filer_public/ba/99/ba99e53a-48d5-4038-80e1-66f9ba1c020e/awmf_museum_diversity_report_aamd_7-28-15.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Term popularized by Louise Kapp Howe, *Pink Collar Workers: Inside the World of Women’s Work* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1977).

the broader social context in which it exists – one in which underlying sexism collides with a “do what you love” labor culture to ultimately exploit the female worker. Unfortunately, those who think such exploitation is acceptable are not just men.

Take Claudia Goldin, for example. Goldin was the first woman to gain tenure in Harvard University’s economics department – and she staunchly disagrees with the idea that salary discrepancy is due to the “smoking gun” of discrimination. Instead, she asserts the chief contributor to the gap is the different choices men and women make throughout their careers. Men value income growth while women value “temporal flexibility,” leading to a gender-divide when it comes to job selection. According to Goldin, women pursue jobs that give them the latitude to be caregivers – in terms of hours, schedule, amenities, or location – and their lower salaries simply reflect these choices over time. Meanwhile, men choose jobs with longer, less flexible hours and are duly rewarded for their dedication. “They’re receiving less than men for a host of reasons, one of which is that they’re not working the same amount of time,” says Goldin, “and in many occupations, working more hours or being there when the firm wants you to be there earns you a lot more.” In other words, the oft-cited statistic that women earn 80 cents for every dollar a man does is misleading – females are just choosing jobs that pay less, such as museum work.<sup>10</sup> (The national pay ratio between men and women reached 80/100 cents in 2015, while female art museum directors, on average, earned 73/100 in 2016.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Stephen J. Dubner, host, “The True Story of the Gender Pay Gap” (podcast), *Freakonomics*, January 7, 2016, accessed March 2017, <http://freakonomics.com/podcast/the-true-story-of-the-gender-pay-gap-a-new-freakonomics-radio-podcast/>.

<sup>11</sup> Catherine Hill, *The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap* (American Association of University Women, Spring 2017 ed.), 4, accessed March 2017, [http://www.aauw.org/aauw\\_check/pdf\\_download/show\\_pdf.php?file=The-Simple-Truth](http://www.aauw.org/aauw_check/pdf_download/show_pdf.php?file=The-Simple-Truth); and Veronica Treviño et al., *The Ongoing Gender Gap in Art Museum Directorships* (Association of Art Museum Directors, 2017), 5, accessed March 2017, <https://aamd.org/sites/default/files/document/AAMD%20NCAR%20Gender%20Gap%202017.pdf>.

Is Goldin’s assessment correct? It seems “choice” and “option” are very different things, and the scenario above seems to be riddled with gender bias and societal expectations – nuances which Goldin certainly recognizes but are hard to quantify from an economics standpoint. Investigating the idea of female “choice” is critical to understanding labor discrimination in the United States, and thus within the museum field. Yes, in part, the pay gap reflects choices. It would be ingenuous to say otherwise. But while women and men do choose different majors and occupations, women are subjected to pay gaps regardless of education or career choice. Even Goldin agrees that occupational segregation exists, although it has been steadily decreasing over the last 40 years (in large part to women forcing their way into the male-professional sphere). But men and women are still being paid different amounts at the same professional levels, and progress has stalled in recent years. Even the Department of Labor seems to confuse and conflate (and ignore the underlying societal pressures between) the two:

Although additional research in this area is clearly needed, this study leads to the unambiguous conclusion that the differences in the compensation of men and women are the result of a multitude of factors and that the raw wage gap should not be used as the basis to justify corrective action. Indeed, there may be nothing to correct. The differences in raw wages may be almost entirely the result of the individual *choices* being made by both male and female workers.<sup>12</sup> (emphasis added)

While a less official source than the Department of Labor, a Twitter exchange that erupted during the 2016 panel “What We Talk About When We (Don’t) Talk About Women in Museums” echoed a very similar misconception concerning female choice (transcribed from actual Twitter conversations):

**Grace Astrove:** Talk about money!!! #payequity #feminism #AAM2016  
**Silvius Br4b0:** @GracieAstrove and or choose different career choices

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, foreword to *An Analysis of Reasons for the Disparity in Wages Between Men and Women* (CONSAD Research Corporation, January 12, 2009), 2, accessed March 2017, <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/public-policy/hr-public-policy-issues/Documents/Gender%20Wage%20Gap%20Final%20Report.pdf>.



**Diana Does Museums:** @PaulShikari @GracieAstrove I'll work where I want & deserve to be paid exact as much as any other human (man or woman) w/same qualification  
**Silvius Br4b0:** @DianaDoesMuseums @GracieAstrove Work the same hours with the same experience as your male counterpart and you will.  
**Silvius Br4b0:** @rkassman @DianaDoesMuseums @GracieAstrove Its called the earnings gap and that because women CHOOSE not to make as much as men.<sup>13</sup>

As evidenced here, commonly held misconceptions about the gender wage gap, concerning hours worked and choices made, are disconcertingly prevalent. The fact is, however, that if a field becomes dominated by women, taking on the same exact jobs men were doing before, the pay literally drops. How's that for a splash of cold, gender-biased water in the face? This decline persists even when controlling for such factors as education (women are now better educated than men overall), work experience, skills, race, and location. Why? The reason is simple, but sobering. Once a woman starts doing a job, it appears to require less skill and thus is not as important to an organization's net earnings.<sup>14</sup> Women are not picking positions of lesser skill or value, according to Paula England, a sociology professor at New York University: "It's just that the employers are deciding to pay it less." The inverse is also true – when men begin to outnumber women in a field or position, pay increases because the work is perceived to have a

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<sup>13</sup> Twitter exchange during "What We Talk About When We (Don't) Talk About Women in Museums," (panel presentation, 2016 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo, American Alliance of Museums, Washington, DC, May 26-29, 2016), May 28, 2016 (5:59 a.m.), accessed March 2017, <https://twitter.com/GracieAstrove/status/736542296305324033>.

<sup>14</sup> Asaf Levanon et al., "Occupational Feminization and Pay: Assessing Casual Dynamics Using 1950-2000 U.S. Census Data," *Social Forces* 88, no. 2 (December 2009): 865-891, accessed March 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.0.0264>.

higher value.<sup>15</sup> A recent Cornell study poses that sheer discrimination may be to blame, finding that it alone may be responsible for 38 percent of the gender pay gap.<sup>16</sup>

These studies stand in stark contrast to Goldin's theory of "temporal flexibility" and her conclusion that discrimination is no longer a primary agent of pay equity. More importantly, they shed much-needed light on the discriminatory culture that exists within museums. It is a culture in which males dominate upper-tier positions, and as slow progress is made and women ascend to leadership roles the salaries afforded those roles decrease; meanwhile, positions further down the hierarchy (such as education and collections management) are dominated by women and the sub-standard salaries reflect that very clearly. Museum work has become devalued because it is a woman's profession.

Which leads us to the second half of the question – why are women more willing to accept lower salaries?

From a social science perspective, gender norms and expectations begin affecting the subconscious at a young age. Throughout their school years, for example, girls and boys are often counseled (intentionally or unintentionally) toward certain occupations that adhere to typical gender traits. One such assumption that is imprinted early on on the female psyche, and with which Goldin's "temporal flexibility" supposition aligns, is that females achieve for the satisfaction of others while males achieve for tangible rewards. Thus, based purely on social constructs of accepted gender roles, girls are funneled toward "nurturing" sectors such as nursing

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<sup>15</sup> Claire Cain Miller, "As Women Take Over a Male-Dominated Field, the Pay Drops," *New York Times*, March 18, 2016, accessed March 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/upshot/as-women-take-over-a-male-dominated-field-the-pay-drops.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn, "The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations," *IZA Institute of Labor Economics*, no. 9656 (January 2016): 8, accessed March 2017, <http://ftp.iza.org/dp9656.pdf>.

and teaching – in which “eager to please” is an unspoken prerequisite – while boys are propelled toward corporations and the sciences. This segregation denies the fact that women, as humans, desire the “basic satisfaction of seeing their work rewarded with money” and are equally eager to compete, rise to new challenges, and hone new skills.<sup>17</sup> Over time, it is such siphoning that has created entire pink-collar professions in which woman are expected to work primarily for the benefit of others rather than remuneration.

It is this socio-historically constructed mindset that allows women to more easily accept and museums to more easily offer – with a clear conscience – salaries that do not represent a living wage. The tradeoff is the conviction that they are helping the museum fulfill its altruistic ambitions, which aligns neatly with the selflessness women are socially expected to espouse. Female work for little (or no) pay has become normalized over centuries – and the underlying attitude of this gender discrimination has become entangled with the American workforce’s current “do what you love” (DWYL) phase. Millennials, especially, seem enamored with the idea that one should not work simply for a paycheck (how prosaic!) but that one’s chosen career path should nourish one’s passions and stimulate one’s creative spirit. But Miya Tokumitsu, the author of *Do What You Love: And Other Lies About Success and Happiness*, argues that this emphasis on DWYL is crippling the American worker in mental, social, and economic ways. “It leads not to salvation, but to the devaluation of actual work, including the very work it pretends to elevate — and more importantly, the dehumanization of the vast majority of laborers,” says Tokumitsu.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Elgin F. Hunt and David C. Colander, *Social Science: An Introduction to the Study of Society*, 15<sup>th</sup> ed. (Routledge, 2013), 242, 244.

<sup>18</sup> Miya Tokumitsu, “In the Name of Love,” *Jacobin*, January 12, 2014, accessed March 2017, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/01/in-the-name-of-love/>.

The industrial complex has convinced employees that work is self-satisfying, fulfills one's own genuine aspirations, and thus a decent paycheck is an unnecessary cherry on the cake. Consequently, employees accept low wages, their position depreciates over time, and they lose economic stability while clinging to a rickety social ladder – all while being made to feel guilty for needing something as base as money, a process of dehumanization that can take a great toll on mental and emotional health.

With a largely female base that has been socially conditioned to such labor dehumanization, art museums have supremely exploited the DWYL trend – particularly with a long tradition of employing volunteers, usually women of independent means who found satisfaction and validation through their devotion of time and effort. How many times are museum professionals told to accept the barely-living-wage fate and just be thankful to have a meaningful job in a field they are genuinely passionate about? In museums, as in other sectors, DWYL prompts workers to believe their labor is disconnected – in a pure, altruistic way – from the marketplace and reduced compensation is for the greater organizational good, not due to broader management biases. Thus, wages are depressed as an oversupply of highly qualified (female) individuals are “willing to underbid each other to secure the non-financial benefits of museum work.”<sup>19</sup> Such perceived benefits include pursuing public betterment, education, arts appreciation, and working with objects one may have spend years becoming a scholarly expert in – in other words, doing what one loves.

The majority of underpaid museum work is that which is largely invisible, another workplace characteristic to which women are accustomed – educators who train unpaid docents, assistant curators who perform research for senior curators, collections staff in the basement

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<sup>19</sup> Merritt, “The Museum Sacrifice Measure.”

writing condition reports. Instead of appropriately recognizing, and respecting, these jobs' fundamental role to the museums economic success they are financially degraded. Directors and senior curators, on the other hand, have salaries commensurate that reflect their greater visibility. But, nonetheless, art museums across the country require personal passion from all employees while their compensation remains an afterthought. And each time female workers decide not to leave for higher-paying jobs outside the field, or ask for a decent wage for a current position, the museum has conditioned them to reaffirm to themselves that their choice to stay is the ethical one, upholding both personal needs and values as well as that of the institution. An ironic twist, when it is the art museum that refuses to confront its own ethical underbelly.

## Chapter 2

### Myth No. 2: Art Museums Do Not Discriminate

*The Vicious Cycle of Gender Discriminatory Practices,  
Hiring Biases, and Sub-Standard Salaries in Art Museums*

While Goldin said it may be hard to find a workplace in which women are underpaid purely on the basis of gender discrimination, she may have been wrong. The art museum provides an example of precisely this situation. The relationship between museums and femininity is a fraught one, and the idea of gender bias within museums walls is not new. By now, the underrepresentation of female artists and feminine histories within museum collections and exhibitions is a widely accepted fact that most art museums are still struggling to amend. But it is only recently that minor attention is starting to be given to how the societal biases and femmephobia that have shaped museum narratives throughout history have been playing out in the museum workforce for equally long.

Before the Guerrilla Girls came together in 1985 to give voice to gender discrimination in the art world – from representation in museums to opportunities to funding – the issue was largely hush-hush. Just as the Guerilla Girls gave a voice to female artists, it is important now that a voice be given to female art museum staff members who continue to face hiring biases and menial salaries. In order to do so, long entrenched practices within a field that has long practiced gender bias in recruitment, hiring, and pay must be addressed and reevaluated. The most glaring of these are a tradition of unpaid volunteerism and internships, the requirement of advanced degrees for entry level positions, a glass ceiling for museum professionals that is difficult to break through, and predominantly male boards of trustees at the wealthiest institutions.

*Unpaid Volunteers and Internships: Economically and Culturally Feminized*

“Compliant, silent and mostly female, interns have become the happy housewives of the working world.”<sup>20</sup>

Technically, all unpaid museum interns are volunteers. Under most state laws governing wages and work hours, as soon as a non-profit compensates an intern he/she legally becomes an employee, which means he/she must be paid at least minimum wage and is subject to withholdings.<sup>21</sup>

As an endless cycle of unpaid internships have become a cultural norm, even a necessity, for the millennial generation, the term “Intern Industrial Complex” has been coined. The complex describes a “permanent intern underclass: educated members of the millennial generation who are locked out of the traditional career ladder and are having to settle for two, three and sometimes more internships after graduating college, all with no end in sight.”<sup>22</sup>

Internships offer no guarantee of full-time, or even part-time, employment. And this is especially true in arts institutions – for-profit and non-profit alike – galleries, auction houses, and museums.<sup>23</sup>

Although rigorous internship data are minimal, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) conducted a survey in 2015 which provided statistical evidence that paid

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<sup>20</sup> Madeleine Schwartz, “Opportunity Costs: The True Price of Internships,” *Dissent Magazine*, Winter 2013, accessed May 2017, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/opportunity-costs-the-true-price-of-internships>.

<sup>21</sup> “Interns: Employee or Volunteer,” National Council of Nonprofits, accessed May 2017, <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/interns-employee-or-volunteer>; and “Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs under the Fair Labor Standards Act,” U.S. Department of Labor: Wage and Hour Division, April 2010, accessed May 2017, <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> Alex Williams, “For Interns, All Work and No Payoff,” *New York Times*, February 14, 2014, accessed May 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/16/fashion/millennials-internships.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Ross Perlin, *Intern Nation: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2011).

internships are more likely to lead to offers of full-time job employment, with higher salaries, than unpaid ones. In the nonprofit sector, 51.7 percent of paid interns received offers compared to only 41.5 percent of unpaid interns, and the formers' median salary offer was \$41,876 versus the latters' \$31,443.<sup>24</sup>

Despite knowledge of this disparity, the majority of art museums offer primarily unpaid internships. This is in line with the rest of the non-profit sector (the top provider of unpaid internships at 57 percent of those offered) and no surprise given the museum's volunteer philosophy and tight financial status (a claim some institutions can make with more integrity than others).<sup>25</sup> And yes, some offer excellent internship programs with small stipends, but they are the exception rather than the rule. By perpetuating this cycle of unpaid labor, art museums are exploiting the craving emerging professionals have to mold their passions into fulfilling careers – even if that means slogging through years of no to little compensation.

