

William T. Eberhard AIA, IIDA: ESSAYS ON ARCHITECTURE:

Cleveland Museum of Art
Cleveland, OH



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The demolition, reconstruction and addition to the Cleveland Museum of Art by Raphael Vinoly illustrate positive and negative things about the museum - and the state of architecture in Cleveland.

In turning a light on the Cleveland Museum of Art, its presence in and its role in University Circle as well as the actions of its leaders must also be given attention.

HISTORY/ CONTEXT:

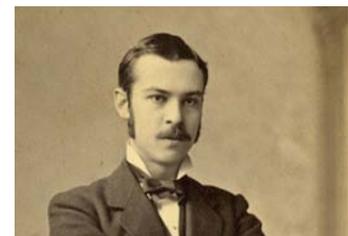
With an endowment from prominent Cleveland industrialists Hinman Hurlbut, John Huntington, and Horace Kelley, the Cleveland Museum of Art was founded as a trust in 1913. Today, the endowment value of \$755 million makes CMA the fourth wealthiest museum in the U.S.

The original neoclassical building facing the Wade Park Pond was designed by Cleveland architects Benjamin Hubbell & Dominick Benes and completed in 1916 at a cost of \$1.25 million with an iconic temple portico entry facing the lagoon. Wade Park was also designed by Hubbell & Benes with the museum planned as the park's centerpiece. The 75-acre green space is named for philanthropist Jephtha H. Wade II, who donated part of his wooded estate to the city in 1881.

Clad in white Georgian marble, the museum building reflected a trend in major cities in the US at the turn of the century where monumental groupings of important buildings were created, inspired by both Chicago's 1893 World Columbian Exposition and the National Mall in Washington, DC in 1901.



Above: Benjamin Hubbell, CMA Architect
Below: 1893 Chicago Exposition
Bottom: Jephtha H. Wade II



The city center's bifurcation into a downtown business district and a cultural center at what has become University Circle five miles to the east was the nation's earliest example of a split between a city's commercial and cultural centers.

Cleveland's Group Plan of 1903 by Chicago's Daniel Burnham, John Carrere and Arnold Brunner created a "Court of Honor" that over time has been referred to as "The Mall," around which the city hall, county courthouse, exhibition hall, library and other structures were to be located. While locating a museum in this cluster was considered, it was finally decided to locate the museum near the Case School of Applied Science and Western Reserve University, which had been near Wade Park since the 1880's.

Before 1900, most of Wade Park and University Circle was open land. From the collaboration between Frederic Whiting, the museum's first director, and architects Hubbell & Benes, the area is now home to the Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance Hall, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Cleveland Botanical Garden, Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland Institute of Music, Western Reserve Historical Society, and Case Western Reserve University—the first and most fully realized urban cultural district in the nation.

Hubbell and Benes were connected to Whiting through Jephtha H. Wade II, the sensitive and cultivated heir of the Western Union telegraph fortune who eased land restrictions to allow the museum to locate in Wade Park. Wade was the forceful museum trustee who handpicked Hubbell & Benes as the museum's architects and later affirmed Whiting as its founding director.

In 1918, Hubbell formed the University Improvement Company with members of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce as a "land bank" to acquire University Circle properties to prevent their commercial development. Wade was also one of the principal stockholders in Hubbell's UIC and a respected art collector whose donations and advice to Whiting were invaluable in the formation of the museum's permanent collection. The Wade heirs are currently in litigation with the Cleveland Botanical Center regarding their fencing off areas of their facility, which is prohibited by Wade's deed of the land for cultural use to be accessible to all without barriers.

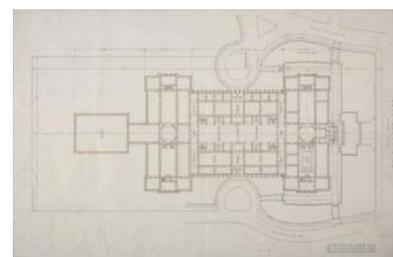
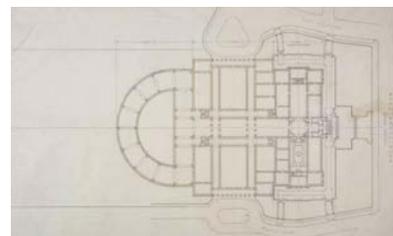
In the late 1910's and early 1920's, Hubbell & Benes developed a number of plans for a proposed cultural center at University Circle to surround the museum. In 1918, Hubbell and Whiting formed the Conference for Educational Cooperation, which produced a series of nationally influential events and publications. And in 1918, only two years after opening, Hubbell & Benes prepared for Whiting a number of alternative plans for the museum to expand dramatically to the north.

For Frederic Whiting, director of the new Cleveland Museum of Art, its proximity to other museums and educational institutions presented an opportunity unique in the world to create a cultural and educational center that could contribute in myriad ways to the betterment of life in Cleveland.

On February 20, 1924, Whiting met with Hubbell concerning the



Top to Bottom:
1. Daniel Burnham Cleveland Group Plan, 1903
2. Frederic Whiting, CMA's first director
3. Hubbell & Benes CMA Design
4. Hubbell & Benes CMA Expansion Design, 1918
5. Hubbell & Benes CMA Expansion Design, 1918



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expansion of the museum, and a little over a month later, Whiting and Western Reserve's President Robert Vinson convened the first meeting of the "Cleveland Educational Council" in the faculty room of Adelbert College. Whiting wrote:

"With a wider and coordinated use of museums it becomes evident that the more closely they can be brought together physically, the more effective will be their development and the wider their use. . . . The bringing together within a few hundred yards of each other of the three museums representing the primary museum functions of the community and bringing in close proximity to them a new building for the Cleveland School of Art, which uses material contained in all three museums, would make a constructive museum unit such as does not exist elsewhere. This group, in close proximity to the [Western Reserve] University, Case School of Applied Science, and Cleveland School of Education, and the proposed large high school building, makes the opportunity offered by Cleveland for constructive educational work, one not to be excelled anywhere."

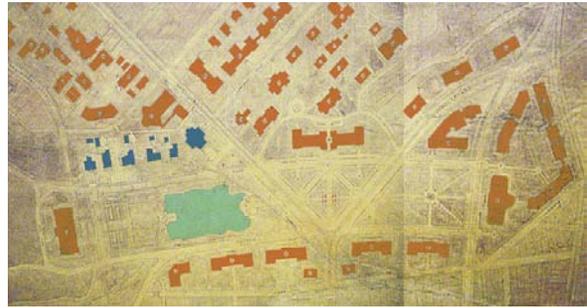
Frederic Whiting was involved in the planning of University Circle as early as 1914. Whiting's efforts to integrate museums with other educational institutions in Cleveland, and to bring such institutions to University Circle, were integral to his ideas on art and education at the outset of his tenure as CMA director.

The Cleveland Conference for Educational Cooperation was more than an experiment in education, and the efforts to find grounds for cooperation and to create institutional synergies were an important effort to theorize the functions of an urban cultural center, the first such effort ever undertaken in the history of city planning in the US.

Cleveland's University Circle stands as a crucial case study in the planning and thinking of the urban cultural center, while its implementation has not always been praiseworthy. Hubbell's studies exhibit the thinking of traditional planners like Burnham who devised a particular design and then sought to fill it with whatever institutions were available.

Whiting represented a new kind of thinker committed to building consensus and thinking through the institutional functions of a cultural center, to a degree that was unprecedented and extraordinary. Whiting's views on the role of the museum and its educational collaborators are perhaps best summed up in "A First Statement from the Study Committee," from the Cleveland Conference for Educational Cooperation, April 20, 1925:

"In considering what meaning should be given to the term "education" [we look] at the question from the standpoint of the interest of the community as a whole. It is of vital



Top to Bottom:
1. Hubbell & Benes 1916 University Circle Plan(CMA at bottom left)
2. Hubbell & Benes Western Reserve Administration Building (Unbuilt)
3. Western Reserve University, 1910



importance to the community that the members of emerging generations should be properly oriented with respect to the society of which they become a part, with respect to the natural environment in which they find themselves, with respect to themselves, their abilities and needs. It is important that these individuals be qualified for productive life. It is important that they should be enabled to draw personal joy and satisfaction from the wealth of experience which the life of the community affords. And finally, it is important that the individual as a result of his educational experience shall consciously contribute to the general welfare and betterment of his community."

"The functional unity of the educational process in a community makes necessary the correlation and integration of its institutional mechanisms under leadership which shall envisage the process as a whole. The advancement and broadening of education in the community comes through increasing where appropriate the area of purposefully organized experience . . . as a

basis for the individual's growth and development."

In the Hubbell & Benes 1916 plan, buildings were colorized for legibility. North is oriented to the left. The legend for the 51 numbered buildings has not been located. Building No. 1, on the left, is the Cleveland Museum of Art, suggesting that the architects viewed their new building as the linchpin of future University Circle development. Building Nos. 2 to 8 along the bottom are most likely arts, music, and architecture schools; Building No. 9 is probably the proposed museum of natural history, the institution that seemed likeliest to move into the neighborhood at that time.

Thus the founders of CMA and the duo that contributed most to the physical conceptual framework for the Circle viewed the cultural center as the vehicle to deliver an elevated educational and spiritual well-being for the entire community.

However, the CMA and University Circle never achieved integration with its residential neighbors to the west and north and there has never been any forward motion from the CMA or University Circle Inc. to better the lives of the museum's neighbors, even when public money was made available to set the table for betterment and connectivity. There is evidence that racism among the East Side whites – or at least fear of African-Americans – has been one of the principle causes.

In 1952, Temple Tifireth Israel joined Western Reserve University, Case Institute of Technology, University Hospital, Mt. Sinai Hospital and CMA to form the University Circle Conference Committee to "address matters of common concern." Elizabeth Ring Mather, widow of the city's iron ore magnate, and the Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund stepped up with money to fund a master plan, along with contributions from Republic Steel, Sohio and private individuals.

Case president T. Keith Glannan and other institutional heads hired Adams, Howard & Greeley from Cambridge, MA to develop the University Circle General Plan, which was released in 1957. The plan's goal was the creation of a special destination through careful land use planning at a time when the surrounding neighborhoods were worsening. Leaders recognized that they needed to bolster University Circle as a place of special importance without just buffering the Circle from urban decay. The planners warned their clients that U.C. "is not just an entity in itself but part and parcel of its surroundings."

Nearby Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights, among the city's most stable and affluent suburbs, were home to a disproportionate number of representatives of the city's growth coalition. These leaders viewed U.C. as not only an important buffer protecting their homes from the spread of urban blight, but as a beachhead for urban renewal in the gap between U.C. and downtown (Souther, 2017). The coalition's planners believed that Cleveland Heights was "extremely stable," the majority-black Glenville area to the north was



Top to Bottom:

1. Temple Tifireth-Israel, now part of CWRU
2. Mt. Sinai Hospital, 1916
3. Elizabeth Ring Ireland Mather
4. T. Keith Glannan, Case President, 1950-1962



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worthy of “conservation,” and the majority-black Hough area needed “remedial action.”

In 1960, Cleveland unveiled its plan for the urban renewal project of 1400 acres from East 9th St. to University Circle. This was the nation’s first use of Section 112 resources and the largest rehabilitation project in the country, intending to revitalize the East Side. “University-Euclid” was intended to redo an area from Superior to Carnegie Avenues and East 79th Street to East 118th Street with a panhandle area to the west to East 55th Street along Chester, Euclid and Carnegie Avenues.

The project was to include high-rise apartments in the Euclid/ Mayfield and Euclid/ East 105th St. areas and a research park at Carnegie and East 109th St., with a mix of home rehabilitation and targeted demolition north of Chester Ave. and west of University Circle (Hough). The expenditure of \$6 million by UC institutions between 1955 – 1965 was to trigger \$12 million in federal renewal funds, which were to go to the city for the University-Euclid plan to reduce the city’s share of the project’s cost (Souther, 2017).

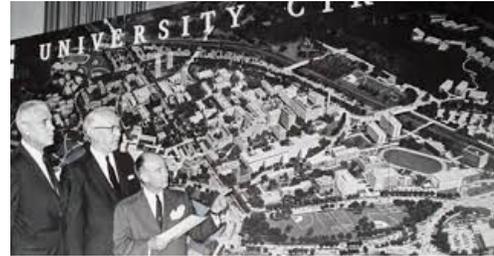
At a 1961 panel discussion at the City Club Forum, critics observed that the city’s urban renewal was stuck due to fears that it would “force Negroes into white neighborhoods.”

A \$175 million UC plan was targeted at remaking the western periphery of UC which was championed by the University Circle Development Foundation which reported directly to the chief officers at Western Reserve University, Case Institute of Technology and University Hospitals and was chaired by Neil Caruthers. UCDF reinforced the thinking that downtown and UC were the city’s two anchors – precisely the vision that Whiting and Hubbell & Benes put forth in 1918 which provided the city with “an invaluable base for metropolitan planning between the two.” (Segal, 1959)

Case president Glannan pointed to the success of “Laboratory Lane” in Boston and observed that the proposed University Circle Research Center was the city’s best crack at competing nationally for ‘Electronic and Space Age’ industries.

