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DeCordova Announces Response to Economic Slowdown

LINCOLN, MA—DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park Director Dennis Kois announced today that in response to the continuing decline in the economy and the resultant impact on DeCordova the Museum is making budgetary adjustments and reducing its full-time staff by seven, to twenty-five.

“While overall giving to the Museum has increased markedly this year over last, we are seeing lower results in a number of earned income areas of our operation.” Kois noted. “Our Museum School, Store, Functions, and Corporate Program, which lends artwork to more than 100 companies around Boston, have all, as one might expect, been impacted by the eroding financial and business climate. The prudent course is to respond in a way that ensures our fiscal and programmatic health through what we believe may be several years of economic uncertainty nationwide.”

The changes announced today are intended to focus DeCordova’s efforts and maintain strategic momentum in key mission-based areas. Specifically, the Museum continues to ramp up an increasingly active curatorial program for the 35-acre sculpture park and galleries. This Spring will see the installation of a major museum-wide exhibition, *The Old, Weird America*, organized by the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, as well as a number of significant changes in the sculpture park, including the installation of a major Sol LeWitt concrete block sculpture. A new project series of exhibitions of early-career artists, *Platform*, will also be launched in 2009.

Despite a planned budgetary reduction of 10% for next fiscal year, DeCordova will continue to provide innovative, exciting programs, classes, and exhibits. Admission prices are not being raised, and visitors will find a number of new amenities including cell-phone audio tours and family activity kits that can be checked out free of charge.

“DeCordova is financially healthy, and will finish this year, as we have past years, in the black.” Board Chair Robert Scott noted. DeCordova’s actions mirror those seen in museums across the country as the impact of declining endowment values, giving, and sales are felt. “While we are less impacted by endowment declines than many local institutions, the Board agreed with Dennis’ recommendation that the prudent course is to plan for the long haul. DeCordova will emerge from these difficult years ready to grow and capitalize on its strengths.” Scott added.

Changes announced today include the elimination of four positions, the shifting of two other positions from full-time to part-time, and a delay in refilling a currently-vacant position. Departments impacted include Education, Membership, Visitor Services, Functions, and the Store. The Education department will be restructured, and an interim department head named. Kois noted that the changes in DeCordova’s education department “...will allow for a restructuring which will focus more attention and energy on the core of the Museum’s educational mission: the Museum School and onsite interpretation. In difficult times it is imperative we focus our efforts in areas of strength, despite the very difficult choices this requires us to make.”

About DeCordova

Founded in 1950, DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park is the only major art museum in the region dedicated exclusively to the exhibition, interpretation, and collection of modern and contemporary American art, with a collection focused on New England art. Located in suburban Boston, DeCordova features a 35-acre scenic Sculpture Park, the regions largest year-round outdoor sculpture rotating exhibition area with more than 80 works on view. The Museum offers a robust slate of educational programs, including the largest non-degree granting studio art program in Massachusetts.

Director Dennis Kois, appointed in June 2008, brings more than twenty years experience in the museum field to the DeCordova. He was previously Director of Texas' Grace Museum, the Chief Designer & Head of Publications and Digital Media at The Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, and Assistant Chief Designer of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. He has also served as an Adjunct Professor in the Graduate Program in Museum Studies at George Washington University. He received his MA in Museum Studies from NYU.

General Information: DeCordova is open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm and on selected Monday holidays. General admission during Museum hours is \$12 for adults, \$8 for senior citizens, students, and youth ages 6–12. Children age 5 and under, Lincoln residents, and Active Duty Military Personnel and their dependents are admitted free. The Sculpture Park is open year round during daylight hours. The Store @ DeCordova and the School Gallery are open Monday 11am to 4pm, Tuesday through Saturday 9:30 am to 5:30 pm, and Sunday 10:30 am to 5:30 pm. The Café @ DeCordova is open Tuesday through Friday 11am to 2pm and Saturday and Sunday 11 am to 4 pm. Guided public tours of the Museum's main galleries take place every Thursday at 1 pm and Sunday at 2 pm. Tours of the Sculpture Park are given on Saturday and Sunday at 1 pm from May to October. All guided public tours are free with Campus admission. Visit www.decordova.org or call 781/259-8355 for further information.