The ethics of unpaid internships are prickly, bringing forth the charged issues of class privilege, economic status, and even institutionalized wage theft. The contentious discussions focus primarily on what implications the prevalence of unpaid work has on diversity within the profession, whether it poses a barrier to those without financial cushioning. While this is certainly a critical dialogue, I contend that a lack of diversity is an outcome of the “intern industrial complex,” not a cause. At the root is the gender-salary link, an issue on which the field is far less aggressive and largely silent. Arguably, the more essential ethical question is: Why is

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<sup>24</sup> “Paid Interns/Co-Ops See Greater Offer Rates and Salary Offers Than Their Unpaid Classmates,” National Association of Colleges and Employers, March 23, 2016, accessed May 2017, <http://www.nacweb.org/job-market/internships/paid-interns-co-ops-see-greater-offer-rates-and-salary-offers-than-their-unpaid-classmates/>.

<sup>25</sup> Phil Gardner, *The Debate Over Unpaid College Internships* (Intern Bridge, 2011), 6, accessed May 2017, <http://www.ceri.msu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Intern-Bridge-Unpaid-College-Internship-Report-FINAL.pdf>.



free intern labor – seen by many as glaringly unethical – allowed to continue as a de facto requirement to pursuing an art museum career and an indispensable cog within many museum’s operations? And, subsequently, how does the dominance of and reliance on unpaid internships relate to salaries that often do not represent a living wage? And finally, is it a coincidence that a field that perpetuates unpaid volunteers and interns also happens to have a predominantly female staff?

Think of the words and phrases that pop up repeatedly in internship postings – “enthusiastic,” “flexible,” “positive attitude,” and “capable of taking direction.” Such phrases could as easily be describing the ideal secretary as the ideal intern. These qualities align with historically female labor traits, whether at home or in the workplace. They imply unflinching pleasantness, obedience, malleability, and outward displays of gratitude – for any task, for no pay. A 2015 study in the *International Journal of Arts Management* found that 40 percent of female students, compared to only 13 percent of males, “disagreed that they would work harder during a paid as opposed to an unpaid internship.” On the other hand, more males than females “agreed or strongly agreed they would work harder during a paid internship” (36 percent and 32 percent versus 23 percent and 23 percent).<sup>26</sup> In other words, females have been socialized to work just as hard at a job with no external reward as one with (salary, benefits, promotion, etc.) because of an unspoken belief in largely intangible benefits.

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<sup>26</sup> Antonio C. Cuyler and Anne R. Hodges, “From the Student Side of the Ivory Tower: An Empirical Study of Student Expectations of Internships in Arts and Cultural Management,” *International Journal of Arts Management* 17, no. 3 (Spring 2015): 68-79, 94, accessed May 2017, <https://fsu.digital.flvc.org/islandora/object/fsu%3A330448>.

Such beliefs have long been instilled in women. Take this 1930s ad for Kellogg's PEP breakfast cereal (fig. 1). The comic book style headline exclaims "So the harder a wife works, the cuter she looks!" as the admiring husband asks, "Gosh, honey, you seem to thrive on cooking, cleaning and dusting – and I'm all tuckered out by closing time. What's the answer?" Cereal and male validation, presumably. As this sexist ad so appallingly demonstrates, women's work has long been considered an expression of love and duty, making monetary compensation obsolete. A satisfied husband – or boss – is all the reward a woman needs. The mere *opportunity* of an internship at a big name art museum, just like the opportunity to cook her family dinner, is what the female intern is expected to be visibly grateful for.



Figure 1. Kellogg's® Pep™ ad. Ca. 1930. *New York Daily News*, "Sexist Ads from the Era of Don Draper," <http://nydn.us/2uSj20p>.

Thus, it is of little surprise that "peripheral, part-time, lowly paid, flexible work with limited benefits has been associated historically with women," and this proves drastically true

when it comes to unpaid internships.<sup>27</sup> Year to year, approximately 75 percent of unpaid interns are women (across non-profit, for-profit, and government sectors) – in part, because employers expect to get away with this exploitative, unethical behavior with little legal fuss.<sup>28</sup>

This gender imbalance in pay inequity translates from intern to staff. Many industries that rely on unpaid internships, such as the arts, have a predominantly feminized workforce.<sup>29</sup> The cultural and economic feminization of unpaid internships – the deeply entrenched, often unconscious belief that when women do work it is less financially valuable – long ago seeped into the veins of the museum field. Is there perhaps also still the unconscious belief, especially in heterosexual partnerships, that it is the man’s responsibility to bring home the bacon while whatever the woman brings home is the icing on the cake?

### *Advanced Degrees for Entry Levels*

It seems obvious that unpaid volunteers and interns depress wages throughout the profession, not to mention displacing paid staff altogether. When the lowest rung on the wage ladder is \$0.00, entry-level salaries – and every non-director position from there on up – suffer as a result. Offering basic compensation to art museum interns would reverberate positively throughout the staff level pay scale, bumping up salaries respectively along the way. In the process, it would do something equally important – breathe value back into the advanced degrees

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<sup>27</sup> Adelina M. Broadbridge and Sandra L. Fielden, eds., *Handbook of Gendered Careers in Management: Getting In, Getting On, Getting Out* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015), 39.

<sup>28</sup> Vickie Elmer, “Women are ‘Leaning In’ – and Not Getting Paid for It,” *The Atlantic*, August 16, 2013, accessed May 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/08/women-are-leaning-in-and-not-getting-paid-for-it/278765/>.

<sup>29</sup> Broadbridge and Fielden, *Handbook of Gendered Careers in Management*, 39.

many museum professionals were required to earn to be hired for a position that currently pays them as much, if not less, than a shift manager at Walmart (a salary range of \$45,720-\$78,777).<sup>30</sup>

Why does the museum field require master's degrees for entry-level positions, just to offer salaries that belittle the very prestige that degree is supposed to evoke? Again, gender bias in educational, professional, and career path expectations.

There is a noticeable gender imbalance in museum profession/studies and arts graduate programs, with most skewing heavily female. In California College of the Arts' Curatorial Practice MA Program's 2010 class, for example, only women even applied. There is a need, as directors and senior faculty members of these programs have identified, for women to gain "intellectual legitimization through study" in order to be considered qualified and prepared for their museum careers. In other words, they need hard proof – a degree and rigorous past experience, printed on resume quality paper stock – that they are capable of meeting the job expectations.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, male peers do not need the validation of a degree to the same extent because, instead, they are evaluated on their confidence, joie de vivre, and untapped future potential. Helena Reckitt (MFA Curating, Goldsmiths, University of London) aptly described this scenario when asked if there were different professional expectations between men and women curators:

The very idea of the independent curator was defined by men with big personalities and concomitant "big ideas" like Harald Szeemann, Seth Siegelaub, Kasper König, or Germano Celant. Especially where contemporary art is concerned, the field has been much more receptive to maverick male curators, to those who come from non-art or non-art historical backgrounds but who have something of the impresario about them. Very

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<sup>30</sup> "Walmart Shift Manager Salaries," Glassdoor, last modified July 20, 2017, accessed May 2017, [https://www.glassdoor.com/Salary/Walmart-Shift-Manager-Salaries-E715\\_D\\_KO8,21.htm](https://www.glassdoor.com/Salary/Walmart-Shift-Manager-Salaries-E715_D_KO8,21.htm).

<sup>31</sup> Suhail Malik, *Survey on Gender Ratios in Curating Programs* (Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, October 23, 2012), accessed May 2017, <http://www.bard.edu/ccs/redhook/survey-on-gender-ratios-in-curating-programs/>.

few female curators have risen to prominent positions without solid professional or academic credentials. In the case of maverick, mostly male figures, their lack of traditional training seems not to work against them. Quite the opposite: it enables them to accrue some of the charisma and star power of the artist. Despite the evidence of women in key curatorial and directorial positions, women working in public institutions still often get stuck at the level of assisting...on the basis of stereotypically female traits of diplomacy, hospitality, and charm...<sup>32</sup>

The male domination of museum culture, caused by the fact that most museums have predominantly male boards, emphasizes that woman's natural professional instincts beyond "diplomacy, hospitality, and charm" cannot be trusted, and thus must be legitimized by a degree even for the most basic of poorly paid entry-level positions. This, in turn, devalues their degree (a financial burden which essentially takes a poor salary to pathetic) and contributes to a comparatively lower sense of confidence in and authority of that female staff member throughout her museum career. If the salary bargaining power of an advanced degree is removed from the outset, there is little to use as leverage for pay increases in the future. No wonder, then, women working in the art museum field find it impossible to progress through the ranks as easily as men – and sometimes even find it necessary to earn yet another degree to ascend to that next professional rung.

### *The Three Ms: Mostly Male Museum Boards*

Why does it matter if an entry-level employee has her master's and is getting paid a salary of \$28,000 if wages are not the primary motivation for working in a museum and the collection, not employees, is the most important asset?

Compensation is a controversial topic. This may be even truer in the nonprofit sector than in the for-profit sector. Often donors feel that money paid to employees takes away from

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

money that could be spent on the charitable purpose of an organization. It is important to remember that the most important asset of any organization is its people.<sup>33</sup>

This is the dangerous mentality of many museum boards. They look out upon a sea of female faces and see them “doing what they love,” “lucky to be there at all,” “satisfied fulfilling the museum’s mission.” If that sea of faces became male, no doubt the inner dialogue would change drastically – and, perhaps, the salaries.

A 2017 survey of museum board demographics conducted by AAM found that board composition is 55 percent male – primarily older, white males between 50 and 64. But the respondents to this survey, “Museum Board Leadership 2017: A National Report,” were predominately history museums, homes or sites (48 percent) with budgets of less than \$1 million (58 percent) and only one to nine paid full-time employees (52 percent). The board gender imbalance is more drastic when one considers art museums, particularly the country’s wealthiest, most influential institutions. While they may no longer be the old boys clubs of yesterday, the gender ratios remain starkly uneven. At the nations top five art institutions (based on 2016 operating budgets greater than \$100 million) males compose 62 to 80 percent of a given board. And not one has a female director.<sup>34</sup> A key finding in the AAMD’s 2017 report, “The Ongoing Gender Gap in Art Museum Directorships,” was that “clear disparities in gender representation” existed depending on operating budget size, namely that “female representation decreases as budget size increases.” The majority of museums with budgets of \$15 million or more are run by male directors.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> “Understanding the IRS Form 990,” GuideStar, January 1999, accessed May 2017, <https://www.guidestar.org/Articles.aspx?path=/rxa/news/articles/2001-older/understanding-the-irs-form-990.aspx>.

<sup>34</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>35</sup> Treviño et al., *The Ongoing Gender Gap in Art Museum Directorships*, 2017.

It is, sadly, not surprising that a male-dominated board at a wealthy institution is more likely to hire a male director. And if they do hire a female, they will pay her less – “at museums with operating budgets of \$15 million or more, female directors earned 75 cents on average for every dollar earned by male directors.”<sup>36</sup>

Some ponder why such a shortage of women in leading directorship roles persists, when museum studies programs are overwhelmingly female. But it is not so inexplicable. The gender ratio of students to top-level positions does not correspond because, as discussed, familiar gendered rules apply within the museum eco-system as it does within the larger societal framework – which means men assume the most powerful roles within the institution. Elizabeth Easton, director of the Center for Curatorial Leadership, sharply observed, “Everyone just claps their hands and says that it’s getting better. But with boards full of men and search committees gravitating to men, it’s not going to get better.”<sup>37</sup> The “it” she refers to is this gender gap and pay inequity within art museum directorships, rather than substandard salaries due to a female dominated field, but the sentiment still rings true for the latter. After examining AAM’s *2014 National Comparative Museum Salary Survey*, a perhaps even more interesting trend was identified. As operating budgets increase, the average salaries for several staff positions actually decrease. Not only is a primarily male board more likely to hire a male director, but in turn that director seems less likely to be an ethical voice amidst trustees and donors, an advocate for living wages on a predominantly female staff’s behalf.<sup>38</sup> “Those directors are the most loud and

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Hilarie M. Sheets, “Study Finds a Gender Gap at the Top Museums,” *New York Times*, March 7, 2014, accessed May 2017, [https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/08/arts/design/study-finds-a-gender-gap-at-the-top-museums.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/08/arts/design/study-finds-a-gender-gap-at-the-top-museums.html?_r=0).

<sup>38</sup> According to the same survey, two-thirds of all full-time paid museum professionals are women, and women outnumber men in 41 of the 52 full-time positions. American Alliance of Museums and New

authoritative voices. It sets a tone,” Easton concludes. “There is a difference if a woman is running one of these big museums.”<sup>39</sup> A difference that could be compensation that accurately reflects the degree, dedication, and value museum workers are bringing to the table.

But, unfortunately, the rare female directors at larger art museums – the Kaywin Feldmans and Karol Wights of the world – are not going to solve the gender-salary problem. Strategically replacing a member of a museum’s leadership team with a female may be good for optics, and even lead to change within that particular institution, but is ultimately a band-aid mentality of “gender-fixing” that has, thus far, not forced the field to seriously consider the ethical dimensions of sub-standard salaries. Small individual steps are nothing to be sneezed at, but they cannot effect the systemic, sustained change this traditionally patriarchal, hierarchical field needs.

Our nation’s largest, wealthiest institutions should be wielding their influence as ethical role models, forerunners. Yet, bluntly put, these art museums – like a sponge – are sucking their staff dry for little to no compensation. They are supporting patriarchal power by manipulating the societally-constructed “women’s role” for their own economic gain. They are encouraging a mindset in which a woman demanding any or adequate compensation necessarily means undermining her wholesale dedication to the museum’s mission for the greater good.

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Knowledge Organization Ltd., *2014 National Comparative Museum Salary Survey* (Washington, DC: American Alliance of Museums, 2014).

<sup>39</sup> Sheets, “Study Finds a Gender Gap at the Top Museums.”



## Chapter 3

### Myth No. 3: The Field Lacks Concrete Numbers

#### *Statistical Research and Analysis*

AAM did not conduct its first comprehensive salary study for the museum field until 2012. Up to that point, several regional associations created salary surveys intermittently for their own respective areas, producing – as one would expect – highly variable data. Without a national comparative survey, it is impossible to observe accurate trends and patterns across gender, budget size, discipline, geographic setting and other defining features – and, likewise, implausible to develop nationwide compensation baselines that would encourage sustained, across-the-board salary improvements.<sup>40</sup>

The AAMD, however, has been releasing salary studies for nearly four decades. In 1980, the first “Statistical Survey and Salary” gauged “each museum’s financial and personnel concerns,” and six years later the survey became annualized.<sup>41</sup> The most recently released *2017 Salary Survey* marks the thirty-second in this series of annual studies of art museum salaries – and for the very first time, the full report was made available for free “as a service to the museum field and museum professionals.”<sup>42</sup> While releasing the report for free is an encouraging step forward in empowering emerging female professionals through access to information, it is simultaneously disheartening that salaries are still deflated after thirty-two years of

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<sup>40</sup> American Alliance of Museums, *2012 National Comparative Museum Salary Study* (Washington, DC: American Alliance of Museums, 2012).