UCDF worked earnestly to convince corporations and organizations responsible for industrial recruitment to highlight University Circle as an amenity and facilitator of a “brainpower” base. A 1959 *Plain Dealer* pictorial magazine called UC “a brain worker’s city within a city.” (Greenough, 1959)

But UCDF also wanted to reshape its periphery, particularly Hough. Initially, UCDF attempting only “seeding” residents affiliated with its institutions in housing along its fringes. UCDF was unable to acquire properties outside its jurisdiction and turned to the Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority to reserve dozens of apartments for interns and residents at Mt. Sinai and University Hospitals in the proposed Springbrook housing project planned for Hough Ave. and Ansel Road. UCDF pitched CMHA that this would promote “racial balance” and “go a long way towards assuring its stability.” UCDF acquired the Tudor Arms Hotel at Carnegie Ave. and East 107th Street

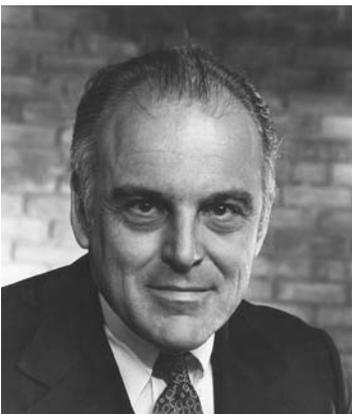


Top to Bottom:
1. University Circle Master Plan, 1950
2. Adams Howard & Greeley University Circle Master Plan, 1957
3. 1959 Downtown Cleveland Urban Renewal Plan





Top to Bottom:
1. Springbrook Towers
2. Tudor Arms Hotel/ Apartments/ Doubletree Hotel
3. University Circle signage today
4. Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver, Temple Tifereth-Israel



for conversion into graduate student housing, recently repurposed as a Doubletree Hotel.

In 1959, UC leaders and their counterparts in other urban universities successfully secured a revision to the federal Housing Act of 1949. Revisions to Section 112 enabled development expenses incurred by major private institutions – universities and hospitals – to be claimed as credits towards a city government’s contribution to urban renewal projects that framed the campuses of those Institutions. This, as Caruthers observed, facilitated breaking the impasse in Hough which had been “relegated to the mere talking stage” since the city was unable to fund the initiative.

The Hough renewal project received federal approval in 1962, but drew mixed reactions in the Hough neighborhood. Some were pleased that they city was finally in a position to make good on years of promises to rehabilitate the neighborhood. But many in the black community wondered if UC leaders were simply drawing federal funds to buffer themselves from the changing neighborhoods to the west and north. UCDF pointed to the 1957 plan that called for reaching out to surrounding areas, and noted that only the city had authority and responsibility for the project.

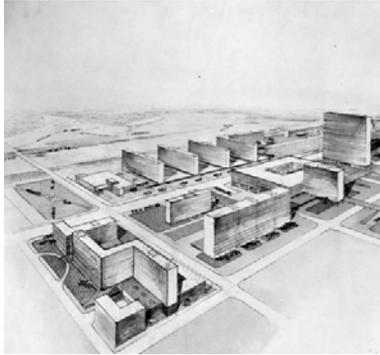
As the civil rights movement became more legible in the early 1960’s, UCDF began to take more seriously the Adams, Howard & Greeley recommendation that UC and its institutions connect more meaningfully with its surroundings. An internal UCDF PR report in 1962 warned that UC should never be “seen as a ‘city within a city,’ a walled fortress standing against a sea off decay.” The report suggested that UC’s boundaries should never be marked by signs or shown on maps, which would “give people outside something to resent, fear and blame.” These and other recommendations in the report “betrayed an implicit paternalism in Circle’s institutions’ role in Hough.”

UCDF conducted interviews with Circle stakeholders to address and overcome community distrust. Rabbi Daniel J. Silver of Temple Tifereth-Israel warned that any statement on community relations had to be a “flaming liberal document,” with anti-discrimination language to satisfy African-Americans. But Silver was also concerned that the UC institutions’ boards would reject any document liberal enough to be accepted in Hough. Silver pointed out that University Circle could not be compared to the University of Chicago or Columbia University, which were financed by national money and were not subject to the prejudices of suburban leaders.

In the winter of 1964, another UCDF internal report was released, sharply critical of the estrangement of UC’s institutions from their surroundings. The author, Michael Copperman, argued that for those in nearby neighborhoods, “the Circle represents the summit of power, wealth and everything else that is beyond their reach. This makes for class hostility and color suspicion. The Circle area becomes a white extension of the suburbs.”

Copperman decried the damage caused by Western Reserve University in 1963 when its housing bureau issued a list where half of the landlords included refused to rent to non-whites. Copperman blamed

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Top to Bottom:
 1. Erievue Urban Renewal conceptual rendering
 2. Erievue Urban renewal Concept; I. M. Pei
 3. Plain Dealer Urban Renewal Price Tag Headline, 1968
 4. Erievue demolition and new Tower



not just WRU but all of the UC institutions, which one person termed “a bunch of racists.” This did nothing to overcome the popular belief that the institutions “wished to build a wall around the Circle that would keep Negroes out” which was furthered by the decision to provide institutional spending credits to the city for rehabilitation in only the eastern half of Hough.

Copperman warned Circle leaders that they needed to make more than token efforts towards the majority-black neighbors to the west and north which he cautioned could well jeopardize the Circle’s ability to carry out its plans. But their inaction mirrored the city’s stagnant urban renewal program.

In September 1960, Caruthers complained to mayor Celebrezze that University-Euclid was not progressing as was the Erievue urban renewal project. Celebrezze argued that Erievue had to come first or the city would “spread itself too thin.” Soon the *Call and Post* was more crisp in its indictment, characterizing Celebrezze’s actions as recapturing the heart of the city for whites and in Euclid-University Circle, building a wall of culture against the slums (*Call and Post*, 5-25-63).

Plain Dealer reporter Philip Porter viewed the November 1963 defeat of an additional Cleveland bond issue to provide more money for Erievue as the result of an organized opposition to the city’s preoccupation with “encouraging real estate promoters to put up tall new buildings in a project which has the euphonious name of Erievue.”

By 1965, the city had renovated only 137 of the 2020 houses – 7% - earmarked for rehabilitation in the University-Euclid, but the city repeatedly promised the delays would end. Part of the problem was tackling the largest urban renewal project in the country – 6060 acres. And until the passage of the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Act of 1965, the federal government offered little help or money in actually pursuing rehabilitation. Property owners’ inability to obtain fire or vandalism insurance often resulted in FHA denials of loans to rehabilitate buildings. Even after the Act was passed, local officials complained about cumbersome federal forms and unresponsive federal officials.

CSU history professor Mark Souther believes that the most significant problem was the failure of the city’s building department in maintaining the building code through formal inspections after the inception of Euclid-University. The city’s urban renewal office even admitted that it had purposely avoided code enforcement to drive down property values that facilitated more economical purchases with renewal funds. The combination of residents’ reluctance to spend their own money in a neighborhood

with shrinking asset values, huge hurdles in obtaining financing, landlord neglect, overcrowding, vandalism, and the city's failure to enforce the building code sentenced much of Hough to demolition.

And when University-Euclid was planned in 1960, city officials, U.C. leaders and neighborhood activists all believed that Cleveland would continue to retain its industrial strength and that Hough would remain a port of entry for migrants – particularly “Negroes and Mountain Whites” (Raiz, 1961). But the city lost jobs and newcomers every year. Yet Hough remained densely populated with an alarming number of unemployed and underemployed, which compelled the *Cleveland Press* to label Hough as a “powder keg as explosive as that which touched off the Watts disaster last year in Los Angeles (Royce, 1966).”

In 1963, CORE picketed the city's University – Euclid field office demanding action. Citizens for Better Housing gave city hall a 14-point position paper, demanding a speedup on Hough renewal. Mayor Locher had culpability for the city's lax code enforcement from his previous job as law director.

The city awarded a \$170,000 contract to Walker & Murray Associates of Philadelphia to address its renewal problem. The study identified target areas of blight and offered a targeted approach to effect remedy, including a pilot demonstration program. By May 1965, even the federal authorities lost patience with the city and delivered a thirty-day ultimatum to initiate meaningful progress under threat of the program's cancellation.

While federal funds were not central to campus development at WRU and Case, UCDF was terribly concerned at the prospect of the failure of the program it had launched. Locher unveiled a program on eleven Hough streets for new streetlights, sidewalks and street resurfacing. While Locher and council bickered over the cost of the renovation of two homes in Hough, another delay finally produced the renovation of a 14-unit apartment building on East 90th Street between Chester and Hough.

The city was more concerned with its image than actual progress and changed its office name from “Urban Renewal” to “Community Development.” An effort to cajole CMHA into rehabilitation 1000 existing units for large families instead of building new small units failed, with the city committing to rehabilitate 200 such units in support of CMHA.

But after stalling for 18 months, CMHA director Bohn refused to cooperate on the grounds that it was his responsibility to develop new housing. But Hough



Top to Bottom:
1. Cleveland mayor Ralph Locher, 1962 - 1967
2. *Plain Dealer* Hough riots headline, 1966
3. Hough Avenue United Church of Christ
4. Hough demonstration, 1966
5. CMHA housing protest



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lacked housing for larger, low-income black families. So CMHA built 590 small units, all in the high-rise Wade and Springbrook apartments, with the majority of units reserved for the elderly and UCDF's agreement with Circle institutions that the balance were reserved for white college students or couples affiliated with Circle institutions to the point that Springbrook was nicknamed "White Island" (Cragett, 1966).

City hall and CDF stumbled along with "token, symbolic...small projects" in an attempt to keep the western part of Hough – "Forgotten Hough" – from being left behind. The Hough Avenue United Church of Christ identified multifamily brick homes on Belvedere Avenue for rehab. Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church also led a campaign to rehab a donated house on east 79th Street after accusing the city of abandoning Hough.

The December 24, 1956 issue of *Life* magazine highlighted the problem, showing photos of ill-clad children, piles of unfolded clothes, overflowing alley garbage cans and a child forced to eat standing up for lack of a table. It described how black real estate agents and two civil rights leaders bought the condemned rat-infested Gordon Towers which received a token effort at rehabilitation.

When violence erupted on July 18, 1966 at a tavern at East 79th Ave. in Hough, sparked by a bartender's refusal to serve a black patron, few were surprised. The rioting spread for six days and the Ohio National Guard was called in to restore order – but not remedy. Cleveland was no longer "The Best Location in the Nation."

Machine tool maker Warner & Swasey announced in October 1966 that it would be the first industry in Cleveland to sponsor housing rehabilitation in Hough. W+S took two four-floor apartments on Crawford Avenue and restored them from 18 units to their original 13-units and sold the project to two African Methodist Episcopal churches to manage (Taylor, 1969). But the action of W+S was the exception to the rule.

In November 1965, the city's PR machine launched Operation Demolition to hide its failures by redesignating hundreds of structures previously slated for rehabilitation, and proceeded to demolish 2700 structures over eight years (Kerr, 2012). With only 3% of the city's land, Hough accounted for 25% of all housing vacancies.

In 1967, CDF paid NBC's Chet Huntley to declare that Cleveland was a "City on Schedule" to document Cleveland's urban renewal failures with an episode entitled "It's Still Yesterday in Cleveland." The documentary presented the fact that Cleveland had done nothing for ten years while other cities had boldly



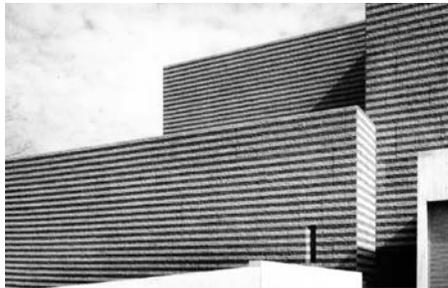
Top to Bottom:
 1. *Call and Post* Headline, 1947
 2. Hough Riots, 1966
 3. Hough Riots, 1966
 4. Hough Riots, 1966





Top to Bottom:

1. CMA Hayes & Ruth Addition, 1958
2. CMA Marcel Breuer Addition, 1971
3. CMA Marcel Breuer Addition, 1971
4. Marcel Breuer
5. Robert Bergman, CMA Director, 1993 - 1999



moved forward, pointing out the successes of Society Hill in Philadelphia and Baltimore's Harlem Park.

Cleveland and University Circle institutions have been unable to produce or incentivize large-scale improvements to urban neighborhoods. By 1967, Mayoral candidate Frank Celeste declared, "Cleveland has hit bottom. The only way to go is up," referring to the "Pray for Cleveland" bumper stickers that had shown up all over town.

In the 50 years since, with billions and billions spent by CWRU, CMA, UH and the Cleveland Clinic, the indifference of the Circle institutions to the well-being of the community immediately contiguous to University Circle is a telling tale of the city's culture and conscience.

MUSEUM EXPANSION:

In 1958, a \$35-million bequest by industrialist Leonard C. Hanna Jr. vaulted the Cleveland Museum of Art into the ranks of the country's richest art museums. Today, the museum receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council through state tax dollars and is also funded by Cuyahoga County residents through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture. The museum derives around two thirds of its \$36 million annual budget from interest on its \$750M endowment. The museum has an acquisition fund of \$277 million, from which it draws \$10M - \$13 million a year for purchase of works for its collections.

In March 1958, the first addition to the building doubled the museum's floorspace. This addition on the north side of the original building was designed by the Cleveland architectural firm of Hayes and Ruth which incorporated new gallery space and a new art library. The addition fell short of providing any architectural integrity or continuity with the 1916 building.

