

MMAA Applicant Description

History. MMAA was founded as the St. Paul School of Fine Arts in 1894 and formally incorporated in 1927 when it began collecting works of art for instructional purposes. From the 1950s on, under the name Saint Paul Art Center, it pursued an avid program of exhibitions—including biennials of drawings, craft, and contemporary art—and assembled an esteemed collection of paintings, works on paper, sculpture, and craft. Renamed the Minnesota Museum of Art in 1969, it became a leading presence on the Twin Cities arts scene through its educational programs and nationally-regarded exhibitions. In 1992, the museum added “American” to its name to reflect its increasing focus on national and regional art and the changing nature of the American experience as seen through the visual arts. The museum’s collection consists of over 4,000 works of art, offering a snapshot of the giving and collecting priorities of the museum and its donors over the decades.

Mission. The mission of MMAA is to showcase American art of the past and present, unleash the creative potential of our community, and inspire the artist in us all. Our purpose is to make the visual arts more accessible to members of our community through exhibitions, programs, educational initiatives, and collaborative ventures. With an emphasis on American art of the 19th century to the present, and in particular, the work of Minnesota and regional artists of all types, it is a cultural asset that has been beloved by local audiences over generations.

Current Programs. Having a museum and visual arts cultural center in downtown St. Paul is a significant addition to the life and momentum of the cultural resurgence happening in St. Paul, and has already made a substantial contribution to life and culture in downtown St. Paul. Since December 2012, we have been organizing exhibitions and programs in a new 3,700 square-foot gallery known as the MMAA Project Space in the Pioneer Endicott Building, and continue organizing and traveling exhibitions both in the state and nationally. Since opening, over 14,500 people have visited the MMAA Project Space.

Our current educational initiative, CreatorKids, was successfully piloted in 2013, serving 90 students in 4th and 5th-grade classes at John A. Johnson Elementary Achievement Plus Elementary School and Galtier Elementary School, both in St. Paul. In 2015, the Project Space will again host the St. Paul Public School Honors Program exhibition, which features art by high school students in partnership with performances at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts.

The MMAA Project Space offers the opportunity to work with more local businesses and groups in exciting partnerships. These include St. Paul Almanac, the Lowertown St. Paul Art Collective, Springboard for the Arts, the St. Paul Public Library, Highpoint Center for Printmaking, Minneapolis Community & Technical College Library, Juxtaposition Arts, Rage to Order, and other progressive art and business organizations.

Membership, staff, and board. We currently have just over 400 members, up from 309 this time last year. MMAA is governed by a 25-member board of trustees, including ex-officio members St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and St. Paul 2nd Ward Councilmember Dave Thune. Four full-time and four part-time staff positions are currently supported by 20 volunteers, six interns, and nine consultants. We are currently searching for a director of development, a senior staff position.