<sup>41</sup> Association of Art Museum Directors, “Celebrating 100 Years,” accessed July 2017, <https://aamd.org/celebrating-100-years/timeline>.

<sup>42</sup> Association of Art Museum Directors, “From the Field: Salary Survey,” July 3, 2017, accessed July 2017, <https://www.aamd.org/our-members/from-the-field/salary-survey>.

comprehensive analysis – indicative of the fact that art museum boards and directors know their staff as a whole is underpaid and do not care enough to remedy the situation.

What follows is a comparative analysis of the AAM’s *2017 National Museum Salary Survey* and AAMD’s *2017 Salary Survey* findings, augmented by independent research into the Form 990s, annual reports, and audited financial statements of the wealthiest ten largest art museums (by operating budget, endowments, and net assets). Financial information is based on FY15 and FY16 documents. To further contextualize the findings, the compiled data is compared to multiple 2016 living wage metrics (all culled from the Living Wage Calculator created by MIT).<sup>43</sup>

### *Key Definitions*

**Form 990** A United States Internal Revenue Service form, officially called the “Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax,” which provides the public with financial information about a nonprofit organization.

**Salary** An individual’s base salary, excluding benefits.

### **Executive Compensation Types**

**Officer** Unless otherwise provided (for example, Signature Block, principal officer in Heading), a person elected or appointed to manage the organization's daily operations at any time during the tax year, such as a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and, in some cases, Board Chair. The officers of an organization are determined by reference to its organizing document, bylaws, or resolutions of its governing body, or as otherwise designated consistent with state law, but at a minimum include those officers required by applicable state law. For purposes of Form 990, treat the organization's top management official and top financial official as officers.

**Director or Trustee** Unless otherwise provided, a member of the organization's governing body at any time during the tax year, but only if the member has any voting rights. A member of an advisory board that does not exercise any

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<sup>43</sup> See Appendix B for all institutional financial data in tabular form and complete list of resources. MIT Living Wage Calculator, accessed July 2016, <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>.

governance authority over the organization isn't considered a director or trustee.

**Key Employee**        Persons with certain responsibilities and reportable compensation greater than \$150,000 from the organization and related organizations (up to 20 current employees who satisfy this definition).

### **Non-Executive Compensation Types**

**Employees**        All remaining non-executive staff, including those considered by the Form 990 to be “Highest Compensated Employees.”

### *Key Insights and Takeaways*

The results from this research and data analysis affirm that the percentage of compensation within art museums is heavily skewed toward the predominately male top 1 percent (the executive staff of officers, directors, trustees, and key employees). Consequently, the average and median salaries of non-executive employees are not only far below executive averages, but consistently toeing the line of a living wage when calculated by metro area, region, operating budget, and family size. Such disparity demonstrates that while senior staff in art museums are lavishly compensated in comparison to their counterparts in other disciplines, entry- and mid-level employees do not enjoy the same edge.

Furthermore, the results confirm that women outnumber men in the majority of positions, making up an average 87 percent in each of the five positions highlighted (substantiating the AAM survey results that 66 percent of all full-time employees are women). However, despite their predominance, females typically receive lower salaries than males in the same position (when accounting for differentiating budgets, regions, discipline, etc.). Thus not only is gender discrimination contributing to substandard salaries across the field, such bias is overtly contributing to pay inequity position by position, individual by individual.

Key insights from the top ten art museums by operating budget sample:

- These institutions are dominated by males in the upper tiers, both as trustees and directors.
  - This could reflect the continued unwillingness to confront gender-salary inequity as the primary contributor to substandard wages within the field, perpetuated by their influence.
- Volunteers and employees ratios equalize as budgets decrease, and reliance on volunteers as been shown to devalue salaries.
  - This all the more necessitates museums with the largest budgets to set fair salary minimums.
- Eight out of the ten museums fall below the average percentage, established by the *AAMD 2017 Salary Survey*, that such institutions with an operating budget of more than \$20 million should spend on employee payroll.
- On average, non-executive employees make \$413,739 less than executive employees, and \$1,026,237 less than Directors/Presidents.
- On average, nearly 8 percent of a museum's total compensation expenditures goes towards only 0.8 percent of the workforce – the executive level officers, directors, trustees, and key employees.

Key insights from the living wage comparisons:

- Across breakdowns by metro area, region, percentile, and operating budget, an entry-level employee in what AAM and AAMD identified as the five lowest paid positions will graze the living wage – either slightly below, even with, or slightly above.
- This nominal, or nonexistent, buffer zone – between living with reasonable fiscal peace of mind and nearing the poverty line – is more likely for females than males. On average, within the five exemplar entry-level positions, males made \$3,000 more than their female counterparts, with the largest peer pay gap nearing \$10,000 for a Membership Assistant.

General Characteristics of Sampled Art Museums

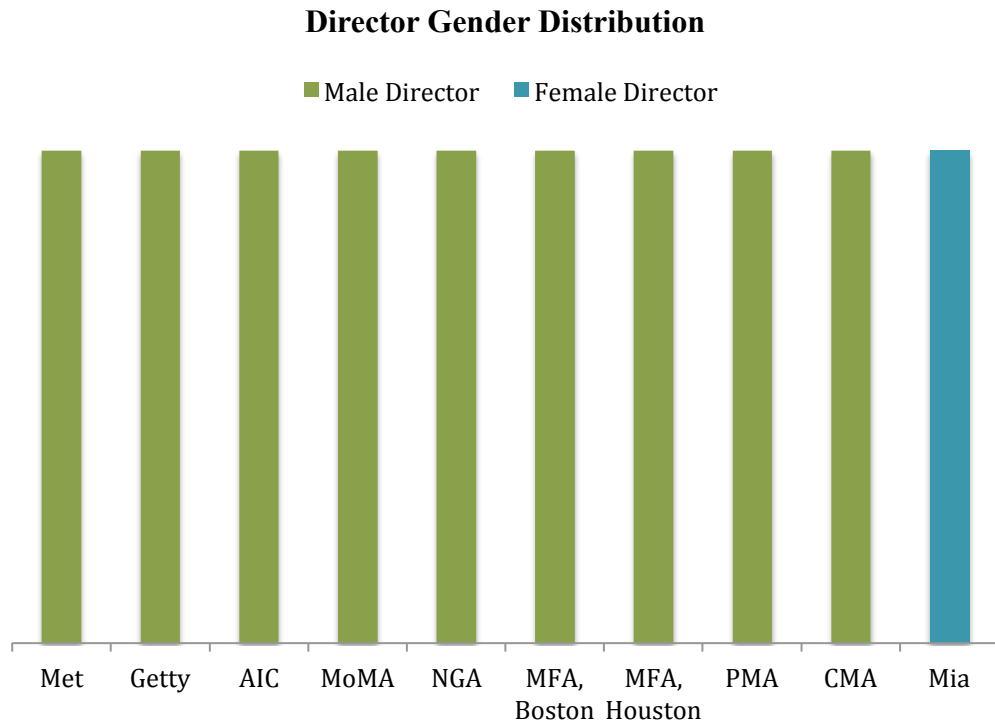


Figure 2. Gender of museum directors, per each institutions' respective FY15 Form 990.

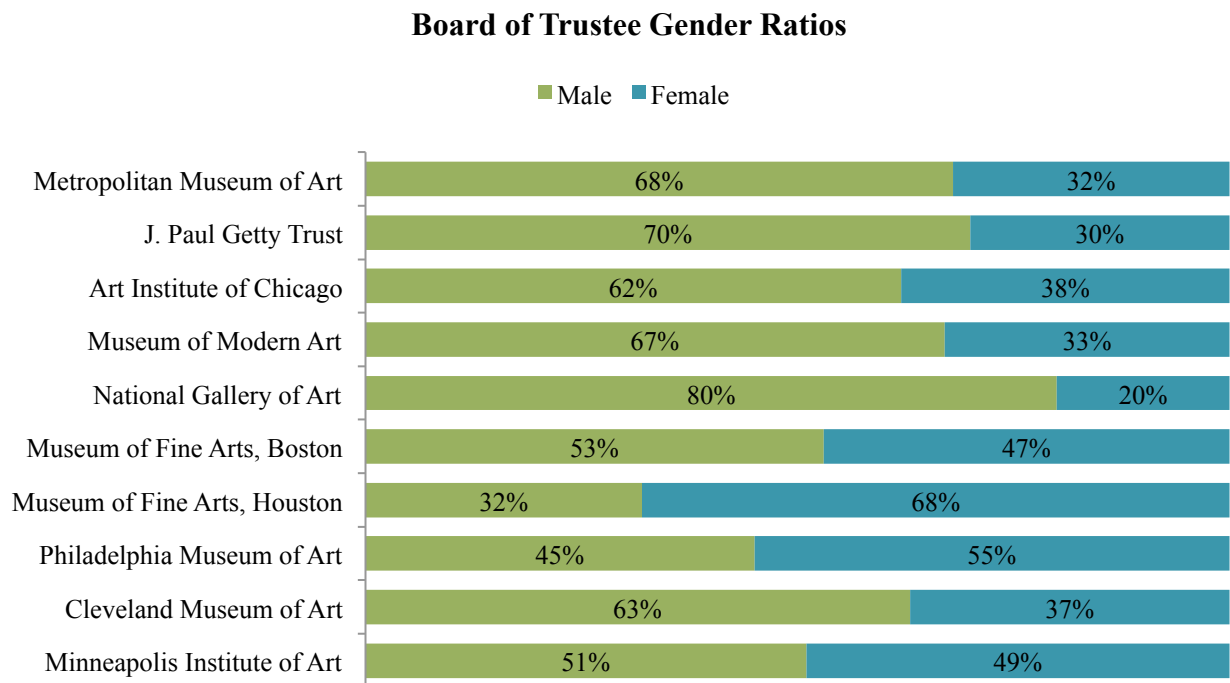


Figure 3. Figures compiled from each institution's current trustee information, per their respective websites.

### Distribution of Museum Workforce

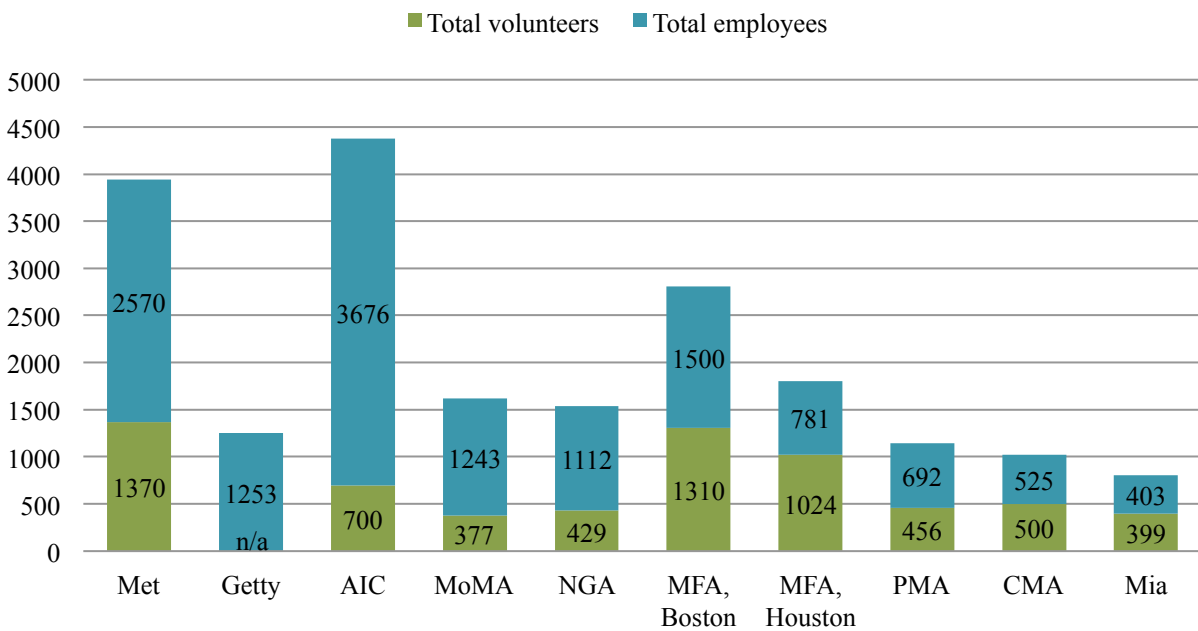


Figure 4. Figures compiled from each institutions' respective FY15 Form 990.

### Distribution by Metro Area and Region

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Metro Area</i>	<i>Region</i>
Metropolitan Museum of Art	New York-Newark-Jersey City	Mid-Atlantic
Museum of Modern Art	New York-Newark-Jersey City	Mid-Atlantic
National Gallery of Art	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria	Mid-Atlantic
Philadelphia Museum of Art	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington	Mid-Atlantic
Art Institute of Chicago	Chicago-Naperville-Elgin	Midwest
Cleveland Museum of Art	Cleveland-Elyria	Midwest
Minneapolis Institute of Art	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington	Midwest
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston	Houston-The Woodlands -Sugar Land	Mountain Plains
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	Boston-Cambridge-Newton	New England
J. Paul Getty Trust	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim	Western

Figure 5. Metro areas are those defined by MIT's Living Wage Calculator. Regions are those defined by the Regional Associations of AAM.

*Fiscal Characteristics of Sampled Art Museums*

**Distribution by Annual Operating Budget**

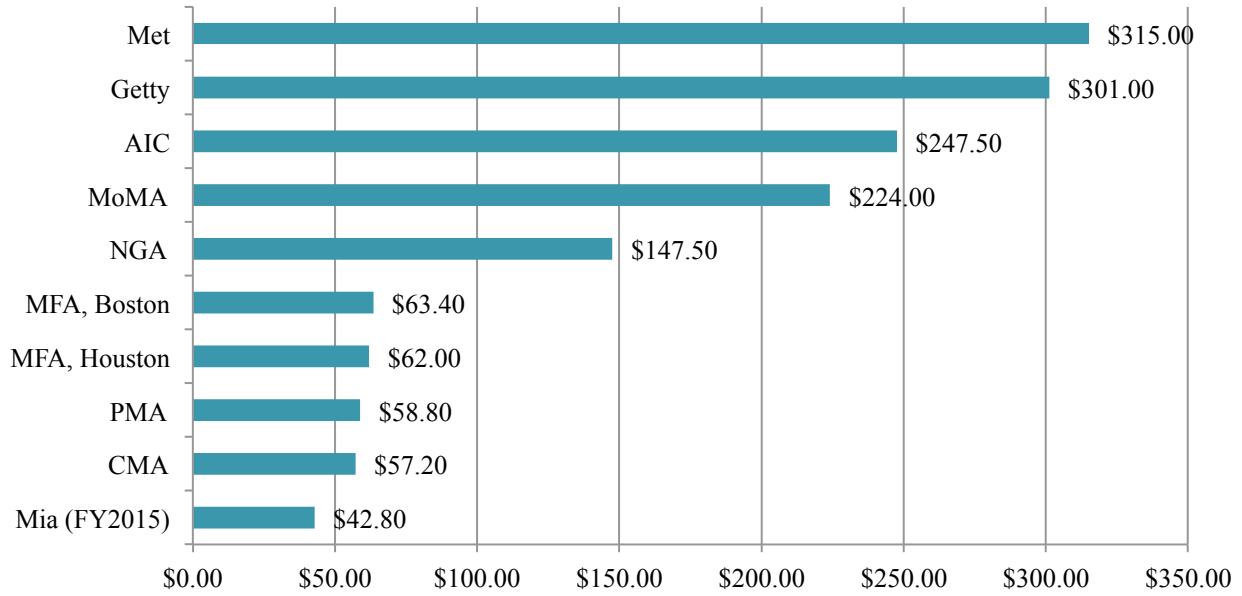


Figure 6. All annual operating budgets are from FY16, unless otherwise noted, and compiled from a combination of institutional 2015-16 Annual Reports, FY16 Audited Financial Statements, FY17 Budget Request, 2016 Consolidated Statement of Activities, and FY15 Form 990s.