The museum again expanded in 1971 with a new gallery wing and main entry to the north designed by modernist architect Marcel Breuer. The blocky addition covered most of the Hayes and Ruth contribution and was clad in contrasting horizontal bands of dark granite with a large poured concrete porte cochere entry. The museum's auditorium, classrooms, and lecture halls were also moved into the Breuer North Wing, allowing those spaces in the original building to be renovated and repurposed as gallery space.

In 1983, a West Wing designed by the Cleveland architectural firm of Dalton, van Dijk, Johnson, & Partners provided larger library space, as well as nine new galleries. A central exterior sculpture garden was a charming respite area that hosted summer jazz concerts. While these additions repositioned key program elements of the museum and added needed gallery space, they also produced

inefficient and confusing circulation and wayfinding that made much of the museum unfriendly for visitors.

In a 2014 interview with CMA director of architecture and design Jeffrey Streaun, *Cleveland Plain Dealer* art and architecture critic Steven Litt chronicled the steps leading up to the museum's efforts at transformation.

Bergman + Cooper + Robertson:

Robert Bergman came to Cleveland in 1993 as director after a stint as director of the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, where he led an expansion and a widely praised reinstallation of portions of the museum's collection. Cleveland's trustees saw in Bergman scholarship and facilities skills and abilities needed in Cleveland and they recruited Bergman to take on the CMA's renovation. Bergman was also determined to make the museum more accessible to the entire community instead of the elitist bastion of predominantly east side supporters it had become under Sherman Lee during his tenure from 1958 to 1983.

Bergman and Streaun redesigned 30 of the 70 galleries the museum had when Bergman arrived, incorporating strong wall colors and effective lighting to update the conventional neutral white and battleship grey that had been the industry's standard and the preference of former design director William Ward. Bergman and Streaun also redid the museum's Armor Court in 1998 that stands in place today as a reminder of Bergman's fastidious and thoughtful gallery-by-gallery remake.

But wall colors, lighting and redeploying the museum's paintings did not address its confusing layout and infrastructure problems. "When an accretion of buildings is that illegible, no amount of signage is going to fix it," Streaun said.

The aging condition of the museum also caused problems. Old mechanical systems broke down. Leaks and condensation from skylights had to be caught with plastic sheets attached to buckets in the attic spaces above galleries, Streaun said.

Bergman and Streaun brought in the esteemed New York planning and architecture firm of Cooper Robertson in 1999 to prepare a comprehensive program of needs for the museum to use to benchmark against its existing conditions. The result was a preliminary plan for a \$170 million expansion that would provide a 22% increase in the museum's gallery space. Cooper Robertson proposed expanding the museum toward East Boulevard, with an addition designed in a style that echoed the neoclassical architecture of the museum's 1916 building.

Bergman died unexpectedly at age 54 from a sudden autoimmune disorder in May 1999 before C+R's plan was unveiled. While the museum's trustees and the art community

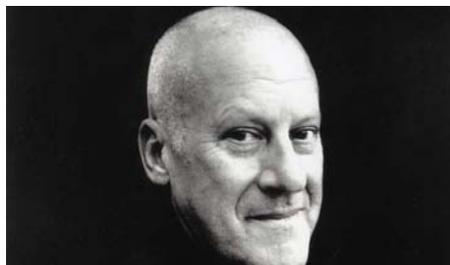


Top to Bottom:
1. CMA North Wing Renovated Gallery, 2013
2. CMA Renovated Armor Court Gallery, 1998
3. Cooper + Robertson Master Plan Model, 1999
4. Cooper + Robertson Atrium Rendering, 1999
5. CMA Director of Design & Architecture Jeffrey Streaun





Top to Bottom:
1. Sherman Lee, CMA Director, 1958 - 1982
2. Katharine Lee Reid, CMA Director, 2000 - 2006
3. Sir Norman Foster
4. Rafael Vinoly
5. September 11, 2001 Terrorist NYC Attacks



were shocked and saddened at the passing of the charismatic Bergman, they elected to shoulder on. “Bob was the guy who lit the match,” said James Bartlett, then the museum’s board president. “That really excited me.”

In 2000, the museum hired Katharine Lee Reid, director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts as Bergman’s successor. Reid was the daughter of the legendary CMA director Sherman Lee who headed the museum and oversaw the 1958, 1971 and 1983 expansions. In addition to her history in Cleveland, she had overseen an expansion program in Virginia that emboldened museum trustees to view her as uniquely qualified to lead the museum through its transformation. But Reid also saw the challenges: “I felt some anxiety. How are you going to choose an architect who was compatible with everybody’s vision — and to form that vision?”

Within a year, CMA’s architect-selection committee had narrowed a list of 63 prospective architects to six finalists. But the work of those finalists was so widely variant that it clearly indicated that the trustees had no coherent criteria that defined what skills or approach the museum needed. In fact, the very range of the architects on the short list painfully illustrated that weakness of the city’s design culture as it signified that the most cultured elites in the community lacked the knowledge to identify architects with the abilities to develop an appropriate response to the Cooper Robertson program and the context of the museum’s existing facilities and conditions.

Observed Litt, “At one end of the spectrum was Frank Gehry, architect of the 1997 Guggenheim Museum branch in Bilbao, Spain, and the Peter B. Lewis Building at Case Western Reserve University, then under construction. At the far opposite end of architectural possibility was David M. Schwarz of Washington, D.C., whose recently completed expansion of Severance Hall painstakingly channeled that building’s original 1931 Art Deco styling.”

The CMA selection committee passed on Gehry, realizing that selecting him would simply be imitating the choice of Peter Lewis, the Progressive Insurance CEO who selected Gehry to design the graduate School of Management at Case that he funded in large part. And Gehry’s history and portfolio of successful additions to existing buildings was not strong. Reid rejected Schwartz because she wanted a contemporary design. It has been reported that I. M. Pei and Beyer Blinder Belle failed to impress the selection committee. That left London’s Sir Norman Foster and Rafael Vinoly of New York.

While the museum asked the two to present a narrative of their ideas and approach to their challenge instead of proposing a design, both finalists failed to comply. Both Foster and Vinoly told the selection committee that to achieve a successful outcome and correct the circulation deficiencies of the existing complex, the 1958 and 1983 additions – both overseen by Reid’s father - needed to be completely demolished.

Both Foster and Vinoly told the selection committee that these additions needed to be replaced by a new central atrium, flanked on east and west sides by new gallery wings. This direction meant abandoning the more conservative master plan created by Cooper Robertson which included a central atrium, but on a far more modest scale than that implied by either Foster or Vinoly. But the selection committee took a step back and agreed;

“It was one of those things where you say, ‘Oh, God, they’re right,’ ” Reid said.

Viñoly got the job not only because trustees were more impressed with his design concept, but because Lord Norman Foster did not personally attend the interview, sending instead his chief lieutenant, Spencer de Gray, from London. For a project of such significance, the selection committee processed Foster’s absence as an indication that his involvement and contribution could not be guaranteed.

On September 10, 2001, CMA trustees voted officially to name Viñoly as the architect. The announcement of Viñoly’s selection the following day was completely overshadowed by the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

The terrorist attacks also placed the museum’s campaign in the unenviable position of launching a huge capitol campaign during the dark recession that following the attacks.

It was not until May 7, 2005 that museum trustees voted to proceed with the expansion and renovation.

THE VINOLY DESIGN:

The public presentation of Viñoly’s design for the \$350 million renovation and expansion of the Cleveland Museum of Art was delivered supposedly as an intended improvised public spectacle. But this was not entirely honest. Held in a Playhouse Square theater, Viñoly spoke on stage with an overhead projector and a grease crayon about respecting the original Hubbell & Benes museum opened in 1916, and the Marcel Breuer north wing addition of 1971.

Viñoly matter-of-factly stated that the 1958 and 1982 additions had to go to create coherent circulation and wayfinding for a museum with the size and quality of CMA’s collection. Viñoly’s addition would double the size of the museum to 592,000 square feet.

Strean described working with Viñoly during the design phase as “brilliant and mercurial.”

“When we had reached an impasse, he sat at the table and solved the problem sketching with you. If it was a difficult situation, he’d throw a fit and stomp out of the room for an hour. He was a very emotional guy, but always the smartest guy in the room.”

MUSEUM STAFF INTERFERENCE IN ENVELOPE SCIENCE:



Above: *Spray Foam Roofing & Insulation* magazine article, July-August 2012, highlighting CMA insulation failure and replacement.

The construction of the building was marred by the lack of knowledge and impertinence of CMA’s staff. Current building science turned out to be something that the museum’s staff lacked. Viñoly’s staff had devised an exterior envelope design of precast concrete with the exterior granite panels bolted to the precast panels.

Viñoly proposed a closed-cell spray foam insulated cavity behind to provide the needed insulation and air barrier cavity which was ventilated to eliminate condensation and protect the art. The museum staff received an informal ‘report’ from an inter-museum facilities group that was written some time in the past and did not reflect current building science.

The report was critical of closed-cell spray foam and its off-gassing characteristics. Viñoly’s team objected, pointing out that the cavity design returned air at the base of the wall and delivered fresh tempered air at the top, so any off-gassing – which would be minimal after a few days – would never affect the art work or the public. The museum’s staff insisted. Viñoly documented his objection in writing.

And so the entire museum exterior was constructed per the museum’s directive, utilizing fiberglass blanket insulation which was developed in 1932 in Toledo. The project was completed and the art work hung and water from condensation began pouring across the floor – just as Viñoly’s team warned. The museum was forced to close for months and the entire exterior envelope inside the precast concrete was demolished and rebuilt per Viñoly’s staff at an enormous additional expense.

While CMA and Viñoly agreed to keep the matter quiet locally, the subcontractor had the story published nationally with seven pages of text and photos of the debacle. On a project of this size and stature with a starchitect such as Viñoly, this mistake by CMA was inexcusable.



Top to Bottom:
1. Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain; Frank Gehry
2. Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain; Frank Gehry
3. Lawrence Convention Center; Pittsburgh, PA; Rafael Viñoly
4. Tokyo Forum; Tokyo, Japan; Rafael Viñoly
5. CMA Addition gravel roofs at southwest, southeast corners



VINOLY'S RESULTS:

In a 2014 article *Plain Dealer* architecture critic Steven Litt proclaimed that Vinoly's expansion design and renovation "put art first." As if it offered proof of his thesis, Litt observed, "It's hard to find a single spot from which to snap a picture that captures the essence of the two big wings Viñoly added to the museum."

That fact is simply a product of the scale and geometry of the complex, which is effectively illustrated from the air.

Litt stated that Vinoly's design places the visitor's emphasis on the 2016 Hubbell + Benes original building. This is partially – but only partially – correct. Until late afternoon, the north elevation is virtually always in shade while the south wall of Vinoly's north mass is always in bright light or sunshine.

Litt believes that the thrust of Viñoly's additions is not to claim attention for themselves, but to focus the eye on the museum's original 1916 building, the lovely neoclassical art palace designed by local architects Hubbell and Benes.

Litt also observed that CMA's project is part of "part of the global explosion of art museum design and construction launched in 1997 by architect Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum branch in Bilbao, Spain" ... which "revolutionized perceptions of art museum architecture when it opened in 1997. Sheathed in undulating waves of shiny titanium, the Guggenheim Bilbao showed that art museums could be considered works of art in their own right. It also turned a grimy industrial town with a polluted river and an infamous band of local terrorists into an overnight tourist destination."

Bilbao also provided non-orthogonal polymorphic spaces of great scale and drama, which have proven extremely difficult for the presentation of traditional art, which comprises 99.9% of CMA's collection. There is no question that Gehry's architecture gets in the way of the art at Bilbao.

Litt has correctly credited Vinoly with allowing the Bilbao pendulum to swing back towards "humility and restraint" to the benefit of CMA and its patrons and visitors with a facility that does not "compete with the collections it houses." Litt reports that when he was awarded the commission in 2001, Vinoly observed that CMA already had two iconic structures in the original 1916 building and the 1971 Breuer addition.

Litt also noted that while Vinoly is known for bold sculptural projects such as the Lawrence Convention

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Center in Pittsburgh with its swooping ski-slope roof and the very large Tokyo Forum mixed use project with an enormous roof skylight shaped like the hull of a boat, his response to the CMA brief was to give the trustees an ultimatum - demolish the 1958 and 1983 additions or he would not accept the commission, which would have left them with the seemingly indifferent Foster.

Vinoly's proposal to "unify" the complex by cladding the simple wings with white Georgia marble in homage to the 1916 building with striped bands of granite echoing the 1971 Breuer building is simple and obvious. It is not creative. It is an easy way out and squanders an opportunity to add a third voice to the dialogue about architecture and materiality of our time.

Vinoly held his east and west additions back from the 1916 building with glass fingers that touch the 1916 building with corridors for circulation between the collections. One flagrant faux pas is the gravel roof of the lower level that forms the corners of the museum's lower level on southeast and southwest corners. This inappropriate and ungraceful mistake should have at a minimum been treated by Vinoly as a granite clad exterior sculpture garden.

Additionally, the glass transitions between the 1916 building and the new stepped masses to the east and west dump too much light in to the sculpture galleries. As a result, even on a cloudy day, the works are silhouetted against the daylight with too much glare, compromising one's ability to properly absorb and appreciate the works. This is hardly putting the art first and in a museum of any stature, is an unforgivable transgression.

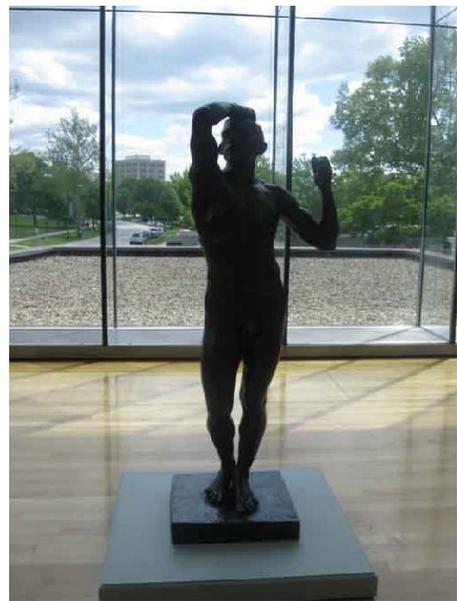
Vinoly employed the popular compression – release spatial design feature most often attributed to Frank Lloyd Wright with the atrium by allowing the Breuer north entry with its modestly scaled foyer, ticketing area and the passage past the too-small bookstore/ shop to remain in place in order to amplify the feeling of release and uplift when guests process out into the atrium.

The atrium's grand scale – 34,000 square feet - is an excellent party center, and given its high cost, it should be. It successfully hosts a wide array of civic, non-profit events as well as weddings for those wealthy enough to pay its \$22,195 - \$35k+ rental fee. A stand of bamboo trees at the west end shields a few dozen four-top tables for patrons to relax and enjoy food and drink from the adjacent too-small café.

Vinoly's design of the skylight does not exempt the space it covers from the ravages of direct sunlight at certain times of the day, rendering its use as anything other than a circulation space problematic.



Top to Bottom:
1. CMA glass corridor 'finger' connection to 1916 building
2. CMA Gravel Roof, backlit Sculpture Gallery
3. CMA Atrium daylight control challenges
4. CMA Revised Main Floor Plan





Top to Bottom:
1. CMA counterweight towers
2. CMA gallery alignment
3. CMA Director David Franklin, 2010 - 2013
4. Christina Gaston



Litt has stated that Viñoly's "architectural result, when viewed from principal vantages along East Boulevard and Wade Lagoon, is that Viñoly's big wings defer to the 1916 building, embracing it as the main architectural attraction." Yet he acknowledges and dismisses the criticism many have directed at the museum's pair of large towers; "Many Clevelanders say they hate the pair of twin concrete towers Viñoly installed on the north side of the atrium as counterweights to the big skylight that soars over the space."

Litt: "The rap against the towers is that they look too high, and too industrial for leafy University Circle. I disagree. I think the vertical notes provided by the towers counterbalance the horizontal shapes formed by Viñoly's East and West wings, and contrast pleasingly with the upward-curving arc of the skylight."

As a matter of fact, the towers are tall and out of scale with the more horizontal masses of the three primary elements of the museum's occupiable space with the 1916 building, the 1971 Breuer contribution and Viñoly's additions. And from any approaching view from the south, they certainly anchor Viñoly's efforts emphatically as a large and significant departure from the 1916 building and as a whole, represent Viñoly's only bold compositional contribution to the meal.

There is no question that the museum is now easier to navigate. Removing the 1958 and 1982 additions guaranteed that. And the atrium is a welcomed hearth space that gives the complex a stasis point.

The capture of Breuer's main floor gallery space east of the main entry and its repurposing by museum staff to Gallery One, a technology-assisted interactive learning experience is engaging, effective and successful.

Viñoly's symmetrical arrangement of galleries can be viewed as a compliment to the 1916 building but their stepping simply reflects the curl of East Boulevard without such justification on the west side of the complex. Some of the galleries deliver straight-line north-south circulation sequences, which can make navigation easier for guests. The second level gallery north of the atrium is a long and linear repository, which seems dark and unfriendly compared to the other galleries, which have fragmental exposure to daylight.

THE GASTON – FRANKLIN SCANDAL & TRAGEDY:

CMA director David Franklin, appointed in 2010, resigned on Oct. 21, 2013 five months after the death of his lover, and after the museum presented him with proof that he had repeatedly lied to cover up his extramarital affair with an employee who later left the museum and who committed suicide in April 2013. In denying the affair, Franklin violated a museum policy requiring disclosure of the relationship.

This tragedy warrants examination as it reveals a clear leadership lapse and absence of transparency from the leaders of the city's most significant institution that has extracted hundreds and hundreds of

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millions of dollars from the community in the past decade, and failed the community's trust by abdicating an obligation of honesty.

Franklin's lover, Christina Gaston, allegedly hanged herself on the night of April 28-29 in her Cleveland Heights apartment, six months after she left a good-paying museum job for a stressful, lower-paying post as managing director of a small cultural start-up, ChamberFest Cleveland. According to the Cleveland Heights police report, Franklin found Gaston on the night of her death and called 9-1-1.

CMA board chairman R. Steven Kestner said he asked Franklin twice about the affair after the museum received anonymous letters in the summer of 2012 and in January 2013, months before Gaston's death. The museum even asked its outside lawyer to question Franklin. Satisfied with his denials, the institution closed its 'investigation' in February - without even contacting Gaston.

Kestner has stated that CMA did not become aware of the Cleveland Heights police report until September 2013 and was only able in October 2013 to confirm that Franklin had lied about the affair. Kestner related his account to staff members of the *Plain Dealer* and the Northeast Ohio Media Group in an interview on Nov. 12, more than three weeks after Franklin's resignation, and after the incompleteness of CMA's prior accounts of the Franklin saga had raised a public furor.

THE CMA BOARD'S "FUCK UP"

CMA trustees were inept, dishonest and deplorable in attempting to conceal and manage the scandal.

In the words of *Scene* reporters Sam Allard and Doug Brown, the CMA board is "comprised of the city's CEO's, wives of CEO's and scions of monied families with ties to the East Side. Most of them live in Gates Mills and Shaker Heights. They tend to be more deeply acquainted with law firms and corporate affairs than museums. Few, if any, have more than a dilettantish appreciation for or sophistication about art. At the risk of sounding overly theatrical, they represent Cleveland's Power and Prestige in concentrate. They socialize in "donor circles."

There are glaring inconsistencies and questions in the Cleveland Heights police report and in Franklin's account of his activities that day, as well as in what the CMA board had served up to *Plain Dealer* reporter Steven Litt. The Cleveland Heights police department failed to thoroughly investigate and reconcile those inconsistencies.

Litt, the city's only regular art and architecture writer, broke the news on Monday, Oct. 21, that David Franklin was resigning as CMA director for personal reasons. In a prepared statement, Franklin said that he wanted more time



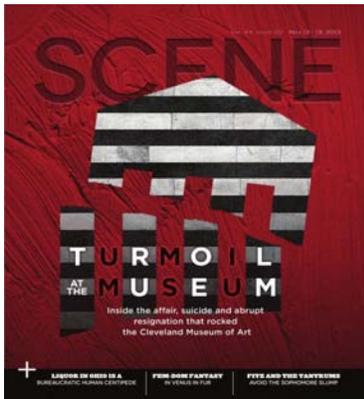
Top to Bottom:
1. Christina Gaston (left) as a child with violin
2. CMA Board Chair R. Steven Kestner
3. CMA Attorney Stephen "Josh" Knerly; Hahn Loeser



for research and writing. After only three years at the helm, Franklin's resignation was effective immediately. The resignation was characterized as another major blow because CMA had seen so much turbulence in its top position since 2000.

At the time, board chairman and Baker Hostetler attorney R. Steven Kestner told Litt he couldn't elaborate on Franklin's "personal reasons," expressing little more than vague surprise. "This is not something anybody plans for," Kestner told Litt.

When the *Scene* reached a trustee in early November 2013, he wasted no time in defending the board's actions and praising



Above, Top to Bottom:
1. Scene magazine cover, November 13, 2013
2. Christina Gaston apartment building, Euclid Heights Blvd.
3. Scene 11-13-13 headline on Franklin scandal
5. Globe headline, Franklin tarnishes NGC, 7-28-08



Kestner's leadership. But Kestner's comments changed every time a new story appeared, contradicting his previous statements and fudging timelines.

"We fucked up, okay? We fucked up," the trustee admitted. "We tried to control the story and we couldn't control the story."

The story the board tried to control was simple enough, but the board's paranoia, press ineptitude and lack of transparency complicated its narrative. A complete lack of transparency or cohesive comment from the museum only muddled matters more. On Nov. 6, CMA attorney Stephen "Josh" Knerly from Hahn Loeser sent an email to all trustees and other museum officials with directives to not talk to Scene reporters. According to Knerly, board discussions that took place in the presence of counsel were subject to attorney-client privilege. Furthermore, wrote Knerly, the board ought to speak with "one voice."

But the board wasn't speaking with any voice at all, and without an explanation, the public had no choice but to speculate. The assumption was that something insidious and underhanded had happened between the beginning of the affair and the abrupt resignation, and that the museum was trying to shield its reputation. "This was absolutely not a cover-up," the trustee told Scene. "What there was was ignorance. And I don't know that that's any better."

The trustee confirmed that information had been laundered for both the public and museum staff -- "It was more leaving out information than trying to mislead" -- in part because the details of the affair and Christina Gaston's death seemed too personal, too voyeuristic.

It compounded the discomfort that the Scene's trustee claimed he was "offended" people thought the affair itself led to the museum's "parting of ways" with Franklin. After all, that was the museum and Kestner's line, trumpeted repeatedly by the Plain Dealer. If not the affair itself, then...

"[Franklin] lied to us!" the trustee said. "He lied to us directly, with no lack of clarity, over a protracted period of time. He ruined any trust there was there."

The irony, of course, is that lying - directly, with no lack of clarity - and ruining trust is precisely what Steve Kestner and the CMA board leadership did for an extended period since before the Franklin story broke.

Ignorance and lying plagued all aspects of the sordid story, from media coverage of the bombshell news to the board's inept investigation of the affair, to how Cleveland Heights police mishandled the crime scene and its so-called investigation to how the board of the Cleveland Museum of Art conducted its business.

TROUBLE UP NORTH

David Franklin had a well-publicized checkered executive past in Canada, though his questionable performance was never mentioned in Plain Dealer editorials celebrating his arrival in Cleveland in

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2010. Shame on the CMA Board and Litt for not vetting Franklin's suitability for the Cleveland post, one of the top positions in the country.

Baker Hostetler attorney Steve Kestner chaired the CMA search committee in 2010 that "found" Franklin and brought him to Cleveland with no shortage of fanfare. Franklin was something of a dark horse in international circles after a controversy in Canada had garnered unwanted headlines. Yes, Franklin was a Renaissance scholar, and yes, Franklin had curated a critically acclaimed Caravaggio exhibition. But he was not a schmoozer or a go-getter.

Strike One.

He was a "mumbler" who had never run a major institution before.

Strike Two.

He was "not particularly dynamic" in group settings.

Strike Three.

He was fond of strong drink.

Strike Four.

But he was viewed as a family man with an outgoing wife and two children. The CMA board leadership hoped those assets might endear him to Cleveland and encourage him to establish roots. After former CMA director Timothy Rub had jumped ship in 2009 after only three years without notice for Philadelphia – the fifth largest city in the US, CMA wanted a long-term stable leader.

But Franklin "made bad jokes."

Strike Five.

And he "wouldn't look you in the eye."

Strike Six.

Who were the other candidates? Did Kestner think that Franklin's weaknesses would keep him tethered to the Cleveland post? Surely there were better alternative candidates, weren't there?

Plus, as former trustees have told *Scene*, Kestner assured the board prior to a unanimous vote that Franklin had been exonerated of all allegations in Canada. The search firm Phillips-Oppenheim, which consulted for the museum during the search, did not respond to multiple requests from the *Scene* when asked about their efforts.

But Franklin's "triple-deleted emails" were something of a cause célèbre in a 2008 case that resulted in his dismissal from the National Gallery of Canada, where he served as deputy director and chief curator. In fact, Franklin was fired twice - in immediate succession - and reinstated shortly thereafter when he challenged his firing in Federal Court.



Top to Bottom:
1. National Gallery of Canada; Ottawa; Moshe Safdie, architect
2. David Franklin, deputy director, National Gallery of Canada; 1998 - 2010
3. Timothy Rub, CMA director, 2006 - 2009
4. Erika Dolphin, assoc. curator of European Art, National Gallery of Canada
5. Christina Gaston





Top to Bottom:

1. Pierre Theberge, former director, National Gallery of Canada
2. Deborah Gribbon, CMA interim director, 2009-2010
3. *Art in America* headline; 10-22-13
4. *The Observer* headline; 10-23-13



Cleveland Museum of Art Director David Franklin Resigns



Affair With Museum Staffer Led to David Franklin's Resignation at the Cleveland Museum of Art

By Max Miller - 10/24/13 13:00m

The Cleveland *Plain Dealer* reported on Monday the abrupt resignation of David Franklin, the Cleveland Museum's director of three years. He cited "personal reasons" and told the paper, "It's time to spend more time on research and writing." On Wednesday, an alternative paper in the city, *Cleveland Scene*, called into question these "personal reasons," and quoted anonymous sources that said Mr. Franklin's resignation was the result of an extramarital affair with a former staffer who committed suicide in April. Commenters on the original *Plain Dealer* story claimed the paper was withholding the truth, possibly because the paper's publisher, Terrance C.Z. Egger, sits on the board of the Cleveland Museum. The full story became clear Thursday afternoon as the museum confirmed the story in *Cleveland Scene* to the *Plain Dealer*, offering more specific details:

The triple-deleted emails - deleted from Inbox, Sent, and Trash folders - revolved around a curatorial assistant named Erika Dolphin. At the time, her position was being eliminated, according to court documents, in a cost-cutting move.