**Compensation Expenditure as Percentage of Operating Budget**

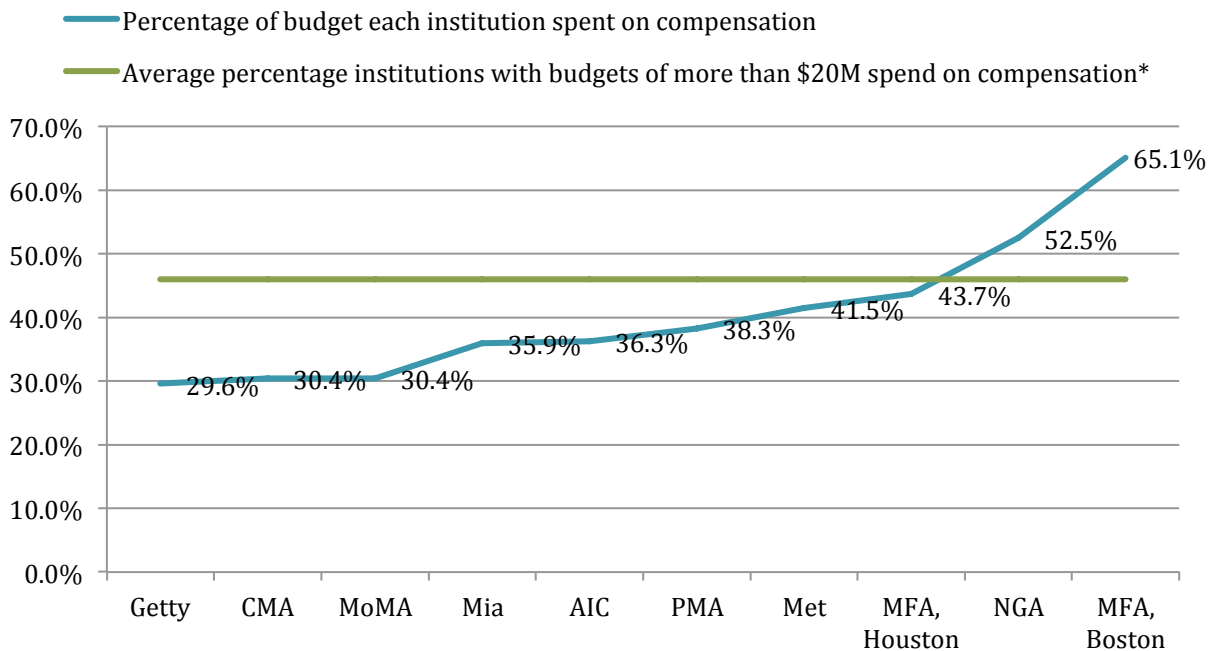


Figure 7. \*According to AAMD's 2017 Salary Survey.

## Compensation Distribution across Museum Workforce

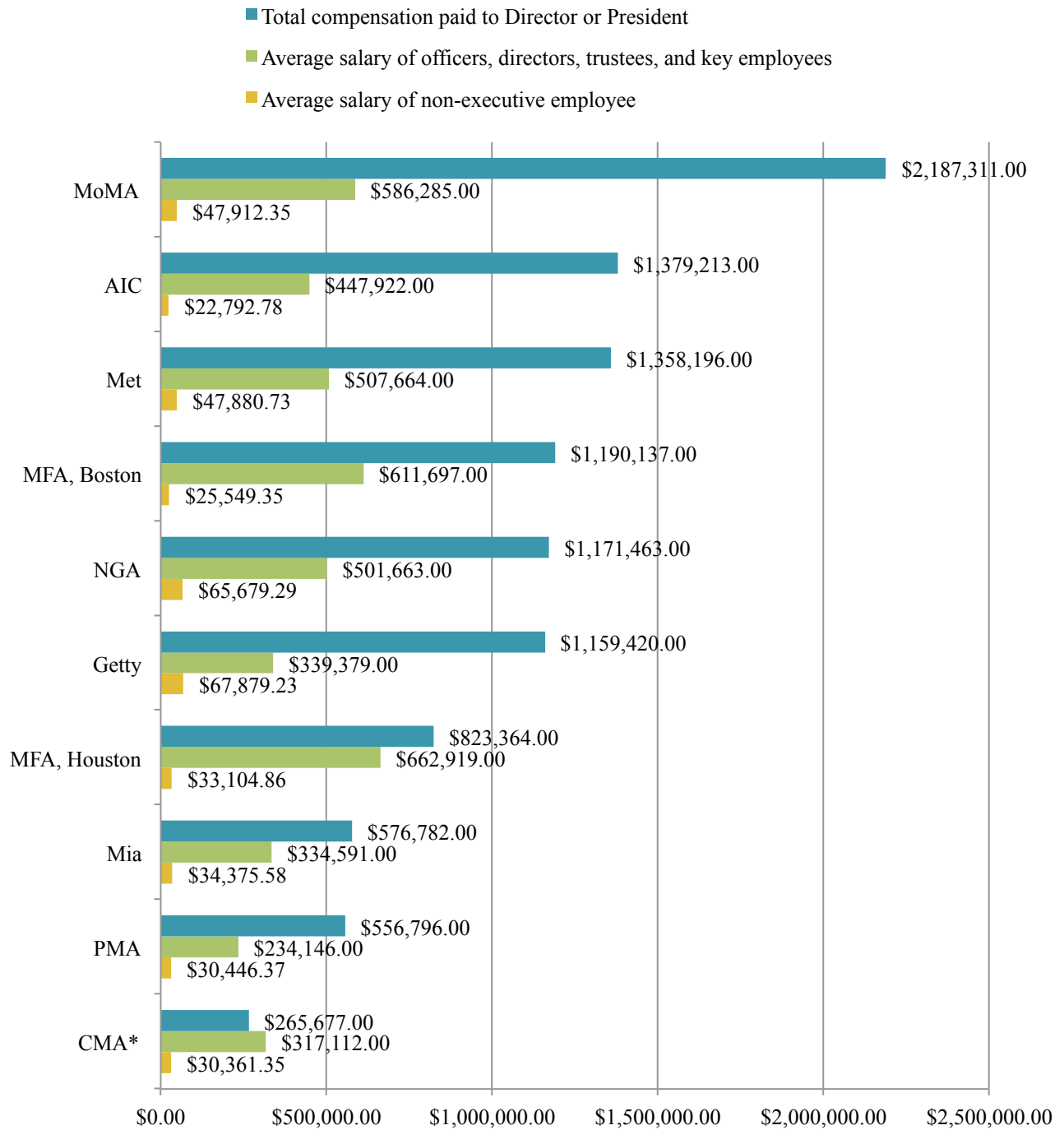


Figure 8. All compensation is from FY15, based on respective Form 990s.

\*The Cleveland Museum of Art Director began midway through the fiscal year, thus reflecting a lower comparative compensation.



### Percentage of Executive Employees vs. Percentage of Total Compensation

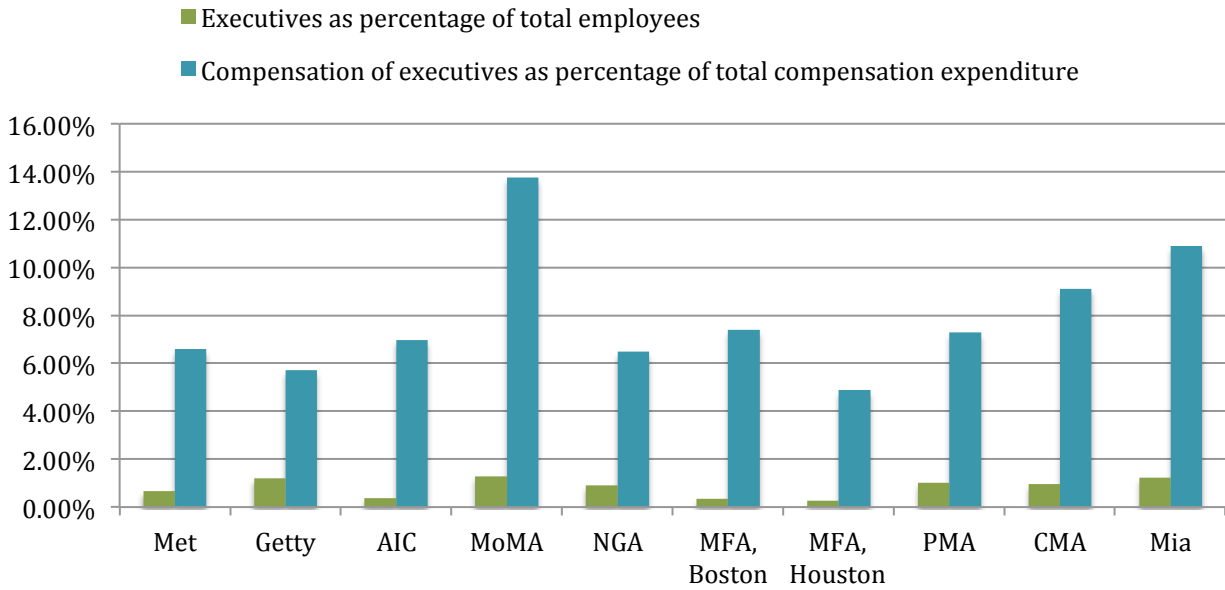


Figure 9. Number of employees and compensation compiled primarily from FY15 Form 990s.

*Living Wage Comparisons*

**Metro Area Living Salary vs. Average Employee Salary by Institution**

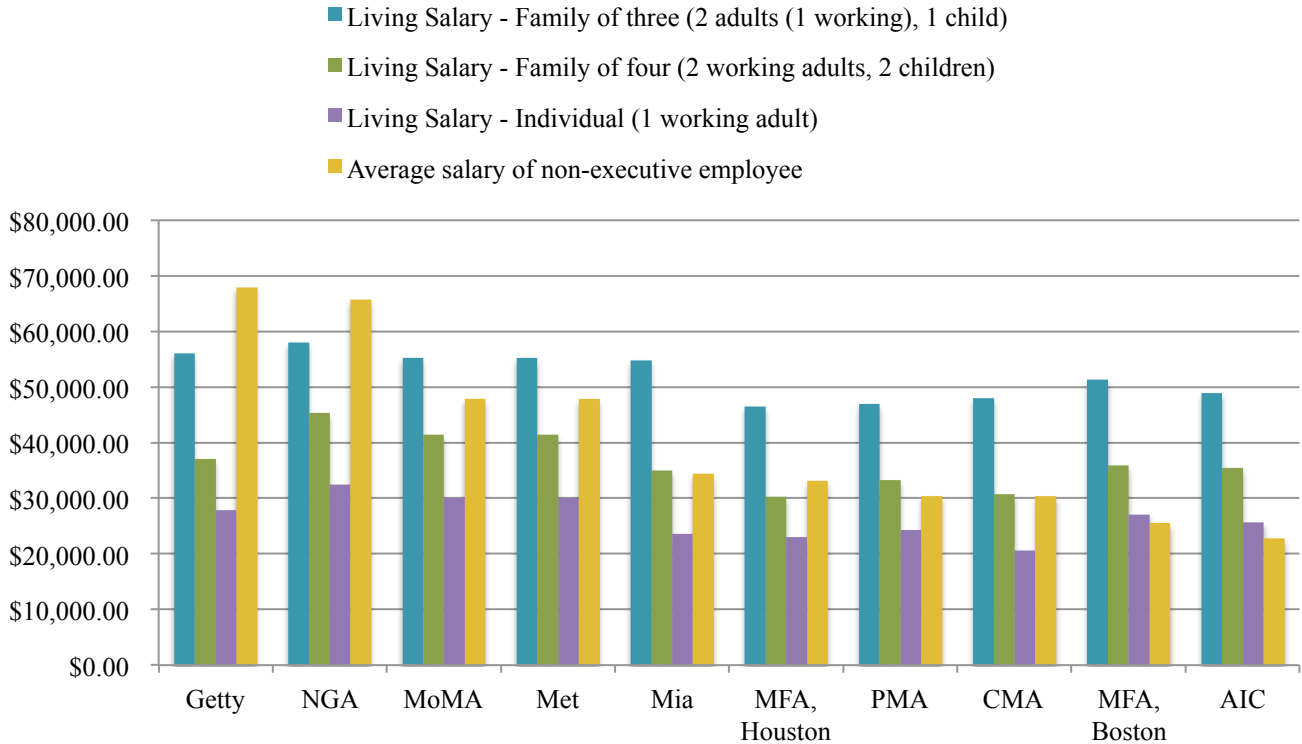


Figure 10. Living salaries were calculated using MIT's Living Wage Calculator, corresponding to the institution's respective metro area. All salaries are based on a 40-hour work week.

**Regional Living Salary vs. AAMD Median Salary by Region**

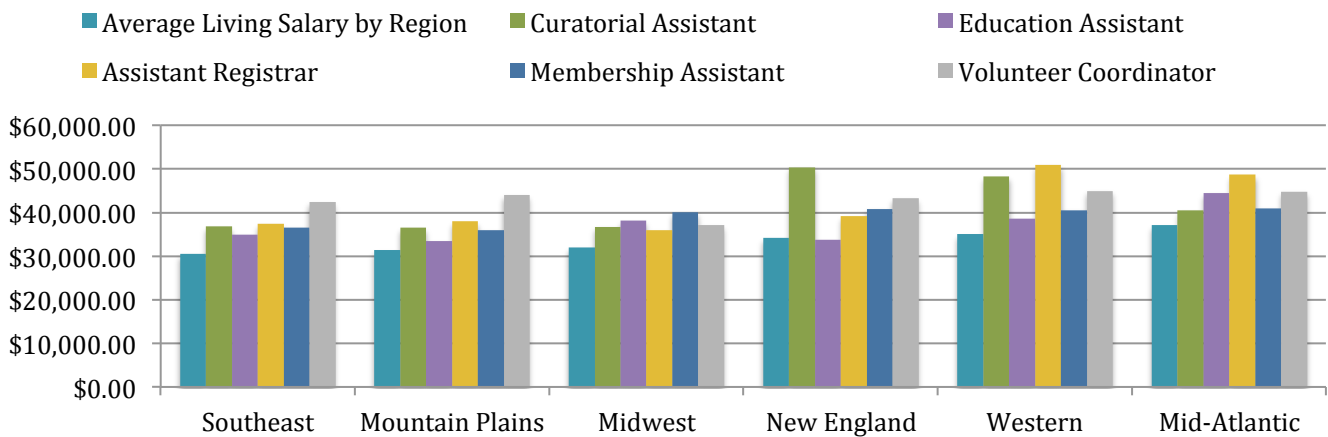


Figure 11. Living salaries based on MIT definition of a typical family of four. Median salaries were chosen for the five lowest paid positions included in the AAMD and AAM surveys.