The contents of the original Dolphin emails -- emails that former National Gallery HR director Lise Labine called "embarrassing to Dolphin and the institution," and which Franklin politely dubbed "unflattering" - have never been made public. But many of the other documents have, thanks to an appeal by the *Ottawa Citizen* when the case was initially sealed from the public eye. That appeal hinged on the idea that risk of institutional embarrassment didn't constitute a legal justification to infringe upon the freedom of the press.

Revealed in those documents, and in a series of stories that took the art world by storm in 2008, was a rivalry at Canada's National Gallery that the press likened to civil war. Franklin and then-director Pierre Theberge were the warring factions, enlisting allies and creating a "toxic" atmosphere at the Gallery, a federal institution in Canada not unlike the Smithsonian here.

From conversations with reporters in Canada, the prevailing feeling at the time was that Theberge, an aging director set to retire at the end of the 2008, was using the email controversy as a smokescreen to veil his primary motive: ensuring that Franklin did not succeed him. The *New York Times* coverage of the story in December 2008, arrived at the same conclusion.

But the whole "horrible misunderstanding," as Franklin himself described the summer of 2008 in a *Plain Dealer* story soon after he was appointed at CMA, turned out to be much more serious than a 'misunderstanding.'

In 2010, the Canadian federal information commissioner determined Franklin broke the law when he deleted the emails - three times, in direct defiance of the Canadian Access to Information Act. The Canadian Justice Minister ultimately exonerated Franklin from a penalty that carried up to \$10,000 in fines and two years in jail. So Kestner was technically correct, but the fact remains: Serious questions about whether or not Franklin would be disciplined for breaking the law were circulating mere months before his appointment in Cleveland.

The attitude of National Gallery leadership regarding Franklin's reinstatement in 2008 should have been an enormous red flag for any search committee considering Franklin for a leadership position.

An excerpt from Canada's National Gallery's Federal Court submission in the Franklin case:

"It would be irresponsible and insubordinate for any employee to conduct himself in the manner Mr. Franklin has over the past two months; but it is inexcusable in the case of Mr. Franklin, the

gallery's chief curator and a deputy director. An intolerable situation would result should the gallery be forced to reinstate Mr. Franklin who has set such a poor example for other employees. To do so would undermine the gallery's integrity in the eyes of its employees and the general public."

Allard and Brown: "This was Kestner's knight in shining armor" to follow Timothy Rubb.

THE AFFAIR

Christina Gaston worked at the Cleveland Museum of Art in the development office from September 2009 to November 2012. Franklin arrived in 2010. She then took a job as the managing director of ChamberFest, a summer concert series.

Gaston possessed beauty, charisma and compassion; she relished the smell of dusty bookstores, collected antiques before it was trendy, a woman who made Audrey Hepburn look frankly plain. She was a woman who was not above walking a mile through snow in heels to volunteer; a woman who loved, above all, music. She cultivated that love in the Dominican Republic when she lived there with her family, playing the violin at a very young age when the body of the instrument was the size of her torso. She practiced for hours a day, a testament to her passion.

Only when a serious injury short-circuited her promising music career – she'd obtained academic degrees in music and played in ensembles from Battle Creek to Poland – did she find solace in her love of museums and her job at CMA. Gaston and Franklin began a romantic relationship sometime in early 2012. It continued, with one reported interruption, during and after Gaston's departure from the museum. Franklin was married with two children.

Gaston and Franklin were in love and planned to marry. Franklin claimed he was in the middle of divorce proceedings. He had moved out of his \$750k Shaker Heights home, which the museum helped pay for, and into an apartment in Uptown on Euclid Avenue in September 2012. They would be together once his divorce was final, free to move away and look for other jobs, he told her. Franklin subsequently moved back into his Shaker Heights home.

Gaston and Franklin had traveled together to Spain, where Franklin was giving a speech, and had an overseas trip to Italy booked and planned for the first week of May – a week after her death.

Allard and Brown report that sources described the relationship as an "open secret," even though Gaston herself was a very private person. Franklin was acutely concerned about his reputation and appearances. When Gaston and Franklin attended the same event, they would act like nothing was going on – and worried about people discussing the affair. Franklin still appeared socially with his wife.

Investigation remains closed in the suicide of the lover of Cleveland Museum of Art director David Franklin, but questions linger

Updated November 3, 2013 at 12:06 PM; Posted November 2, 2013 at 3:00 PM



By [Steven Litt, The Plain Dealer](#)

Updated Saturday afternoon with new comments from R. Steven Kestner, chairman of the Cleveland Museum of Art board of trustees:

The Cleveland Heights Police and the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner said Friday that their investigation into the suicide in April of the lover of David Franklin, who resigned as director of the Cleveland Museum of Art in October, remains closed.



David Franklin inspecting a conservation lab with conservator Dean Yoder on Thursday, May 23.

Top Down:

1. Cleveland *Plain Dealer* article; 11-3-13
2. *Cool Cleveland* headline
3. *Scene* headline on anonymous letter to CMA board; 11-14-13



The Unfortunate Legacy of David Franklin



By Josh Levner

The news of the Cleveland Museum of Art's Director David Franklin's resignation shocked most of Cleveland's art community, but as the news began to hit the internet and social media, those not surprised began to criticize the initial reporting of *The Plain Dealer*/Cleveland.com's Steven Litt. So much so that *The Plain Dealer* has gone on the offensive to explain their role in the alleged, attempted whitewash/cover-up.

It's difficult to even decide where to begin with this article. His resignation is a bombshell. The backlash from the community towards Litt, the PD/Cleveland.com and the CMA is another unprecedented "black eye" for the museum, the paper and city as a whole. Franklin's controversial Canadian backstory is shockingly provocative. And then there are the many layers to each story that add more and more complexity to the issues.

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Here's One of the Anonymous Letters Sent to the Cleveland Museum of Art Trustees About David Franklin's Affair

Posted By Vince Cizegorenk | Email Us on Thu, Nov 14, 2013 at 12:58 pm

This week's feature delves deep into the **affair, suicide and abrupt resignation that rocked the Cleveland Museum of Art.**

There are multiple issues with the departure of former director David Franklin here, including what and when the museum knew of the affair and death, the *Plain Dealer's* curious lack of coverage and subsequent resignation of the board's version of events without so much as a question (but with plenty of chest thumping), and the willfully inept "investigation" the museum initiated into the relationship once it was tipped.

Here's one of the anonymous letters, according to a source, that was sent to all trustees – including PD publisher Terry Egger – back in January 2013. All board members have been instructed by the museum's lawyer not to talk to *Scene*, so we've obviously been unable to get comment on its contents.

You'll notice Christina Gaston is mentioned by name (Kestner now says she was never asked about the relationship during the investigation because they believed Franklin when he denied the affair) and that Steve Litt, the PD's reporter/stenographer is mentioned by name. Whether or not the author of the letter did in fact contact Litt with the accusations is unknown – multiple sources have told us he was aware of the rumors and affair for months – but by Litt's own admission, he did not look into those rumors until after David Franklin was forced to resign.

Real Clear Arts
Judith H. Dobrzynski on Culture

HOME ABOUT CONTACT

The Cleveland-Franklin Mess, Continued

It's never the crime, it's the cover-up. Watergate, among other scandals, proved that and the forced resignation, aka firing, of David Franklin (below left) as director of the Cleveland Museum of Art last month, is showing it once again.



Three articles have more details. First, Cleveland Scene, which was the first (I believe) to go beyond the spoon-fed resignation story, has written *Turmoil at the Museum: Inside the Affair, Suicide and Abrupt Resignation That Rocked the Cleveland Museum of Art*. It says, among other things, that the board terminated Franklin because he had repeatedly lied about the affair he had with a former CMA staffer, who later committed suicide. It then points out that the board also lost credibility because it lied. Among the key passages:

[Board chairman Steve] Kestner's (below right) comments had mutated materially every time a new story appeared, contradicting statements he made earlier and fudging timelines.

"We fucked up, okay? We fucked up," the trustee admitted. "We tried to control the story and we couldn't control the story."

Then:

The trustee confirmed that information had been laundered for both the public and museum staff -- "It was more leaving out information than trying to mislead" -- in part because the details of the affair and Christina Gaston's death seemed too personal, too voyeuristic.

Top Down:

1. *Real Clear Arts* blog headline, 11-14-13
2. *Scene* headline, 11-13-13
3. *Crain's Cleveland Business* headline; 11-13-13

SCENE

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Turmoil at the Museum: Inside the Affair, Suicide and Abrupt Resignation That Rocked the Cleveland Museum of Art

By Sam Altard and Doug Brown

The Cleveland Museum of Art in University Circle is one of Northeast Ohio's flagship cultural institutions. It is home to an impressive collection of major paintings -- by Degas, Monet, Caravaggio -- and boasts one of the fastest endowments of any museum in the country. It was established in 1913 "for the benefit of all the people forever," and remains largely free to the general public. Thanks to ongoing support from individual and corporate mega-donors, the museum's lavish \$350-million expansion is nearly complete. It is governed, as



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December 15, 2013 (12:30 AM)

2013 NEWSMAKER: David Franklin, formerly of the Cleveland Museum of Art

SCOTT SUTTELL

TWEET SHARE EMAIL



David Franklin came to the Cleveland Museum of Art in September 2010 with a hint of controversy in his past. He left the museum in late October amid a full-blown scandal that involved the suicide of a woman with whom he had an extramarital affair. The museum on Oct. 21 announced that Dr. Franklin, an expert in Italian Renaissance art, was resigning from the job "effective immediately." It did not specify a reason for his departure, but noted that he would be "retained as a consultant for a period of time in order to insure an orderly transition." The transition was anything but orderly.

Commenters on stories posted on Cleveland.com, Clevelvescene.com and elsewhere quickly filled in their own reason for Dr. Franklin's sudden departure -- an affair he had with a museum employee who had committed suicide in the spring. *Scene* soon posted a story about the matter, and by Oct. 23, R. Steven Kestner, a Cleveland lawyer and chairman of the museum board, confirmed to *The Plain Dealer* that it was an affair that led to Dr. Franklin's resignation (Mr. Kestner later clarified that it was lies about the affair that led to the resignation.) The unseemly episode continued a pattern of sudden departures in the career of Dr. Franklin. In mid-2008, Dr. Franklin was dismissed as deputy director and chief curator of the National Gallery of Canada after museum lawyers concluded he improperly had deleted emails during his firing of an assistant curator. Dr. Franklin filed a lawsuit and subsequently was rehired by the National Gallery, though the episode involved what *The New York Times* characterized as "the release of a series of unusually vitriolic internal email messages." (Dr. Franklin said in 2010 when he was hired in Cleveland that the allegations about the emails were never substantiated.) Dr. Franklin's departure came as the

After her death on April 29, news of Gaston's suicide spread quickly, if unofficially, through the museum's various departments. Many of the higher-ups knew immediately -- one high-ranking museum official was disseminating the news to those tied into the Cleveland arts scene the next day, for example. And Laura Bidwell -- wife of trustee and recent interim director Fred Bidwell -- was very close with Christina Gaston and knew about the suicide soon enough to send flowers to the Gaston family for Christina's funeral in Georgia on May 5.

Some employees emailed about the news; others subsisted on rumors for weeks. One former employee says he'd always thought that it was Gaston's sister who had found her. Though Gaston was no longer employed at the museum at the time, colleagues were "surprised" and "appalled" that no official word was given to the staff.

For the most part, however, Gaston's passing was so well concealed that many of her close friends were unaware of the news. Her birthday was in early May, less than two weeks later, and one CMA coworker described the horror of watching Christina's Facebook page erupt with predictably jolly wishes. There was no obituary in local papers.

Christina's older sister, Cassandra, said it wasn't necessarily surprising. "We're very private people," she told *Scene*. A memorial service was held for coworkers and friends at the Cleveland Institute of Art Cinematheque, where Christina had volunteered every other Saturday taking tickets, but that was not until July 22, nearly three months later.

Whether or not the death of a young woman on the rise in Cleveland's cultural community was newsworthy remains a question of taste. But David Franklin's presence and the couple's relationship, which the museum was at least aware of, should have instantly been subject to scrutiny. Instead, the museum sat in silence and Franklin continued operating as its director - for six months.

THE NIGHT CHRISTINA DIED

Christina Gaston's bedroom in the old brick apartment building on Euclid Heights was cluttered with the accessories of a stylish, artsy 34-year-old woman -- books, high heels, shopping bags, a rolling black suitcase with clothes piled on top. On one side of her bed was a lint roller resting on the ledge of the music stand that must have held hundreds of pages of Christina's sheet music as she played her violin. On the other side was a white nightstand on which sat an old paperback copy of Larry Niven's science fiction book, *The Ringworld Engineers*, next to her Hello Kitty alarm clock and a copy of Italo Calvino's *The Baron in the Trees*.

She died there on April 29.