### National Living Salary vs. AAM/AAMD 25th Percentile Salary

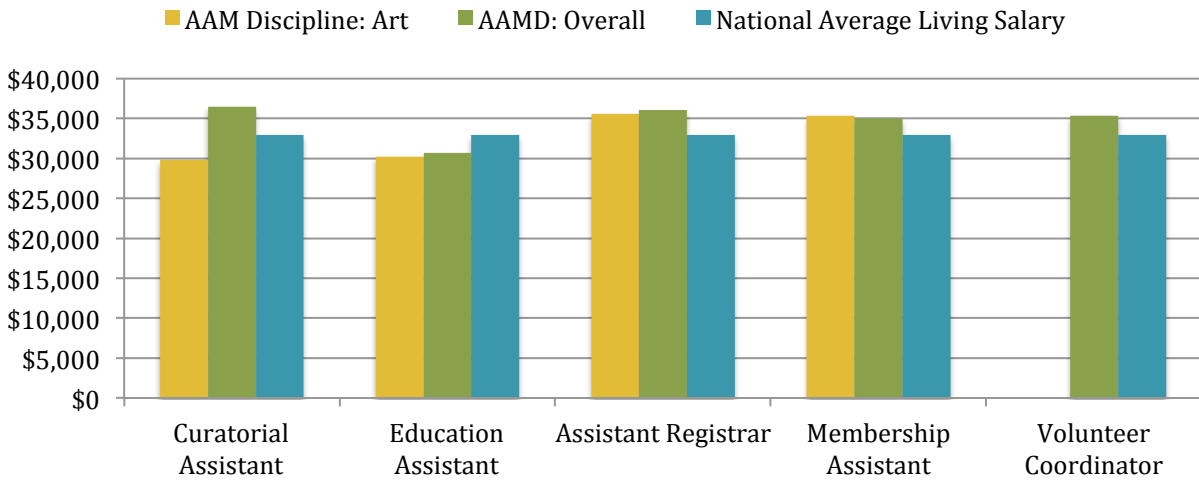


Figure 12. National average living salary based on MIT definition of a typical family of four. Salaries compiled from overall AAMD 25<sup>th</sup> percentiles per position, and AAM 25<sup>th</sup> percentiles per position in the art discipline.

### National Average Living Salary vs. AAMD Median Salary by Operating Budget

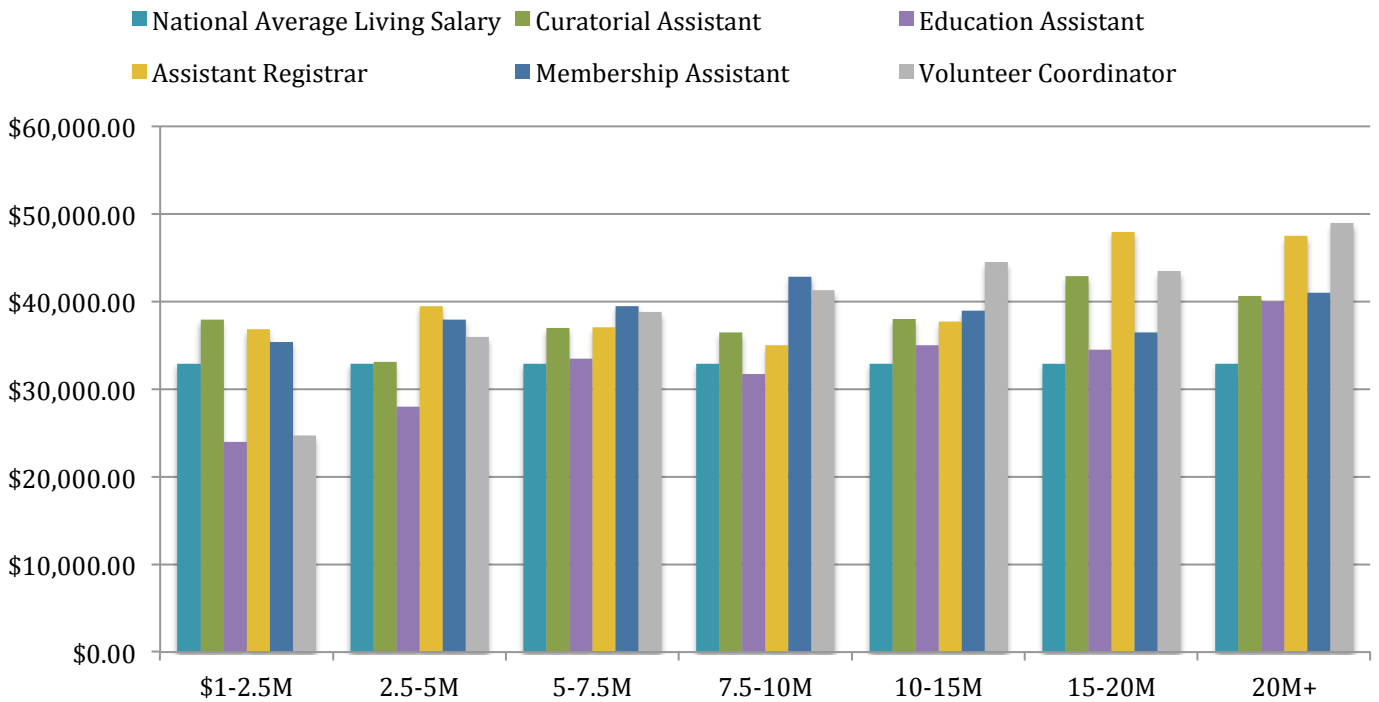


Figure 13. National average living salary based on MIT definition of a typical family of four. Salaries compiled from overall AAMD salaries by budget per position.

Gender Salary Comparisons

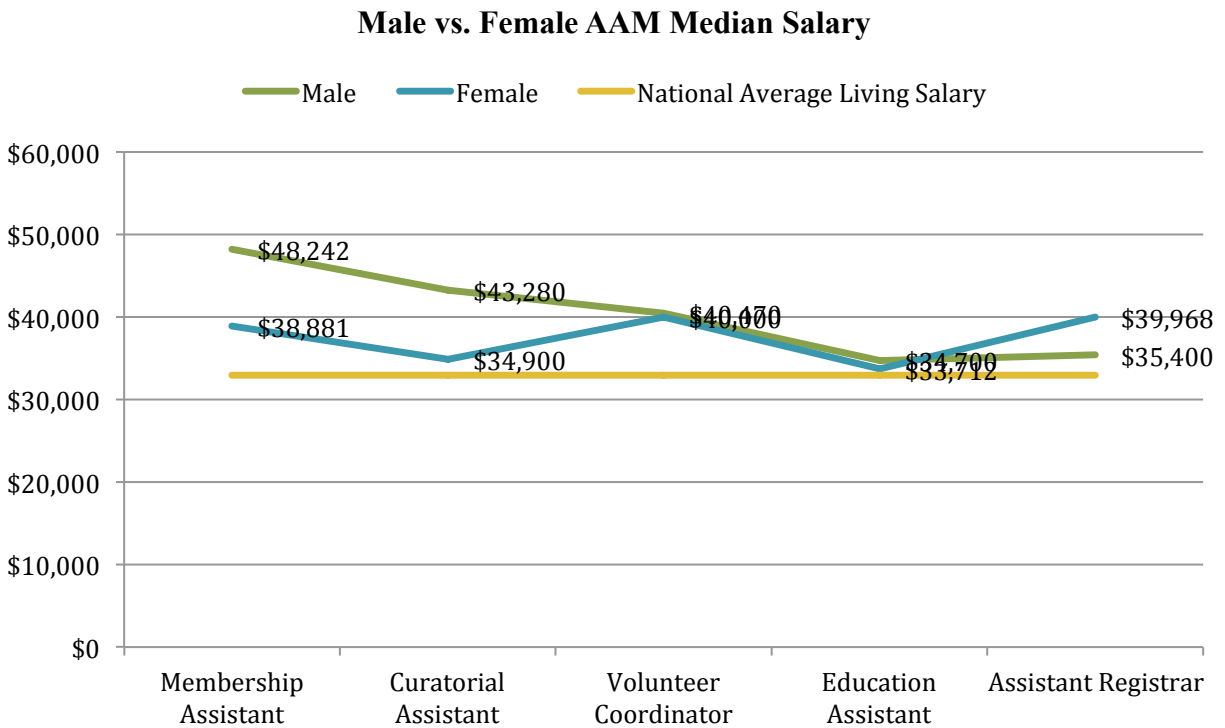


Figure 14. Salaries compiled from overall AAM median salaries by gender per position

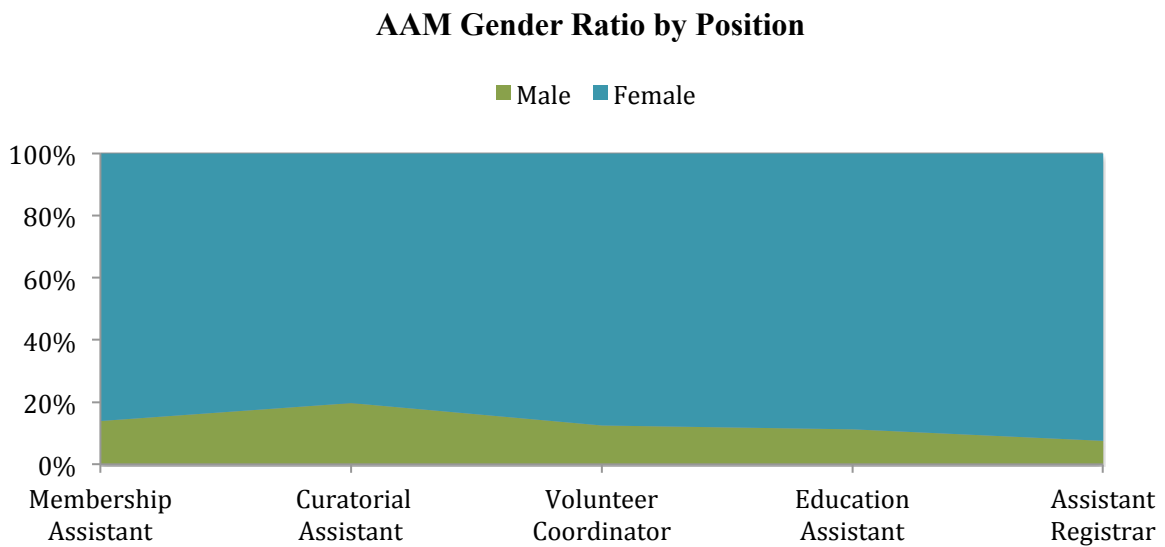


Figure 15. Compiled from AAM's percentage of female vs. male respondents per position

## Chapter 4

### **Myth No. 4: Gender-Salary Equity is Beyond a Museum's Control**

#### *Individual and Institutional Approaches to Addressing the Issue*

There are two binary ways in which people tend to think about gender-salary inequity – as a macro versus micro issue, and an institutional versus individual responsibility. Too often the tendency is to talk about it as a macro issue but an individual responsibility, two modes of thought comically at odds. Somehow the bias is one that must be addressed by society at large, too entrenched to solve within the cubicles of a single office – but, simultaneously, every woman is told she must “lean in” and grab her career by the proverbial horns. One woman is expected to challenge the discriminatory practices within her workplace, but the individual office is not made to feel equal guilt for not proactively confronting those practices. That job is left for ambiguous “society” to grapple with.

When work is not work, but abstract fulfillment of personal passion and public service, workers are less likely to fight for workers' rights. Thus, the very expectation that women confront salary discrimination at an individual level, a case-by-case basis, is perhaps more difficult within the museum field than many other sectors. For this reason, it is even more incumbent upon individual institutions to both implement standard procedures that combat gender-salary bias and encourage staff to feel confident exercising their voices when such bias is at play. Four measures could have a profound impact on the field – unionization, identity-blind hiring, salary transparency, and salary history. When museums are seen as being at the forefront of equality and integrity, these measures should be happily embraced as part of that overarching mission.

## *Unionization*

The old adage – it is far easier to break one pencil than a handful – rings true for museum workers as much as an elementary school student learning about solidarity. Strength in numbers. The power of many voices. All of these phrases may now be trite from overuse, but their underlying principle is an important one. Sustained change requires collaboration and support, from colleagues, directors, and boards alike.

Yet, historically, attempts at museum worker unionization have been haphazard at best. Every few years, stories break in different areas of the country with headlines that read similarly along the lines of “fight over unionization,” “museums battle with unions,” and “workers protest.”<sup>44</sup> Overall, museum staff have only been forced to seek union representation or form their own unions once benefits of various kinds had been shrunk to intolerable levels.

MoMA, once again, provided one of the more attention-grabbing examples in 2015. During the museum’s largest annual benefit, Party in the Garden (where tickets range from \$2,500 for an individual to \$100,000 for a table of 10),<sup>45</sup> more than 100 employees took to the streets to protest low pay, slim maternity leave, and a proposal to weaken healthcare benefits. The reason workers were able to strategically act on this optically powerful evening and put public pressure on MoMA to renegotiate a fair contract? Because MoMA’s professional and administrative staff are all represented by a union, United Autoworkers Local 2110. The bargaining unit is comprised of about 280 people, running the gamut from curators to retail, with

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<sup>44</sup> Various news reports over the past 10 years, e.g. “At Tenement Museum, a Fight Over Unionization,” *New York Times*, March 4, 2008; “SF’s de Young & Legion of Honor Museums Battle with Unions,” *Hyperallergic*, September 14, 2012; and “‘Modern Art, Ancient Wages’: MoMA Workers Protest during Glitzy Benefit,” *The Guardian*, June 3, 2015.