According to Cleveland Heights police officer Andrew Trhlin's official report that night, he and officer Douglas Olp got a call at 12:13 a.m. -- Sunday night into Monday morning -- to respond to a report of an unconscious woman at the apartment. David Franklin had just dialed 911 to report finding his friend hanging. They arrived and were flagged down by Franklin waiting for them outside and led to the apartment's back door and then the bedroom, where they found "an unresponsive white female in the rear bedroom leaning over the bed."

Her face and hands were purple, and there was a white rope hanging from the ceiling fan, "the other end of the rope was near Gaston's head, however, we could not confirm it was around her neck due to her positioning on the bed, her hair, and the heavy green coat she was wearing." At 12:20 a.m., Cleveland Heights fire personnel showed up - police and fire respond to calls like this in tandem - and she was officially pronounced dead six minutes later. Trhlin called the county coroner's office at 12:51 and an investigator showed up a half hour later.

When police and then the county medical examiner arrived, her 5'-2", 116-pound lifeless body was no longer hanging, but leaning over the side of the bed next to her nightstand. Her legs were underneath her on the hardwood floor as if she were kneeling, torso leaning up against the side of her bed with her face down and arms stretched out in front on top of it. Franklin must have positioned her so. She wore a green herringbone coat over a long sleeve white shirt, long black skirt and shin-high black socks.

The rope - perhaps as thick as a dime - was wrapped once to make a simple overhand knot around a single metal stem that connects a wooden blade to the base of the ceiling fan. Sitting on the other side of the bed was a pair of scissors and an unused pile of the same rope material with a perfectly and cleanly tied noose with a hangman's knot on one end.

Elsewhere in the apartment police found some of Gaston's prescriptions: tizanidine - a muscle relaxant, trazodone - an antidepressant and Cymbalta - for depression and anxiety. In the kitchen was an opened bottle of red wine, a used wine glass, and four bowls on the ground -- two filled with dry cat food and two filled with water -- for her two cats. Not found anywhere that night, in either her apartment or car, was her iPhone.

No suicide note, either. Or her camera.

David Franklin was described as "extremely emotionally distraught" by Officer Trhlin. In his report, he wrote: "While waiting for coroner to respond, I spoke further to Franklin. Franklin stated at 2000 hours the previous night [8 p.m. Saturday], he received a text message from his friend Christina Melinda Gaston stating that she was "depressed from work." Franklin stated after he did not hear back from Gaston, he

The screenshot shows the top of a BLOUINARTINFO article. The header includes the site name and a search bar. Below the navigation menu, the article title is "Cleveland Museum Picks a New Director, Who Survived an Email Scandal" dated August 27, 2013. A photograph of the Cleveland Museum of Art is featured. Below the photo, there are several paragraphs of text. The first paragraph states: "The Cleveland Museum of Art has named David Franklin as its new director, replacing Timothy Rish who departed the museum to run the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A specialist in Italian Renaissance and baroque art, Franklin, 48, currently serves as the deputy director and chief curator of the National Gallery of Canada." The second paragraph mentions: "At the National Gallery since 1998, Franklin organized shows that included 'Leonardo, Michelangelo and the Renaissance Florence' and 'Bernini and the Birth of Baroque Portrait Sculpture,' an exhibition jointly organized with the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles that was the first North American show of the sculptor's portrait busts. Franklin is currently organizing a show on Caravaggio which has been set to debut at the National Gallery in the summer of 2014." The third paragraph notes: "The new Cleveland director's tenure at the Canada museum was embroiled in controversy, however, when allegations surfaced in 2008 that he had dated emails he had written to colleagues about a woman who worked at the institution. That woman, Krista Dughin, had filed an official grievance against the museum with her union after she was fired from a curatorial assistant job. Following his dismissal, Franklin did not go back to his job back. In a recent statement he said that the emails he dated contained information that could have "embarrassed the gallery or Ms. Dughin." He was subsequently rehired."

- Top Down:
1. *Blooin Art Info* Story CMA's hiring of Franklin despite his Canada scandal; 8-27-10
 2. *Scene* headline on Franklin's lies to police; 10-31-13

The screenshot shows the top of a SCENE article. The header includes the site name and a navigation menu. Below the navigation menu, the article title is "David Franklin Lied to Cleveland Heights Police the Night He Found Christina Gaston's Body" dated October 31, 2013. A photograph of David Franklin is featured. Below the photo, there are several paragraphs of text. The first paragraph states: "Phone records provided to Scene by Christina Gaston's family show definitively that former Cleveland Museum of Art Director David Franklin gave false information to Cleveland Heights police officers on April 29, 2013, when he allegedly discovered Gaston's body at her apartment on Euclid Heights Boulevard in the very early morning." The second paragraph notes: "Franklin told police, and provided handwritten testimony in their report, that he'd received a text message from Christina Gaston at 8 p.m. the previous night (Saturday, April 27). According to Franklin, that text said: 'depressed from work.'" The third paragraph asks: "But Christina Gaston's phone records show only one text on April 27. It was sent from Gaston's phone at 6:06 p.m. to a number which Scene has confirmed is not David Franklin's. What prodded Franklin to allegedly visit her apartment that night if that text was never sent?"

The screenshot shows the top of a Cleveland Magazine article. The header includes the magazine's name and navigation links for 'FOOD & DRINK', 'THINGS TO DO', 'IN THE CLE', 'ENTERTAINMENT', 'AT HOME', 'STYLE', and 'HEADLINE'. Below the header is a search bar and a 'TRENDING > TOP DOCS' section. The main article title is 'Art of Deception' with a sub-headline: 'How the Cleveland Museum of Art's leadership painted itself into a corner in the David Franklin affair.' The article is categorized as 'COMMENTARY' and dated '12:00 AM EST' on 'December 20, 2013'. It includes social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The author is listed as 'Michael D. Roberts'. The text begins with: 'Some years ago, Baldwin Wallace University was embarrassed by newspaper accounts that revealed a Rembrandt painting it obtained was a forgery. An unscrupulous art collector had victimized the school. I spent nearly a year tracing the provenance of the painting and broke the story for *The Plain Dealer*. Later, I learned that the newspaper's tip about the forgery came from the Cleveland Museum of Art. I found it peculiar that museum officials did not do the honorable thing and privately tell the university of the forgery. There seemed to be something devious in the museum's behavior.'

Top Down:

1. *Cleveland magazine* story; 12-20-13
2. *Culture Girl* blog headline; 10-22-13

The screenshot shows the top of a CultureGrrl article. The header includes the site name 'CultureGrrl' and the tagline 'Lee Rosenbaum's cultural commentary'. Navigation links for 'HOME', 'ABOUT', and 'CONTACT' are visible. The article title is 'David Franklin's Sudden Shocking Exit: Another Dizzying Spin in Cleveland Museum's Revolving-Door Directorship UPDATED' with a sub-headline: 'October 22, 2013 by CultureGrrl'. Below the title is a portrait of David Franklin, ex-director of the Cleveland Museum of Art. A link '[More on this: [here](#).]' is provided. The text begins with: 'Not since the sudden, unexplained departure of Timothy Potts from the directorship of the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, in 2007 has there been such a shockingly precipitous exit from a major art museum as yesterday's resignation, effective immediately, of David Franklin from Cleveland Museum of Art, which he had led since September 2010. Even Potts (who is now director of the J. Paul Getty Museum) offered to stay on at the Kimbell three months, "to allow time for his successor to be identified and to ensure a smooth transition. But Franklin will be only "retained as a consultant for a period of time, in order to insure an orderly transition," according to the museum's press release yesterday announcing this dismaying development. Here's Franklin's own statement, appended to the end of the museum's announcement: I am proud of the accomplishments that our team has achieved during my tenure. We have raised more than \$100 million, opened the unique and innovative Gallery One, and made notable acquisitions and achievements in publications, research and scholarship culminating in the creation of the Keithley Institute for Art History, in collaboration with Case Western Reserve University. I thank every staff member, donor and the Board for helping make those accomplishments possible. The Museum is on very solid financial footing, with a bright future as one of the world's finest art collections. Over the past few months, I have concluded that it's time to spend more time on research and writing. I look forward to working with Fred Bidwell [a member of the museum's board of trustees and now its interim director] to achieve a

responded to her apartment to check on her.

Once at her apartment, Franklin stated he went to her front door and rang her apartment doorbell. Franklin stated Gaston did not respond, however, he noticed her apartment lights were on and her interior patio door was open. Franklin stated he then went to the back door and again was unsuccessful making contact. Franklin stated he found that the back door was unlocked and he entered the apartment. Once inside, Franklin stated he located Gaston unconscious in the bedroom (north side of the apartment). Franklin stated he immediately contacted emergency services and stood by until police arrived. Franklin, who was visually upset, completed a brief written statement."

That is the only record of David Franklin conduct and comments at the scene of his lover's alleged suicide. Police did not ask to see the "depressed from work" text message he said Christina sent him. They would have learned that there was no such text message to Franklin from Gaston. Nor did they ask him about Christina's missing phone. Police records show police dismissed Franklin even before the medical examiner showed up.

A BOTCHED INVESTIGATION AND QUESTIONS FROM THE FAMILY

Christina Gaston's family in Georgia was more involved in the case than any local institution or agency. For months after her death, they were justifiably unsatisfied with the CH police investigation and official story so they pieced together their own investigation. They badgered Cleveland Heights police incessantly for answers to lingering questions that were never delivered.

For instance, where was her phone? Gaston was a voracious photographer. Where was her digital camera?

That neither were never recovered reflects poorly on scope, competence and effort of the 'investigation' by Cleveland Heights police. But the family obtained phone records from AT&T for Christina's account which showed definitively that she never sent a text to David Franklin that Saturday night, the one he claimed said she was "depressed from work." In fact, only one text was sent that day, to a graphic designer who was doing work for ChamberFest.

Why did CH investigators not go back to Franklin and demand an explanation for his unfounded assertion of a text message that was supposedly what prompted him to come to her apartment?

But Christine's phone was still active the night Franklin found her body: a data transfer from the phone was sent at 12:22 a.m., minutes after Franklin's 911 call, and another at 2:34 a.m. This was explained to the Gaston family by an AT&T technician as a probable attempt to locate a cell tower.

The Gaston family had plenty of questions and five months later,

in September, the Cleveland Heights police finally assigned the case to a detective. CH Law Director Gibbon downplayed the action in a conversation with *Scene* reporters as a “courtesy to a distraught stepfather” and not an official investigation.

By October 23, however, two days after Franklin “resigned” from the museum, CH police still had not bothered to ask David Franklin about Christina’s cell phone. According to the case report, on that day, Franklin’s attorney, Virginia Davidson, called the detective to ask if her client was under investigation for Christina’s death. The detective said, “We received a call from Ms. Gaston’s stepfather and that we were trying to resolve some ‘questions’ the family had,” but any formal investigation would have to be conducted by the coroner. But, “I told Davidson that we still did not know the location of Gaston’s phone and whether her client knew of its whereabouts and whether he could address any other ‘questions’ the family had.”

Davidson said she would ask Franklin about it and call them back that afternoon. That never happened.

But the Gaston family had other questions as well. The toxicology report from the medical examiner showed no drugs in her system, despite the prescriptions found in her apartment, some of which hadn’t been refilled in months. Also, there was the ceiling fan which Gaston’s stepfather Ron Flower had installed. How could Christina possibly been able to get the rope knot around the fan? “Standing on her bed - a soft mattress - no supporting box-spring - on a metal frame - Christina would have missed reaching the ceiling fan blades by at least five inches,” a family member wrote. Additionally, Christina was still unable move her right arm well while recovering from shoulder surgery, which also puzzled the family.

In the months following Christina’s death, the Cleveland Heights police department and the county medical examiner had been passing the buck, with each been telling the Gaston family that it was the other agency that should answer questions. The medical examiner had been telling them they only re-open cases for further investigation based on information provided by the police department. The police had been telling them they couldn’t look into anything without the explicit order from the medical examiner.

“Our department did not consider this a suspicious death,” wrote one officer. No wonder - no real investigation was performed. The officer claimed that he allowed the family to simply “vent” their concerns: “I explained that we could not open an investigation. However, I did advise Flower we could look into a few of his ‘concerns and questions’ about our police report, and make an addendum to clarify our report, and forward that to coroner’s office.”

“Police feel at this point they are not interested in proceeding any further with looking into those issues,” said law director Gibbon. “As far as they are concerned, the case is closed, unless the coroner’s office asks them to assist them.”

The coroner’s office pronounced the death a suicide in less than 24 hours, and there was plenty of circumstantial evidence to point to that fact. But there were also aspects of Franklin’s story that didn’t

The David Franklin scandal highlights the need for transparency at the Cleveland Museum of Art



The Cleveland Museum of Art’s leadership needs to live up to the transparency and daylight provided by architect Rafael Vinoly’s grand atrium, the centerpiece of the museum’s nearly finished \$350 million expansion and renovation. (Steven Litt, *The Plain Dealer*)



By Steven Litt, *The Plain Dealer*
Follow on Twitter

on November 22, 2013 at 6:00 PM, updated November 24, 2013 at 7:31 AM

Top Down:

1. *Plain Dealer* follow-up story, 11-22-13
2. *Buzz Feed* headline, 10-29-13
3. *Plain Dealer* story on lying as the reason for Franklin’s dismissal, 11-13-13

BuzzFeed News Cleveland Museum Director Resigns Months After Former Co-Worker

Cleveland Museum Director Resigns Months After Former Co-Worker And Lover Commits Suicide

Speculation abounds as the museum begins to search for its fifth director since 2000.