<sup>45</sup> *Party in the Garden 2017* (MoMA, June 5, 2017), accessed June 2017, <http://mo.ma/2f3xyyC>.

salaries of \$29,000 to \$79,000 – and it is 75 percent women, 70 percent of which are of childbearing age.<sup>46</sup> One museum bookstore employee minced no words when describing her feelings toward the proposed cuts: “It feels like a direct attack on our ability to do our job. Upper management is skewed heavily towards men. Women are the lower-paid workers, and have to take on these costs during childbearing years.”<sup>47</sup>

Fortunately, being part of a union promotes immediate staff solidarity, allowing workers to take timely action and present a cohesive counterargument through an established negotiating committee. Equally important, they kept their cause personal and visible even after the pickets came down, through a union-organized #WeAreMoMA Instagram campaign, and were able to put the threat of a strike on the table as a bargaining chip.<sup>48</sup> All of the above forced senior level management to seriously negotiate with, rather than disregard, female staff and their calls for fair wages and benefits. Just 20 days after the initial protest, a new contract was ratified by 95 percent of the 280 MoMA employee members of Local 2110.<sup>49</sup>

This rosy outcome is atypical, and unionized museum workers are a rare breed. MoMA union members somberly acknowledged this in a closing letter after negotiations were settled:

In the last hours, the Museum altered its negotiating positions substantially, particularly on health care benefits. We attribute this in part to the overwhelming support we received from friends and supporters like you outside the Museum. We thank you for joining our campaign and fighting with us. We could not have done it alone. Finally, we know that many of our counterparts in museums are not unionized and have no voice in their

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<sup>46</sup> Ben Davis, “What’s Behind the Museum of Modern Art’s Bitter Battle with It’s Own Workers?,” Artnet News, June 3, 2015, accessed June 2017, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/museum-modern-art-battle-workers-304397>.

<sup>47</sup> Whitford, “MoMA Employees Protest ‘Modern Art, Ancient Wages’.”

<sup>48</sup> MOMA Local 2110, Instagram photos, accessed June 2017, <http://ink361.com/app/users/ig-1975724903/momalocal2110/photos>.

<sup>49</sup> Benjamin Sutton, “MoMA Workers Vote to Approve New Contract,” Hyperallergic, June 22, 2015, accessed June 2017, <https://hyperallergic.com/216630/moma-workers-vote-to-approve-new-contract/>.

employment conditions. We are happy to speak with anyone who wants more information about organizing a museum union.<sup>50</sup>

The museum field does not independently publish union affiliation reports, perhaps because it is a rare occurrence to find unionized museum workers in the United States and thus the sheer numbers do not exist for an accurate survey to be conducted. The closest the field comes to self-reporting unionization statistics is a single-sentence note in the AAMD's *2017 Salary Survey* – “less than a fourth of all responding museums reported having unionized staff” (and only 14 percent indicated “Union Negotiations” as a basis for salary increment).<sup>51</sup> The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, however, publishes yearly releases on membership by occupation and industry. Within the entire “Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation” sector – of which “Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions” is a subsector – only 5.4 percent were members of unions in 2016 (down from 6.4 percent in 2015).<sup>52</sup>

While art museums have avoided unionization, see it as a taboo subject to be handled rather than embraced, similarly education- and public-focused fields not only allow their workers to unionize but, in fact, have the highest unionization rates among all occupational groups. In 2016, “Education, Training, and Library” occupations led the pack with union member rates of 34.6 percent (and union representation of 38.2 percent).<sup>53</sup> Thus, sheer numbers demonstrate an

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<sup>50</sup> MoMA Employees of Local 2110, “Petition Update: Contract Agreement Reached at The Museum of Modern Art,” Change.org, June 23, 2015, accessed June 2017, <https://www.change.org/p/the-museum-of-modern-art-settle-a-fair-contract-with-moma-staff/u/11167266>.

<sup>51</sup> Association of Art Museum Directors, *2017 Salary Survey* (New York, NY: Association of Art Museum Directors, 2017), 16.

<sup>52</sup> “News Release: Union Members – 2016,” U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 26, 2017, accessed June 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*



art museum staff's lack of collective bargaining power is quite an anomaly as compared to colleagues in the education and information services subsectors, which require similar advanced degrees. And the wage discrepancy between the fields reflects that divide.

In the period of January through March 2017, the average hourly earnings of production and nonsupervisory employees in the Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions subsector was just \$18.<sup>54</sup> By comparison, the average hourly earnings for the same ranking employees in the same time period within the Other Information Services subsector – of which libraries and archives are main components – was nearly double, at \$33.<sup>55</sup> And this trend of unionization spurring wage growth is evident within each subsector as well – a nonunion worker in the “Education, Training, and Library” occupations made \$887 in median weekly earnings in 2016, while a union member made \$1,130; nonunion workers in “Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation” made \$673, while union members earned \$720. Nationwide, in 2016, the median weekly earnings of nonunion workers were \$802, while union members brought in \$1,004.

Unions have shown to not only raise wages and increase benefits across the board (from paid leave to more generous, employer-provided health insurance and pension plans), but to “reduce wage inequality because they raise wages more for low- and middle-wage workers than for higher-wage workers” and “set a pay standard that nonunion employers follow.”<sup>56</sup> In other words, unions would not only help close the gendered salary gap within art museums, but each

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<sup>54</sup> “Industries at a Glance: Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions: NAICS 712,” U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed June 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/iag/tgs/iag712.htm>.

<sup>55</sup> “Industries at a Glance: Other Information Services: NAICS 519,” U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed June 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/iag/tgs/iag519.htm>.

<sup>56</sup> Matthew Walters and Lawrence Mishel, “How Unions Help All Workers,” Economic Policy Institute, August 26, 2003, accessed June 2017, [http://www.epi.org/publication/briefingpapers\\_bp143/](http://www.epi.org/publication/briefingpapers_bp143/).

institution that encouraged collective bargaining would raise the compensation benchmark for the entire field. A snowball effect no museum worker would be chilled by.

Public schools and libraries are no more known for having large reserves of cash than museums are, so why the disparity between union membership and correlated wage growth? Many entrenched museum practices do not foster a culture where fighting for workers rights is encouraged or even seen as viable – due to the dominating philosophy of self-sacrifice, and a transitory body of employees consisting largely of volunteers, interns, part-time, and grant-funded temporary workers. In a passion-driven environment with subpar job security, it is even more incumbent upon senior management to embolden and support workers' voices. In turn, they will be rewarded with longevity and contented staff, situated to become change-agents and drive the museum forward. From the employee perspective, collective bargaining gives staff a seat at a negotiating table that is currently reserved for directors and boards that often place vision at odds with employee value.

No one relishes the tense environment of negotiating compensation – workers want to avoid picketing and strikes as much as institutions do. But because unionization is so foreign to most museums and their employees, the latter are scared to pursue joining (or forming) one and the former bristle with cocooned self-preservation at the mere mention of it. In order to dispel the embattlement unionization represents to workers and institutions alike, and instead see it as the benefit to both entities that it is, it must become an accepted aspect of all ranks field-wide. A museum has no reason to fear organizing if treating its staff in a fair and equal manner, particularly when it comes to compensation, is already part of its ethical agenda. As the nonprofit sector continues to expand while organized labor declines, this is the perfect opportunity for museums to take a stand. Institution by institution, what is now a subject of extreme hostility and

bad PR could become just another social arena in which museums are leaders and prove their commitment to the highest standards – in staff economic security, wages, and benefits. Already steeped in discourses of rights and justice, it should be second nature for an art museum to direct those sentiments toward its own staff.

### *Identity-Blind Hiring, Salary Transparency, and Salary History*

Three measures less historically rooted in American labor but which have become more commonplace in recent years to address workforce diversity and equity are identity-blind hiring, salary transparency, and salary history. Unions require the collaborative efforts of all current museum staff and management at a given institution, made more difficult by the fact those entities encompass a range of ages and philosophies toward museum work and workers – running the gamut from supporters of traditional hierarchies to advocates of cross-functional, cross-disciplinary organizational structures. Identity-blind hiring and salary transparency/history, on the other hand, would initiate change with new hires on an individual basis. Slowly transforming the field and achieving gender-pay equity from the ground up, one position at a time. While slower, the less volatile nature of these approaches, as compared to unionization, may be an appeal factor.

Identity-blind hiring first caught the public’s attention in 1970s when symphony orchestras began holding auditions behind a curtain, and increased the chance a woman would be hired from 25 to 46 percent.<sup>57</sup> But as a field-wide initiative in the museum world, it is brand new. AAM launched its inaugural *FutureLab: Hiring Bias Project*, with tech partner GapJumpers, just

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<sup>57</sup> Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse, “Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of ‘Blind’ Auditions on Female Musicians,” *National Bureau of Economic Research*, working paper no. 5903 (January 1997): abstract, accessed June 2017, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w5903.pdf>.

earlier this year. The project is an outgrowth of research conducted by the AAM's Center for the Future of Museums, investigating "barriers to equity," "bias-reduction strategies," and "challenge-based approach[es]" to their own hiring process. In consultation with individual museums, AAM and GapJumpers will "develop, administer and score an online skills-based challenge for prospective applicants."<sup>58</sup> The jobs will then be available to browse and apply for via GapJumper's website. For a \$500 fee per position. AAM touts this charge as a "discounted fee structure," although one can imagine many museums for which shelling out even \$500 towards a more equitable workplace is lovely in theory, but not accounted for as a line item in the budget. Not to mention somewhat ironic when the ethical question at hand is a living wage.

However, the intentions toward equity are obviously there and hopefully museums will see the financial value of evaluating a candidate – both the short-term investment and long-term return – based on performance and skills alone. (While a visit to GapJumpers website looked less than promising in that regard – with only two jobs available in North America, one of which was a role at GapJumpers itself – the deadline to apply for AAM's *Hiring Bias Project* was only May 1, 2017. Time will tell.)<sup>59</sup>

What benefits does identity-blind hiring bring to the museum table? Well, because it proposes to do just that – make the hiring process "identity-blind" even when the hiring team is not, whether unconscious or unwilling. It allows the interviewer to purely assess skills, without scooping through the foggy bias and preconceived notions of gender, race, or age. And the

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<sup>58</sup> "FutureLab: Hiring Bias Project," American Alliance of Museums, accessed July 2017, <http://www.aam-us.org/about-us/what-we-do/center-for-the-future-of-museums/futurelab-hiring-bias-project>.

<sup>59</sup> GapJumpers, "North America Employers," accessed July 2017, <https://www.gapjumpers.me/questions/?category=OTH&continent=NA>.

method could be particularly effective in museums, where an ironic direct relationship exists: the greater a field's identity aligns with objectivity and equality, the greater the gender bias.

Known as the “paradox of meritocracy,” research conducted in 2010 by researchers at Indiana University and MIT found that “when an organization is explicitly presented as meritocratic, individuals in managerial positions favor a male employee over an equally qualified female employee by awarding him a larger monetary reward.”<sup>60</sup> The two underlying mechanisms responsible for this ironic twist both manifest themselves clearly within museums.

When a field publicly prides itself, even relies, on being unbiased – equitable, inclusive, accessible, or any other buzzword presently resounding through the museumsphere – it has an effect on their senior level management. One, managers are less likely to scrutinize their own personal behaviors for prejudice because the ethical credibility established by their institution's brand begins conflating with their self-perceived moral compass. In other words, they are convinced they are genderblind, above bias, because their institution professes to be. How else could they hold the position they do, if their personal beliefs and actions were not somehow intertwined with the museum's mission? They are unwilling or unable to confront their subconscious gender stereotypes – which are “common and automatic”<sup>61</sup> – because it would require a daunting confrontation with their sense of self and fundamental beliefs about their work. Thus, they are more likely to discriminate against women because these implicit biases seep into their decisions unquestioned and unchecked.

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<sup>60</sup> Emilio J. Castilla and Stephen Benard, “The Paradox of Meritocracy in Organizations,” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (December 2010): 543-676, accessed July 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.2189/asqu.2010.55.4.543>.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

A second, and related, mechanism is that a strong sense of personal objectivity forges confidence in the validity of one's beliefs, and thus a greater likelihood of acting on those beliefs – including suppressed prejudice. Fairly and neutrally presenting information to the public is the cornerstone of most art museum philosophies, making it the perfect breeding ground for senior level staff to feel fair and neutral by extension. “People given a chance to disagree with a set of sexist statements or primed to feel objective have been found to be more likely to recommend a male over a female candidate in experimental hiring scenarios.”<sup>62</sup>

Following this reasoning, it would seem those most susceptible to these mechanisms would be a group in power which has never personally experienced pervasive bias – white males, which just happen to dominate the upper museum echelons. These cause-and-effect scenarios are so sociologically and psychologically entrenched, it is no wonder the museum field has been largely silent about the ethical dimensions of their gender discriminatory salary practices. But whether ignorant or intentional, the blissful silence must end at some point – if not by changing unconscious behaviors, than by changing how the field hires.

Enter again identity-blind hiring. Women tend to do exceptionally well in GapJumpers' model, making up nearly 60 percent of their top performers.<sup>63</sup> And while GapJumpers might be the most comprehensive, and thus effective, blind audition route, there are other ways museums can begin making strides towards blind hiring processes. There are research-based apps that

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<sup>62</sup> Benoît Monin and Dale T. Miller, “Moral Credentials and the Expression of Prejudice,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81, no. 1 (August 2001): 33-43, accessed July 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.81.1.33>; and Eric Luis Uhlmann and Geoffrey L. Cohen, “‘I Think It, Therefore It’s True’: Effects of Self-Perceived Objectivity on Hiring Discrimination,” *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 104 (September 2007): 207–223, accessed July 2017, <http://www.socialjudgments.com/docs/Uhlmann%20and%20Cohen%202007.pdf>.

<sup>63</sup> GapJumpers, accessed July 2017, <https://www.gapjumpers.me/>.

conceal demographic details, but also even more low-tech options than that.<sup>64</sup> Hiring teams can choose an outside individual to process applications before they reach their desks, removing gender-identifying information, and the team itself can create in-house performance assessments based on clearly outlined priorities they wish a candidate to demonstrate. Scoring those challenges and ranking them anonymously would make any bias that surfaces during the in-person interview that much more apparent, and thus easier to address and deal with.<sup>65</sup>

The idea of identity-blind hiring may seem like a moot point in a field that is already predominately women. Yet, consider that removing gender from the equation not only increases the number of women hired (which is not the issue at hand in entry- and mid-level positions) but increases the salary offered (which is).

The persistence of gender and racial inequality in wages is especially puzzling given the claims that some type of merit-based or incentive pay practices are widespread among employers... Under certain circumstances, organizations that emphasize meritocratic values and beliefs may unintentionally introduce bias and create inequity in the distribution of employee rewards... Overall, salary increases were significantly lower for women, ethnic minorities, and non-U.S.-born employees when compared with white men with the same performance evaluation scores, in the same job and work unit, with the same supervisor, and the same human capital.<sup>66</sup>

The takeaway? Gender and merit are persistently and pervasively conflated. And sub-standard salaries are the most visible manifestation of this bias within museums. So, hand-in-hand with identity-blind hiring must be salary-history-blind hiring as well as salary transparency for the job at hand.

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<sup>64</sup> Blendoor, accessed July 2017, <http://blendoor.com/>.

<sup>65</sup> Elizabeth Weingarten, "Why Pretending You Don't See Race or Gender is an Obstacle to Equality," *Slate*, May 23, 2017, accessed July 2017, [http://www.slate.com/blogs/better\\_life\\_lab/2017/05/23/you\\_re\\_not\\_blind\\_to\\_race\\_and\\_gender\\_but\\_your\\_hiring\\_process\\_can\\_be.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/better_life_lab/2017/05/23/you_re_not_blind_to_race_and_gender_but_your_hiring_process_can_be.html).

<sup>66</sup> Castilla and Benard, "The Paradox of Meritocracy in Organizations."

An ideal hiring process for, let's say, an assistant registration position would go as follows: a position description is crafted, an appropriate salary is assessed based upon the education requirements and skills needed, and that salary is included everywhere the job is posted. The selected applicants will go through an identity-blind hiring process and, once a job offer is made, can proceed to negotiate a salary and benefits they feel is commensurate with their experience based upon the *transparent, fair, and established minimum salary* both parties have already agreed to by applying and advertising. Under no circumstances should a base salary be “revealed,” like some sort of unmerited game show prize, only after a candidate has been offered a position. And never should a candidate's current or previous salaries influence or act as a baseline for the compensation at hand.

In 2016, Massachusetts and California became the first states to pass laws banning employers from asking about previous salaries. Since then New York City, Philadelphia, and New Orleans have passed similar laws, and legislation barring employers from considering prior salary has been introduced (but not yet passed) by 24 states and the District of Columbia. Critics of these measures tout there is no data supporting that such policies will combat discrimination and further gender pay equity. Which is true – but only because there is no direct data yet to base research upon. This is inaugural public policy and the legislation that has been passed will not take effect until 2018.<sup>67</sup>

There is, however, no dearth of data showing that reliance on salary history when making new-hire compensation decisions certainly contributes to the gender pay gap – which develops as

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<sup>67</sup> Yuki Noguchi, “Proposals Aim to Combat Discrimination Based on Salary History,” *NPR*, May 30, 2017, accessed July 2017, <http://www.npr.org/2017/05/30/528794176/proposals-aim-to-combat-discrimination-based-on-salary-history>.



soon as women toss off their graduation cap and compounds throughout their careers.<sup>68</sup> Basing a salary offer on prior pay disproportionately affects women because they are already likely to be earning discriminatory wages, or are reentering the workforce after taking a hiatus to care for family, and thus the vicious cycle of inferior wages and diluted earning potential becomes perpetuated from one museum job to the next.<sup>69</sup>

The potential benefits of mounting salary history legislation are numerous and encouraging. Such legislation offers “fewer opportunities for companies to judge employees based on previous pay instead of qualifications; a more-level playing field for women and people of color who face barriers to earnings straight out of the gate; and a surely imperfect but nevertheless significant obstacle inserted into the cycle of gender discrimination, low pay, and respectively low raises that compound over a woman’s lifetime.”<sup>70</sup>

Salary transparency, too, has been the focus of new regulations over the past year. In February of 2016, for example, the New York Department of Labor adopted the “Employer Imposed Limitations on the Inquiry, Discussion, and Disclosure of Wages” rule. Colloquially known as the “transparency laws,” it prohibits employers from restricting their employees’

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<sup>68</sup> Christine Corbett and Catherine Hill, *Graduating to a Pay Gap: The Earnings of Women and Men One Year after College Graduation* (Washington, DC: American Association of University Women, 2012), accessed July 2017, <http://www.aauw.org/resource/graduating-to-a-pay-gap/>; and Hill, *The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap*.

<sup>69</sup> “85 Organizations Support the Pay Equity for All Act,” American Association of University Women, May 24, 2017, accessed July 2017, <http://www.aauw.org/files/2017/01/Pay-Equity-for-All-Act-Sign-On-nsa-1.pdf>.

<sup>70</sup> Christina Cauterucci, “Equal Pay Legislation Banning Salary History Questions is Absolutely Based in Data,” *Slate*, April 14, 2017, accessed July 2017, [http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx\\_factor/2017/04/14/equal\\_pay\\_legislation\\_banning\\_salary\\_history\\_questions\\_is\\_based\\_in\\_data.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2017/04/14/equal_pay_legislation_banning_salary_history_questions_is_based_in_data.html).

discussions of earnings.<sup>71</sup> While salary secrecy can obviously allow gender discriminatory employment practices to flourish, one could argue that art museum salaries are far from secret. As a non-profit they are required to publicly disclose their financial statements and Form 990s, which does include compensation in dollar amounts – but only for the board and five highest paid employees. Beyond broad salary studies like those conducted by AAM and AAMD, which anonymously compile wage statistics from across the field, it is nearly impossible to determine exactly what a retail associate, outreach coordinator, or other female non-managerial employee is earning at a specific institution. Transparency in job postings would reveal the living wage underbelly many museums would rather ignore, and thus may force the boards and directors responsible for setting salaries to publicly address the ethical dimension of their decisions.

Beyond the ethical imperative of alleviating suppressed gender bias is an economic incentive. Salary transparency is good for the entire museum organism and, by extension, the audiences they serve. A field experiment conducted by researchers at UC Berkeley found that “Those exposed to information about their placement in the earnings distribution provide significantly more labor effort on average than those with no information about peer earnings.”<sup>72</sup> In other words, fostering a work environment in which compensation is shared openly among staff actually improves individual productivity and performance. Employees work harder when they know where they stand. Related research published in the *Academy of Management Journal* determined that, conversely, pay secrecy has an “adverse effect on participant continuation

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<sup>71</sup> “Rule Making Activities,” NYS Register (January 20, 2016): 10, accessed July 2017, <https://docs.dos.ny.gov/info/register/2016/january20/rulemaking.pdf>.

<sup>72</sup> Emiliano Huet-Vaughn, “Striving for Status: A Field Experiment on Relative Earnings and Labor Supply” (Job Market Paper, UC Berkeley, 2013), abstract, accessed July 2017, [http://econgrads.berkeley.edu/emilianohuet-vaughn/files/2012/11/JMP\\_e.pdf](http://econgrads.berkeley.edu/emilianohuet-vaughn/files/2012/11/JMP_e.pdf).

intentions...particularly among high performers.”<sup>73</sup> Again, to parse the language – concealing wages negatively affects staff longevity, and thus organizations run the risk of losing their best workers. A trend the museum field knows all too well.<sup>74</sup>

### *The Gender Equity in Museums Movement*

As with most social issues involving inequality, there are rumblings at the grassroots level long before those in power commit to change. The topics of gender and salary in museums have both gained traction over the past few years, although largely as disconnected conversations (unless discussing the specific issue of pay gaps among directors). Nevertheless, a consistent vocal presence – online, in text, and at conferences – is precisely what is needed to make these intrinsically connected topics become agenda items at future board meetings. These professional observations illustrate – and necessarily complicate – a discussion that must go much further, regarding not only the gendering of art museum salaries but also what this issue conveys about the sociology of the art museum field.

The three most vocal advocates for social change within museum workplace practices and culture are the individuals behind Joyful Museums (2014), Museum Workers Speak (2015), and the Gender Equity in Museums Movement (GEMM) (2017).<sup>75</sup> Together, they provide an

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<sup>73</sup> Elena Belogolovsky and Peter A. Bamberger, “Signaling in Secret: Pay for Performance and the Incentive and Sorting Effects of Pay Secrecy,” *Academy of Management Journal* 57, no. 6 (December 2014): 1706-1733, accessed July 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.5465/amj.2012.0937>.

<sup>74</sup> Marieke, “Why are Good Museum Workers Leaving the Field?,” Joyful Museums, September 10, 2016, accessed July 2017, <http://www.joyfulmuseums.com/why-are-good-museum-workers-leaving-the-field/>.

<sup>75</sup> Joyful Museums, accessed July 2017, <http://www.joyfulmuseums.com/>; #MuseumWorkersSpeak, accessed July 2017, <http://museumworkersspeak.weebly.com/>; and Gender Equity in Museums Movement, accessed July 2017, <https://www.genderequitymuseums.com>.

environment for emerging, current, and former museum professionals to converse about, collaborate around, and challenge the status quo. As *Museum Workers Speak* so aptly put it, “Our goals are to provide a forum to begin this conversation, to counteract the silence/taboo around discussing labor in museums.”

Through regular surveys, monthly tweet chats, and AAM conference sessions, these coalitions have certainly built the stage and directed the spotlight. By raising awareness and developing resources, they are flipping the script. But not in its traditional sense. Instead of displaying the myriad perspectives of the museum community, an outward lens the field has always been more comfortable with, they are putting on display the museum worker – in all her passions, struggles, obstacles, insecurities, and achievements. An entity the average art museum board is surprisingly unfamiliar with when it comes to daily accommodations and operations.

A recent study released by the AAMD might imply their efforts are making important, if incremental, advances. The AAMD’s *2017 Salary Survey* found the average median salary increased by 3 percent in 2016. Though this sounds encouraging, it only mirrors the country’s economic growth rate of an average annual 2 to 3 percent. Furthermore, the positions that saw the most salary growth were Chief Operating Officers (5.5 percent – double the average rate across other museum positions), curatorial staff (4.6 percent), and directors (1.6 percent).<sup>76</sup>

If anything, this salary growth only perpetuates what has already been introduced here – that those few male-dominated senior positions continue to receive a disproportionate distribution of financial reward.

Best summarized by Letitia James, the Public Advocate for the City of New York, “The old ways of attacking the problem aren’t working. We’ve got to pursue new approaches – like

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<sup>76</sup> Association of Art Museum Directors, *2017 Salary Survey*, 4-5.

attacking wage disparities at their subtle but pernicious roots.”<sup>77</sup> It just so happens that in the museum field, those roots are at the top.

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<sup>77</sup> Letitia James, “To Pay Women Fairly, Ban Salary History Questions for all Private and Public Employers,” *New York Daily News*, March 28, 2017, accessed July 2017, <http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/pay-women-ban-salary-history-questions-article-1.3011940>.

## Chapter 5

### Myth No. 5: Pay Equity is Not an Ethical Issue

*Calling for Change from the Top:  
Confronting the Ethical Dimensions of Substandard Salaries*

All of the measures just outlined – unionization, hiring practices, and grassroots coalitions – are steps that can be taken at individual and institutional levels. Implementing change one museum, one activist, one employee at a time. But are disparate, fractured pockets of progress across the country enough? Or will such efforts continue to make headlines once in awhile, but soon fade into white noise to those not directly impacted? As with civil rights, gay marriage, and countless other social movements, state-by-state laws may change – but not until the gavel falls at a Supreme Court ruling is the mission seen as accomplished. So, what is in order to achieve better salaries and pay equity in art museums across the nation? Acknowledgment and advocating must come from those who govern the field – the AAM, and boards and directors at the most powerful institutions.

#### *American Alliance of Museum's Code of Ethics*

In nearly every regard, museums adhere to an ethical conduct that exceeds the minimum behavior required by local, state and federal laws. When it comes to collecting, deaccessioning, programming, fundraising, audiences – all are guided by a moral compass fundamental to the identity and integrity of the field.

The law provides the basic framework for museum operations. As nonprofit institutions, museums comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws and international conventions, as well as with the specific legal standards governing trust responsibilities. This Code of Ethics for Museums takes that compliance as given. But legal standards are a minimum. Museums and those responsible for them must do more than avoid legal liability, they must take affirmative steps to maintain their integrity so as to warrant

public confidence. They must act not only legally but also ethically. This Code of Ethics for Museums, therefore, outlines ethical standards that frequently exceed legal minimums.<sup>78</sup>

This excerpt is taken from the AAM's Code of Ethics, which provides a framework, a template, for museums to adopt and expand upon depending on their specific setting. And yet, when it comes to gender pay equity, both the AAM and the museums it represents are not following their own directives. Do the salaries currently being paid meet legal minimums? Yes. Do the salaries reflect a museum taking "affirmative steps to maintain their integrity" and thus setting an ethical model for other sectors? Absolutely not.

Why, in this particular area, are art museums across the board falling short? The answer, it would seem, is disappointingly simple. Those in power do not see staff as the most important asset held or value shared. Those labels, according to the Code of Ethics, are held by collections and public service, respectively. While no one would argue those two entities are paramount, it would be equally hard to argue they could continue exist at all, let alone flourish, without devoted – but financially undervalued – staff.

On that front, the Code of Ethics is largely silent. While a section on "Governance" does exist, it merely states in ambiguous and idealistic language that "The governing authority ensures that the museum's collections and programs and its physical, human and financial resources are protected, maintained and developed in support of the museum's mission." What does it mean to protect, maintain, and develop human resources in support of the mission? The answers are infinite, open to interpretation by each and every art museum board and director. Such relative criteria and subjective implementation have allowed substandard salaries based upon implicit

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<sup>78</sup> "Code of Ethics for Museums," American Alliance of Museums, adopted 1991, amended 2000, accessed July 2017, <http://aam-us.org/resources/ethics-standards-and-best-practices/code-of-ethics>.

gender biases to become normalized in the field. Thus, it is precisely here, with AAM and the Code of Ethics, that the tides must turn.

AAM's leadership and accreditation is what nearly every museum subscribes to. By not directly addressing living wages and pay equity, museums fear no repercussions for their current practices. Equally concerning, AAM may be shirking their own ethical duty to “develop standards” and “provide advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community.”<sup>79</sup> But it is better late than never, and strides have been made. Their 2017 Annual Meeting and MuseumExpo held a session titled “Workplace Confidential: Museum Women Talk Gender Equity” (led by the founders of GEMM).<sup>80</sup> While it wasn't exclusively about salary, there was extensive discussion about salary inequity – a commendable move by AAM, although the use of the word “confidential” in the session title does slightly reinforce the aura of taboo and guilt around the subject.

Issuing a policy statement, as AAM did in 2014 regarding diversity and inclusion, would be another substantial step in the right direction.<sup>81</sup> The ultimate goal, however, must be incorporating salary standard language as an amendment to the Code of Ethics (which hasn't been updated since the turn of the millennium). Both actions, though, would require the AAM to overcome what seems like their greatest obstacle – eschewing their vague and dispassionate language in order to advocate with precision, clarity, and focused intent.

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<sup>79</sup> “About Us,” American Alliance of Museums, accessed July 2017, <http://aam-us.org/about-us>.

<sup>80</sup> *2017 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo Program Book*, “Workplace Confidential: Museum Women Talk Gender Equity,” (American Alliance of Museums, St. Louis, MO, May 7-10, 2017), 57.

<sup>81</sup> “Diversity and Inclusion Policy,” American Alliance of Museums, approved February 26, 2014, accessed July 2017, <http://aam-us.org/about-us/strategic-plan/diversity-and-inclusion-policy>.



A refreshing example of such an approach was taken by colleagues at the library-equivalent umbrella organization, American Library Association (ALA), in 2003. In their “Campaign for America’s Librarians: Advocating for Better Salaries and Pay Equity Toolkit” they minced no words, with an introduction to a 58 page manifesto that is as biting and impassioned as the issue demands:

We librarians have a well-deserved reputation for being outspoken when it comes to intellectual freedom and other issues that affect library users. We have not been nearly as vocal on our own behalf. Statistics show that our profession, along with others that are predominantly female, are underpaid relative to the education required and the complexity of the service we provide. Our challenge is clear:

- We must overcome the stereotype of the librarian as the selfless, dedicated, and devoted worker, who is in the profession to do good and who will accept any pittance of pay.
- We must promote a better understanding of what the librarian does. No one will want to pay us more money if they have no idea what education, experience, judgment, and special skills it takes for us to do our jobs.
- We must contribute substantively to the fight for pay equity—it is our fight, too. Women have been discriminated against in a variety of ways, a primary one being compensation.<sup>82</sup>

Where is this straight-shooting vigor at AAM? A small but striking difference between the two organizations vocabulary is the use of “we.” AAM speaks of “museums” as an external party, while ALA fuses their organization with the librarians it represents by using a first-person “we.” The implication is that AAM does not identify as part of the body it serves. Lacking such embedded unity, it is no wonder the organization has not felt compelled to become a platform for pay equity.