Rachel Zareff
BuzzFeed News Reporter

Posted on October 29, 2013, at 5:44 p.m. ET

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Lying about affair led to David Franklin leaving top job at the Cleveland Museum of Art, board chairman says

Updated Nov 13, 2013. Posted Nov 13, 2013

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By Steven Litt, *The Plain Dealer*

franklin.jpeg

David Franklin, who joined the Cleveland Museum of Art as director in 2010, resigned on Oct. 21 in the wake of controversy about his relationship with a one-time museum employee who committed suicide in April.

(Cleveland Museum of Art)

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- David Franklin’s lies about a relationship with an employee at the Cleveland Museum of Art — not the affair itself — ruined his relationship with trustees at the institution and sparked his resignation as director.

add up, a missing cell phone and a number of legitimate unanswered questions.

Initially, officer Trhlin wasn't surprised to find Christina Gaston dead from an apparent suicide when he responded to the call. Trhlin told Franklin and the medical examiner investigator that the department had to deal with her suicide attempt just several months prior. The M.E.'s report noted: "Cleveland Heights PD stated that the decedent made a call in 2012 (end of) to Mobile Crisis. She was making threats of suicide while in her car near her apartment. They located her and she was taken to University Hospital."

But this was a lie.

Like the text message Franklin claimed to have received that never existed, Christina's alleged call to Mobile Crisis - a 24/7 mental help hotline - never existed. The family checked her phone records, Cleveland Heights police records, and talked to the hospital, and found no such record of that call or incident. Flower included this information in a long letter to Cleveland Heights police in September. A Cleveland Heights detective finally confirmed on October 30 that the suicide attempt never happened.

Why did Trhlin lie to Franklin and the M.E.?

FRANKLIN'S ACCOUNT:

Gaston's family found David Franklin's behavior odd after Christina died. At first, Franklin avoided calls from Cassandra, Christina's sister. But then, Franklin hounded her continuously for months with text messages and phone calls, professing his love for Christina and his grief. Franklin failed to respond to inquiries from reporters at the *Scene*.

Cassandra recorded the calls which show Franklin speaking about the couple's future plans together, claiming his divorce paperwork would have been finalized just weeks after Christina's funeral - which he attended - and claiming that they wanted to marry soon and had begun looking at houses together. Franklin said that he hated Cleveland and that it was not the right city for Christina. He said that he had "failed her" by not recognizing problems before they materialized.

The recorded calls show that Franklin would ramble for minutes at a time without interruption in his soft Canadian lilt, making oddly specific statements about the exact reasons Christina would have killed herself and exactly what was going through her mind the days leading up to the incident. Yet Franklin only told CH police that he had come to her apartment that night because she had not responded to a text - which was never sent.

In describing to Christina's sister his experience at finding her, Franklin told Cassandra Gaston that when he didn't hear back from Christina that Sunday, he thought either "she was having emergency meetings with the ChamberFest people and therefore was gone Sunday morning" or she was in a sleeping pill-induced nap.

"I do honestly believe that that was the trigger, the work, she just felt overwhelmed," he said. The pain from her shoulder surgery, a slight mistake at work - it all added up, Franklin contended. "I assume it really had to do with her arm. The pain, the chronic pain she described something that was chronic, she never could escaped it and it just drove her to this moment of despair."

In the conversation, Franklin continued: "I really think she woke up on Saturday, she got fucked around by the music festival that had been fucking her around for a few weeks, she was probably exhausted, her arm hurt, she thought she had somehow made a mistake, that was going to embarrass her in terms of the festival, and then probably -- and then I wasn't available, and there must be some demons in her head -- the kind that we all have in a way, but she couldn't dismiss them and she didn't reach out to anyone. That night, she didn't have any of her defenses that day. I think it was very spontaneous, I don't know why that makes me feel somewhat better, but I guess it slightly does, it makes me feel slightly more like an accident I guess."

He also thought the pills could have played a role: "Well, that's the thing, though, I don't know whether that's actually what killed her, in fact, or whether that was just paraphernalia, see what I mean? Whether she died from an overdose -- I just didn't spend enough time there."

Franklin also noted that Christina had confessed to a prior suicide attempt and he regretted not prodding her about that further, and he repeatedly mentions the alleged suicide attempt that Cleveland Heights police informed him of - that never actually happened.

Throughout the conversation, Franklin mentioned Christina died "quickly" and "spontaneously." How would he know? Unless he had been there?!

He also provided more information on his whereabouts the day she died that he didn't mention to police: He never told police or the medical examiner that he was at her apartment earlier in the day.

"I actually went over once in the afternoon. I rang the bell, no answer," he told her. "I didn't have a key, which in retrospect was totally fucking stupid on my part." The family thinks Franklin did, in fact, have key to her place. The duplicate they had made for her was not in her

apartment when they searched for it, and Christina had a key to Franklin's place with her car keys.

"Anyway, so, I didn't have a key, so I left -- I can't remember what time, maybe that was like 4 in the afternoon or something, and I went home again, and I just thought 'this is too strange' by the evening. So I went back, and then I realized because it was getting dark, there was a light on in her bedroom. I went to the back door and the door was open, so I found her and I called 911."

But "getting dark" was between 8:21 and 8:51. Franklin called 911 just after midnight. The autopsy placed Gaston's death at about 10 p.m. None of Franklin's timeline adds up.

And Cleveland Heights police failed to investigate the scene in a responsible manner, find her cell phone and investigate Franklin's disconnected comments.

WHAT THE MUSEUM KNEW & WHEN IT KNEW IT

In the midst of a sprint to complete the \$350-million renovation project and intent on protecting the image of the museum, which had been burned in the art world as incapable of attracting and retaining top talent and having run through a string of directors in just a few short years, Kestner's instinct to protect David Franklin can at least be understood, but not tolerated.

But something pressed the board in October to demand his resignation. While *Scene* broke the news of the affair and suicide, it wasn't until two days later that Kestner "confirmed" to the *Plain Dealer* that the extramarital affair was behind the departure.

Although the museum was aware of rumors as early as January 2013, Kestner said, but it wasn't until early October that proof of their "dating relationship" was discovered. The museum hired an attorney to investigate the matter but, "The inquiry yielded no credible evidence to substantiate an inappropriate relationship and the inquiry was closed at that time," Kestner wrote in his statement to the *Plain Dealer*. "We believe that it would have been irresponsible to take action based solely on rumors."

Swift action was taken, according to the chairman, once they saw the police report: "In early October, for the first time and based on new information, the Board confirmed that a dating relationship had existed with a former employee during and after her employment at the Museum. Once the relationship was confirmed in early October, the Board acted expeditiously."

However, documents show an attorney for the Cleveland Museum of Art contacted Ron Flower in September 2013 asking who the detective in charge of the investigation was. Why would not CMA's attorney have contacted Cleveland Heights police instead? Kestner then amended his version of events again to say yes, the museum knew of the police report in September but somehow did not obtain proof of the relationship until October. A source close to the



Top to Bottom:
1. Plain Dealer publisher & CMA trustee Terrance Eggar
2. August Napoli, deputy director, CMA
3. Steven Litt, *Plain Dealer* art & architecture critic



board says the investigation included searches of internal email and phone records.

But that investigation should have happened many months earlier.

An anonymous letter was sent to all museum board members in December 2012/January 2013. That letter included allegations of the affair with mention of Christina and her position at the museum - by name.

Instead of any semblance of a real investigation, David Franklin was questioned twice about the rumors – once by Kestner himself. His steadfast denial was enough for the chairman, who then brushed off the rumors to fellow board members as flat-out false.

The anonymous letter:

I am writing to ask the burning question on everyone's mind. What were you thinking?

Of all the potential directors the world over, David Franklin was the best you could come up with? With your track record, you should not be allowed to interview future directors, but this one: this was possibly your worst mistake yet! You chose a philandering, incompetent, inept, socially retarded, greasy haired curator to stand at the helm of one of the greatest art institutions in the country. That was your best choice?

- He is always late. (Fashionably late is not really a term. Rich people created it so we could strut into a crowded room like peacocks.)
- He has to drink in order to socialize with donors. (Or even when he does not have to socialize with donors. He drinks far too much!) Have any of you noticed that yet?
- He whines like a child, constantly crying that he's tired and doesn't think he should have to attend donor events. Which only causes him to drink more!
- He does not know what to say unless someone else tells him what to say, and if he goes off script, he's lost.
- He started a relationship with Christina Gaston in the Development Department, openly flaunting that relationship, getting caught in inappropriate positions in the hallways, stairways, out on Wade Oval, and God only knows where else. Very professional. Perhaps the incident at the museum in Canada wasn't really "nothing."
- He then leaves his wife and his two young children, yes, he no longer lives in that mansion you helped him buy, and now lives on his own, leaving his wife and children to fend for themselves in a foreign country, so he and this young girl can "get on with it." It was getting difficult for them to slip away for some mid-day "nookie"! He's quite a class act.

This is the face you want to put forward to the public? This is the class act we have championing our beloved museum?

I could go on and on, regaling you with stories I've heard, but I might save the bulk of it for Steve Litt. I'm sure Steve could make a story out of what kind of a man is running this great institution (which is becoming a laughing stock within the walls, and is starting to leak outside). At least Timothy was a leader. He might have been an ass, he was definitely arrogant, and he certainly didn't care about anyone but himself in the end, but he knew how to run a business, lead an organization, and act like a professional.

David Franklin was really best you could do? That's very sad.

One source close to the museum speculated that the board did not pursue the matter because they did not want to find out the truth, that "they are conditioned, absolutely programmed, not to make waves." Sources familiar with the museum's operations have said it would be "unthinkable" and "preposterous" that the museum wouldn't have a policy in place regarding romance in the workplace.

A former board member confirmed that there is an employee manual and code of ethics, including a whistle-blower policy and policies regarding sexual harassment, but could not confirm whether a codified policy on office romance existed. They suggested, if nothing else, that such relationships are understood to be bad for employee morale.

That is likely one reason why David Franklin and August Napoli, the museum's development director, helped orchestrate Christina Gaston's move to ChamberFest - an annual concert series, in November 2012.

Christina's departure from the museum was already suspicious. Friends of hers had told *Scene* that the job stressed her out. She was a perfectionist, and ChamberFest was a small, unorganized operation.

Whether or not she felt a vocation to fundraising, she was considered a woman with a bright future in the museum's development office, described by one senior curator as a "rising star." The ChamberFest job represented, among other things, a pay cut and a loss of medical benefits. Christina had undergone arthroscopic shoulder repair one month prior - Oct. 19, 2012 - and required extensive physical therapy.

But in a recorded phone call with Cassandra Gaston after Christina's death, David Franklin talked about Christina's employment in weirdly paternalistic terms: He thought it would be "good for her" to try out a management position. He didn't view it as a demotion. Music was her passion, after all. And even when the job proved to be an emotional burden:

"We all realized it wasn't working out terribly well...We even had -- when I say 'we' I mean me and her former boss, Augie, who's very, very friendly with Christina and offered to help her too. He and I basically had other...were looking at other positions that she could apply for, or even go back to the museum."

Franklin and Napoli were pulling strings. That much was clear. But the only ones who could truly corroborate the strategies at play were Franklin and Napoli themselves. Franklin hinted that easing whatever on-the-job tension existed was a factor in getting Christina the job, but only a minor factor. Though Franklin alluded to getting Christina the job, little can be found to corroborate that fact.

When reached by *Scene*, August Napoli communicated that he had nothing to say and did not respond to follow-up emails.

Diana Cohen, the executive director of ChamberFest, lauded Christina Gaston as a person and employee but did

not answer questions about her employment placement. "I do not have any comment at this time," she wrote in an email to the *Scene*. All other CMA board members declined to comment.

HOW THE SCANDAL WAS (NOT) COVERED

One of the board members of CMA was Terry Egger, publisher of the *Plain Dealer*. Egger received the anonymous letter detailing the allegations of the Franklin affair with Gaston. But Egger told *Plain Dealer* reader representative Ted Diadiun he did not know anything until the Monday when Franklin's resignation was announced; "I was unaware of the resignation and the issues involved until it was announced on Monday. As to whether I in any way had any influence on the timing or content of Steve's stories, the answer is an emphatic no. The journalism always takes precedence in any board I serve on. I think Steve is very good at what he does, and I encouraged him only to pursue the story and do his very best work." Egger never provided the anonymous letter to Litt.

"Rumors aren't stories," *Plain Dealer* managing editor Thom Fladung told Diadiun, exhibiting a luxury granted by the paper to the museum that is not shown toward sports teams or politicians. "We were not going to be compelled to publish by what anyone else did. We decided not to file a story just on the police report, we wanted to push the board to tell us what prompted the resignation. By waiting a day, we were able to lay out for the readers clearly what the board knew, when they knew it, and to report that in the context of the fact that (Franklin) continues to have a relationship with the museum."

Except that all the information in what Litt described as a "deliberative piece of journalism," were lies and half-truths from Kestner.

Allard and Brown characterized Litt as a "capable, veteran reporter, but also a cheerleader and PR mouthpiece, more investigative stenographer than investigative reporter. But he's also a reporter with a vested interest in covering the museum favorably. His former colleague at the *Plain Dealer*, Donald Rosenberg, who was laid off in August, was reassigned from the orchestra beat in 2008 after he wrote a series of critical articles about conductor Franz Welser-Most." In Cleveland, the boards rule.