But AAM cannot continue to profess to champion museums without championing museum workers.

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<sup>82</sup> *Campaign for America’s Librarians: Advocating for Better Salaries and Pay Equity Toolkit* (Chicago, IL: American Library Association-Allied Professional Association, 2003), 3, accessed July 2017, <https://www.ala.org/ala/hrdr/libraryempresources/toolkit.pdf>.

### *Art Museum Boards and Directors*

The art museum board plays a key role in improving salaries and pay equity, and there are two measures that would have a significant positive impact: educating trustees about employees and prioritizing the board's own gender composition.

Wages and benefits are primarily negotiated and established by the director, HR director (if one exists), and the board committee that oversees budget decisions. A very small, principally male pool is charged with representing a large, predominantly female workforce: not quite a recipe for gender-pay equity. A product of extensive interaction and peer dialogues, the close-knit relationship between the director and board is likely a primary factor in inflated, sometimes extortionate, director salaries. But as a governing force responsible for the integrity of their institution, directors should be leveraging that relationship to advocate on behalf of their staff. They are in the position to impress upon the board that employees are indeed a museum's most valuable asset and that ethical standards museums profess to adhere to demand that those employees be paid a wage commensurate with their education, skills, experience, and cost of living – even if that means redistributing funds allocated for the director's own salary. Paying museum professionals decent wages encourages the continued professionalization of the field, which in turn leads to better quality programs and exhibitions, and ultimately brings every museum closer to their holy grail of a larger, more engaged, and diversified audience.

Board education can also include taking the American Association of University Women's (AAUW) Implicit Association Test (IAT). The IAT discerns how much an individual implicitly associates with “traditional, stereotypical gender roles (e.g., Male with Leader or Female with Supporter).” Such unconscious biases exist within most people, and even if they “do not reflect and may even contradict what they consciously believe,” they can predict

discriminatory behavior.<sup>83</sup> Recognizing these socially ingrained prejudices at the board level is the first step to combating them. For example, acknowledging that, although they may have approved (and even read) the equality and diversity policies on the books, those policies might be more symbolic than effective – even counterproductive, as their very existence might lull some trustees into a false sense of fairness accomplished.<sup>84</sup>

“It is time to go to battle differently.” Those were the sentiments of a director of one of the nation’s most affluent Ivy League university art museums. “One of my first actions as director was to fight for living wages.” He saw adjustments in compensation that needed to be made across the rungs, and acted accordingly. And, sitting on other art museum boards himself, he is typically the lone trustee advocating for wage review. “Boards don’t see employees as an asset, so directors need to lobby.” In his opinion, the art museum field not only fails to be a leader in gender-pay equity, it fails to even reflect the sea change toward parity happening in American society at large.<sup>85</sup>

In short, a director can be a museum worker’s most powerful ally or greatest source of resentment.

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<sup>83</sup> “Implicit Bias and the AAUW Implicit Association Test on Gender and Leadership,” American Association of University Women, March 2016, accessed July 2017, <http://www.aauw.org/files/2016/03/BarriersBias-IAT-one-pager-nsa.pdf>.

<sup>84</sup> John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, “Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony,” *American Journal of Sociology* 83, no. 2 (September 1977): 340-363, accessed July 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2778293>.

<sup>85</sup> Interview by author with a museum director, June 27, 2017. The name of the interviewee is withheld; interview was confidential.

Research has also shown that “managerial accountability is associated with higher female and minority representation in managerial jobs.”<sup>86</sup> Logically, a female director is more likely to fight for the salaries of a chiefly female workforce – and coverage of the lack of female art museum directors (and the pay gap they contend with) is ample. But, as we know, there is a gender imbalance within museum boards themselves. Increasing female representation on boards not only increases the likelihood of hiring women into leadership positions and, consequently, has a trickle down effect on the economic prosperity of women in lower level positions – boards with more women are statistically proven to experience higher financial performance.<sup>87</sup> Substantially higher. Companies with the “highest percentages of women board directors” outperformed those with the least in the areas of equity, sales, and invested capital by 53, 42, and 66 percent, respectively.<sup>88</sup> However according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, gender balance within board rooms could take more than four decades to achieve *with* equal proportions of women and men joining boards each year.<sup>89</sup> Thus, just as with areas like programming and audience outreach, the nations most influential art museums should be bunking trends, setting standards, and emerging as role models for institutions across the country that look to them for best practices – not waiting passively for vague “society” to right itself.

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<sup>86</sup> Alexandra Kalev et al., “Best Practices or Best Guesses? Assessing the Efficacy of Corporate Affirmative Action on Diversity Policies,” *American Sociological Review* 71, no. 4 (August 2006): 589-617, accessed July 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240607100404>.

<sup>87</sup> Alana Semuels, “When Women Run Companies,” *The Atlantic*, December 27, 2016, accessed July 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/12/female-bosses-in-the-workplace/506690/>.

<sup>88</sup> Lois Joy et al., *The Bottom Line: Corporate Performance and Women’s Representation on Boards* (Catalyst, 2007), accessed July 2017, [http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/The\\_Bottom\\_Line\\_Corporate\\_Performance\\_and\\_Womens\\_Representation\\_on\\_Boards.pdf](http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/The_Bottom_Line_Corporate_Performance_and_Womens_Representation_on_Boards.pdf).

<sup>89</sup> *GAO-16-30: Corporate Boards: Strategies to Address Representation of Women Include Federal Disclosure Requirements* (U.S. Government Accountability Office, Report to the Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises, Committee on Financial

Gender parity within museum trustees is both an ethical and economic imperative. And what museum board can argue with solid business sense?

### *Conclusion*

The AAM's Code of Ethics clearly emphasizes that a museum's foremost priority is the community it serves. That should include the community within its own walls. What better way for an institution to make a positive social impact on the public than by providing a living wage to the underpaid and under-recognized women who make the museum hum, day in and day out, with their education, skills, and tireless devotion.

There will never be a "good" time to address gender-pay inequity. As non-profits, art museums will always be under financial pressure. But neither workers nor the field itself can afford to continue this complicit behavior – signing the unspoken contract of DWYL, self-sacrifice, and entrenched gender-biased practices – that implies a real or perceived lack of funds is a valid reason to discriminate with compensation that fails to reflect a living wage. To do so would be to accept becoming an established pink-collar profession.

It is time. The field has qualms about unpaid internships, unneeded degrees, board ratios, and directorship gender-pay gaps – but when it comes to the ethics of substandard salaries a entry- and mid-levels, there is an absence of shame. And shame, unfortunately, is what motivates change within the rungs of power. Museums cannot truly be the ethical institutions they profess to be until they acknowledge the inequitable treatment of their own employees. The field is ready and anxious to embrace the virtue of equity, accessibility, diversity, and inclusion when it comes to audience – but it is quite a different matter when it comes to the woman sitting at a computer

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Services, House of Representatives, December 3, 2015), accessed July 2017, <http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/674008.pdf>.

cataloguing the collection, or the one leading third graders through the galleries, or the one greeting visitors with a wide smile as they enter the gift shop. It is time to value these unsung heroines.

It is time to go to battle differently.

## Appendix A: Survey on Gender and Salaries in American Art Museums

Throughout my time as a graduate student and initial experience in the field, I have been struck by the fact that art museum staff, particularly throughout the entry- and mid-levels, are predominately female. This lopsided gender ratio led me to the next series of questions: (1) Is this imbalance related to the characteristically low salaries paid to these positions? (2) If so, what would more sustained and intimate knowledge tell us about this gender-pay inequity structure? and, (3) What, if anything, should individual institutions or the field in general be doing to address the issue?

Essentially: Is the field low-paying because it is disproportionately women and, if so, what field-specific factors play a role in this discrimination and what steps should be taken to remedy the situation?

These questions have developed into my graduate thesis. To bring the issue into focus and humanize the salary surveys already conducted (by organizations like AAM and AAMD), I wish to survey those within the field that may have firsthand knowledge of or insight into this topic. By no means do I consider these responses to be a systematic sociological survey of the issue, but a preliminary stage of informed speculation. My hope is this professional commentary will illustrate – and necessarily complicate – a discussion that must go much further, regarding not only the potential gendering of art museum salaries but also what this issue may convey about the sociology of the art museum field.

The following questions posed were constructed as straightforwardly as possible:

1. Is there a noticeable gender imbalance in your institution?
2. What do you think determines the above ratio?
3. Do the salaries within your institution represent a living wage for all employees?
4. Do you believe there to be a connection between the gender ratio and the salaries paid?
5. Do you believe there to be different professional expectations – in education, hiring, career path, and daily operations – between men and women?

## Appendix B: Sample of Financial Data for Top Ten Wealthiest Art Museums by Operating Budget

Institution	Board: Male	Board: Female	Gender Ratio	Operating Budget (Total Expenses)	Endowment	Net Assets
Metropolitan Museum of Art	25	12	68%/32%	\$315M (2016)	\$2.5B (2016)	\$3B (2016)
J. Paul Getty Trust	14	6	70%/30%	\$301M (2016)	\$6.3B (2016)	\$9.8B (2016)
Art Institute of Chicago	43	26	62%/38%	\$247.5M (2016)	\$970.9M (2016)	\$1.2B (2016)
Museum of Modern Art*	30	15	67%/33%	\$224M (2016)	\$385.8M (2016)	\$1.4B (2016)
National Gallery of Art	4	1	80%/20%	\$147.5M (2016)	\$444.1M (2015)	\$1.1B (2015)
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	17	15	53%/47%	\$63.4M (2016)	\$547M (2016)	\$908M (2016)
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston	23	50	32%/68%	\$62M (2016)	\$1.11B (2016)	\$1.5B (2016)
Philadelphia Museum of Art	25	30	45%/55%	\$58.8M (2016)	\$437.1M (2016)	\$822.3M (2016)
Cleveland Museum of Art	20	12	63%/37%	\$57.2M (2016)	\$698.4M (2016)	\$905M (2016)
Minneapolis Institute of Art	23	22	51%/49%	\$42.8M (2015)	\$169.6M (2015)	\$324.4M (2015)

Institution	Total Compensation Expenditures	Total Compensation - % of Operating Budget	Director	Director - Reportable Compensation	Director - Other Compensation	Director - Total
Metropolitan Museum of Art	\$130,869,785.00	41.5%	Male (Thomas P. Campbell)	\$999,309.00	\$358,887.00	\$1,358,196.00
J. Paul Getty Trust	\$89,125,176.00	29.6%	Male (James Cuno, Pres)	\$860,586.00	\$298,834.00	\$1,159,420.00
			Male (Timothy Potts, Dir)	\$785,205.00	\$82,433.00	\$867,638.00
Art Institute of Chicago	\$89,738,078.00	36.3%	Male (Douglas Druick)	\$637,169.00	\$742,044.00	\$1,379,213.00
Museum of Modern Art*	\$68,169,017.00	30.4%	Male (Glenn D. Lowry)	\$1,212,687.00	\$974,624.00	\$2,187,311.00
National Gallery of Art	\$77,395,208.00	52.5%	Male (Earl A. Powell III)	\$914,987.00	\$256,476.00	\$1,171,463.00
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	\$41,254,761.00	65.1%	Male (Malcolm Rogers)	\$837,850.00	\$352,287.00	\$1,190,137.00
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston	\$27,114,523.00	43.7%	Male (Gary Tinterow)	\$800,402.00	\$22,962.00	\$823,364.00
Philadelphia Museum of Art	\$22,494,786.00	38.3%	Male (Timothy Rub)	\$517,795.00	\$39,001.00	\$556,796.00
Cleveland Museum of Art	\$17,373,462.00	30.4%	Male (William Griswold - Begin 8/2014)	\$263,077.00	\$2,600.00	\$265,677.00
Minneapolis Institute of Art	\$15,354,432.00	35.9%	Female (Kaywin Feldman)	\$489,342.00	\$87,440.00	\$576,782.00



## Appendix B: Sample of Financial Data for Top Ten Wealthiest Art Museums by Operating Budget

Institution	Compensation of current officers, directors, trustees, key employees	Compensation of officers, directors, trustees, key employees - % of Total Compensation Expenditures	Total officers, directors, trustees, and key employees	Officers, directors, trustees, key employees - % of Total Employees	Avg. salary of officers, directors, trustees, and key employees
Metropolitan Museum of Art	\$8,630,284.00	6.59%	17 (17 officers)	0.66%	\$507,664.00
J. Paul Getty Trust	\$5,090,686.00	5.71%	15	1.20%	\$339,379.00
Art Institute of Chicago	\$6,270,902.00	6.99%	14 (4 officers/10 key)	0.38%	\$447,922.00
Museum of Modern Art*	\$9,380,559.00	13.76%	16 (3 officers/13 key)	1.29%	\$586,285.00
National Gallery of Art	\$5,016,633.00	6.48%	10 (6 officers/4 key)	0.90%	\$501,663.00
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	\$3,058,483.00	7.41%	5 (5 officers)	0.33%	\$611,697.00
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston	\$1,325,837.00	4.89%	2 (2 officers)	0.26%	\$662,919.00
Philadelphia Museum of Art	\$1,639,023.00	7.29%	7 (4 officers/3 key)	1.01%	\$234,146.00
Cleveland Museum of Art	\$1,585,562.00	9.13%	5 (4 officers/1 key)	0.95%	\$317,112.00
Minneapolis Institute of Art	\$1,672,953.00	10.90%	5 (3 officers/2 key)	1.24%	\$334,591.00

Institution	Other salaries and wages	Total individuals receiving other salaries and wages	Avg. salary of non-executive employee	Total Employed	Total Volunteers
Metropolitan Museum of Art	\$122,239,501.00	2553	\$47,880.73	2570	1370
J. Paul Getty Trust	\$84,034,490.00	1238	\$67,879.23	1253 (360 museum)	
Art Institute of Chicago	\$83,467,176.00	3662	\$22,792.78	3676	700
Museum of Modern Art*	\$58,788,458.00	1227	\$47,912.35	1243	377
National Gallery of Art	\$72,378,575.00	1102	\$65,679.29	1112	429
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	\$38,196,278.00	1495	\$25,549.35	1500	1310
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston	\$25,788,686.00	779	\$33,104.86	781	1024
Philadelphia Museum of Art	\$20,855,763.00	685	\$30,446.37	692	456
Cleveland Museum of Art	\$15,787,900.00	520	\$30,361.35	525	500
Minneapolis Institute of Art	\$13,681,479.00	398	\$34,375.58	403	399

## **Appendix B: Resources for Financial Data for Top Ten Wealthiest Art Museums by Operating Budget**

*International Revenue Service Form 990 / 990PF (accessed May 2017, GuideStar.org):*

Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014 (FY15)  
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