THE GOVERNANCE CONUNDRUM

R. Steven Kestner put himself between a rock and a hard place. If he admitted that he saw the Christina Gaston

police report or knew of its contents earlier than he says he did, which is likely, it means he actively covered up his director's involvement in a death, an affair, and the deceit attendant to both, and nonetheless allowed him to continue to direct the Cleveland Museum of Art for five months.

Conversely, if Kestner did not see the report or know of its contents until he says he did - willfully or otherwise - Allard and Brown allege that the chairman of the CMA board is guilty of profound negligence in pursuing critical information about the most important figure at the institution he governed.

By Kestner's own admission, the board knew of Franklin/Gaston rumors in January, 2013, four months before Gaston's death. Yet no one thought it was serious enough to pursue beyond their "internal investigation."

And why is that?

Allard and Brown assert that is because in Cleveland, the tradition of board membership has been built around the board members themselves, not around the institutions they govern. Being on a board, for the many of these people, is a chance to write checks and "give back." It's a chance, moreover, to perpetuate the image of themselves as people of power and prestige in the community. There's long been a tradition of gratitude for trustees' financial contributions, which is deserved.

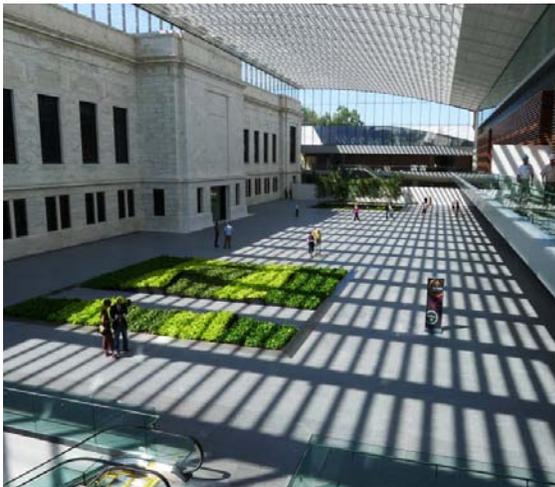


Above Left, Clockwise:
1. Peter B. Lewis
2. Cleveland lakefront at East 55th Street
3. & 4. Cleveland Medical Mart/ Global Center for Health Innovation





Top to Bottom:
 1. CMA East Addition rendering
 2. CMA aerial
 3. CMA addition atrium
 4. CMA spray foam article; *Sprayfoam Insulation & Roofing*; July/ August 2012



But that gratitude has instilled in them an almost deific sense of entitlement, the certainty that they are beyond reproach. There's zero transparency, zero accountability and, consequently, zero criticism.

Board members can become so enamored of their membership that they forsake their trusteeship. It is their fiduciary responsibility to govern the institution. In the instance of the Franklin – Gaston affair, the Cleveland Museum of Art, in the public trust, Kestner and the board saw their obligation to protect and advance CMA an its ideals by lying and concealing the truth. But they failed.

They hired a director ill-equipped for the task to run their museum. They opted to be cheerleaders rather than governors and overlook, at best, or cover up, at worst, his unprofessionalism, even when it was clear that they had made a serious mistake.

It is a glaring and tragic example that Peter Lewis may have been exactly correct in his public condemnation of the city's institutions and boards and their domination by attorneys who fail to lead.

In his *Cleveland magazine* article in December 2013, Michael Roberts observed, "If the scandal had taken place in government or many workplaces, those responsible for allowing the situation to rupture would be asked to resign. The museum board should examine its own conduct in this matter and take appropriate action, for the morale of employees and responsibility in fundraising."

"In 2002, an irate Peter B. Lewis, who built Progressive Insurance into a Fortune 500 company, wrote to me with a piercing critique of the city's establishment. Lewis, who passed away in November (2013), had donated millions of dollars to Cleveland institutions."

"He argued that lawyers and businessmen involved with civic endeavors were not great thinkers. This insular network of well-intentioned civic leaders tried to create a consensus of what they thought was good for the community. The problem is that they were out of touch. They spent more time trying to please each other than making the city and its institutions better."

"Not much has changed in 12 years. Our civic leadership has been unable to develop projects such as the lakefront. It created a Medical Mart that did not work but metamorphosed into something called the Global Center for Health Innovation."

"The Plain Dealer would do well to examine its journalistic practices. It should have challenged the museum from the beginning, rather than blithely castigating the museum as it did in a later editorial."

“Yet nobody is more out of touch than the museum leadership — which must be replaced if the institution is going to regain its credibility.”

THE VINOLY PROJECT’S BUDGET:

Cooper Robertson’s program for the CMA expansion was estimated to cost \$170 million in 1999. Along the way, Vinoly incorporated a football field-sized atrium and the price tag zoomed to \$350 million. Then, after the initial design had been presented, the expansion of the underground parking to meet projected needs and create a convenient entry procession to the new north entry from below grade was simply deleted after being deemed unaffordable.

No one asked or explained how the original program that had been evaluated by experts and pegged at \$170 million could not be delivered when the project’s budget more than doubled after Vinoly was hired.

Then there was the museum’s screw up of the building science of the new building’s exterior wall that forced the removal of the art and the demolition and reconstruction of the entire building’s exterior walls. In the interest of concealing its costly mistake, the museum and Vinoly never identified the cost though the project’s schedule was extended by nine months because of it, though the museum subsequently confessed that Phase I experienced a \$9.3 million overrun on its construction cost.

In January 2014, Steven Litt reported that the museum “discovered” to its “surprise” that the “project has come in \$30 million cheaper than expected.” Interim director Fred Bidwell attributed the “savings” to the fact that the museum “plowed ahead with the project through the 2008-2009 recession.”

But that implies that construction costs dipped by 15% during this period, which is false. Bidwell called the museum’s move a “bet” that had “really paid off.” In attempting to give the story credibility, Litt reported that the museum saved \$15 million on materials and labor, particularly steel because of lower demand during the recession.

But labor is labor and if the museum, as it claimed, changed the steel design in the atrium skylight, thus saving on materials, it meant that Vinoly had seriously over-designed the skylight from the onset. That is nothing to be proud of. Additionally, labor to erect the steel would have not changed in any fundamental way even if steel sizes and weights were reduced. And if demand was soft, it could have conceivably amounted to bids with diminished “risk” factors for unspecified issues associated



Top to Bottom:
1. CMA skylight steel erection
2. CMA skylight steel erection



with the execution of the work, which would have been fractional - and not significant.

A survey of construction costs indicates that the 2008 recession impacted construction costs by only 5% or less during this period and that by the time the museum was bidding and buying its Phase II scope of work, costs were the same as they had been in 2008 (Construction Analytics, Turner, etc.).

Bidwell claimed that \$6 million had been saved by not purchasing new furniture and equipment that had been budgeted. So 14 years after Cooper Robertson’s program analysis and original budget, CMA decided that it no longer needed new FF+E.

Over-budgeted to begin with? Obviously, yes. That is also nothing to be proud of.

The important ‘miss’ here by the museum is that it failed at stewardship of its program and project.

To delete the underground parking at the preliminary design stage because the initial estimates were obviously inflated and unrealistic and then complete the project



Top to Bottom:

1. CMA East Wing
2. CMA cafe
3. CMA Provenance restaurant
4. CMA Gartner Auditorium renovation; Westlake Reed Leskosky/ DLR Group
5. CMA Gartner Auditorium renovation; Westlake Reed Leskosky/ DLR Group
6. High Museum; Atlanta, GA; Richard Meier



\$30 million less than you were told the project would cost means that CMA and its construction manager, Panzica Construction Company, appear to have completely goobered up the cost forecasting and project management on the largest and most important cultural project in the city's history.

CMA apparently had no appropriate resources on hand with either its staff, its architect or consultant team with sufficient knowledge of construction costs to discern that Panzica's preliminary budget projections were significantly inflated - even before a \$6 million contingency was added at the bottom of the ledger. It also bears noting that the museum's new construction is actually, in many respects, quite simple: it is a structural frame with a precast concrete exterior envelope and granite surfaces attached. The interior is a simple metal stud wall with insulation and drywall. There is no argument that skylight and glass corner connections to the 1916 building are sexy and costly.

Bidwell also stated that CMA realized in December 2013 that it did not need to tap its \$6 million contingency. Originally to be completed in 2012, the museum's project was not completed until 2013 with its grand opening celebration on 12-31-13. Phase I had a \$9.3 million cost overrun and was nine months late, which is likely attributable to the exterior wall fiasco. Coming in \$30 million under budget - and not realizing it until you are done is obviously too late to go back and add to the garage as originally planned for a better designed entry sequence from the north, now the museum's only effective entry.

After being closed for nearly three years for the overhaul, the museum reopened 19 of its permanent galleries to the public in the renovated 1916 building main floor in June 2008. On June 27, 2009, the new constructed East Wing opened to the public containing the Impressionist, Contemporary, and Modern art collections. On June 26, 2010, the ground level of the 1916 building reopened which now houses the collections of Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Sub-Saharan African, Byzantine, and Medieval art.

The expanded museum includes enhanced visitor amenities, such as new rest rooms, an expanded store and café - both too small, a sit-down gourmet restaurant - too small, parking capacity increased to 620 spaces, and a 34,000 square foot glass-covered courtyard. For context, the Cleveland Museum of Contemporary Art's entire building is less than 31,000 sf. The existing CMA Gartner Auditorium from the 1971 Breuer addition was renovated with great skill by Westlake Reed Leskosky/ DLR Group.

By January 2014, CMA had raised \$262 million of its \$350 million target. Fundraising reportedly began in 2002 and construction began in 2005. Bidwell stated that \$242

million was for construction. Previous reports identified the construction cost to be \$258 million.

What was the other \$108 million for?

Cuyahoga County Probate Court in late 2009 gave CMA permission to reserve \$22 million in annual income – not principal – from its sizable art purchase endowment to pay down debt from \$165 million in bonds borrowed in 2005 and 2010 to pay for construction prior to when CMA's fundraising produced the needed cash. According to the probate ruling, the museum was allowed to use up to \$75 million in income from the art purchase funds.

“What we're doing is sacrificing the opportunity cost of spending that money during any given year” on art, Bidwell stated. When asked whether the museum would reimburse the art purchase endowments for the lost purchasing power, Bidwell said, “The fact of the matter is, we're constantly going to be raising more endowment money, and I expect the art fund to grow.” According to tax statements, the museum has spent approximately \$10 million a year – only 1.5% of its endowment - on art in recent years.

THE ARCHITECTURE:

When Paul Goldberger reviewed Richard Meier's High Museum in Atlanta upon completion in 1983, he observed, “Almost every museum building is the result of a struggle between art and architecture, and it usually ends with one side giving up. Sometimes the architect creates so powerful a presence that the art is overwhelmed, and in other instances the building defers to the art so completely that it has no architectural presence in itself. Rare indeed is the museum that falls into neither extreme - that is a strong and potent work of architecture in itself, yet seems completely to understand and respect the works of art within it.”

Vinoly's effort for the CMA renovation and expansion delivers an adequate if uninspired setting for its fine arts assets which are exceptional in their quality. His architecture similarly is uninspired, but for the atrium party center he talked the Board in to building, though it was not an element requested by the Museum in its program summary prepared by Cooper Robertson to drive the expansion design.

Goldberger termed Meier's Atlanta museum “a triumph of museum design. It is not only Atlanta's most important piece of recent architecture, it is among the best museum structures any city has built in at least a generation.” No such accolades are due for Vinoly's efforts in Cleveland.

Goldberger described Meier's High as “a structure of



Top to Bottom:
1. High Museum atrium; Atlanta, GA; Richard Meier
2. CMA East Wing, Rafael Vinoly
3. CMA Addition original rendering



gleaming white porcelain panels, granite and glass. The imagery is as crisply modern as can be imagined, but this is Richard Meier's modernism, not that of the Bauhaus - it is rich and sensual, not cold and stern. Mr. Meier is an architect who seems to love the art of composition so much that he turns modernism into something altogether graceful and picturesque, even romantic, and in so doing reminds us how much rich potential still remains within the modernist vocabulary.”

Vinoly delivers no exploration of the potential of the modernist vocabulary, inside or out. His exterior delivers an extreme and almost wimpy deference to Marcel Breuer's 1971 granite-clad banded addition, part of which remains, with a rescaled and lightened version of the same vocabulary. The mimicry seems shallow, spectacularly uncreative and disappointing. It clearly intends to be a vanilla tether between the neo-classical 1916 gem and Breuer's Brutalist dark granite ribbons.

Instead of the skylight over the football field atrium Vinoly deposited between the original Hubbell + Benes building and what remains of the Breuer addition, in Atlanta, Meier created a geometric form – a quarter circle under a skylight - that induces movement and

provides view angles into the galleries – a more engaging design element at a much smaller scale with a much leaner budget with a more dynamic impact. There are zero gallery view angles from Vinoly's atrium.

Vinoly's original design called for clear glass at its corner joinery and skylight, which gave the design a light and gentle quality from the exterior that has been marred by the resulting dark grey/ black glass. If Vinoly failed to do his heat gain calculations before he presented his design and spent a ton of money building the models and doing all of his presentation renderings, only to get it wrong, then shame on him. And despite the enormous price tag, the original underground garage was eliminated. What Vinoly and CMA proposed and 'sold' was not delivered.

Vinoly's interior galleries are adequate, neither spacious nor particularly well lit. In some galleries, the paintings and sculptures seem crowded as if the



Top to Bottom:
1. CMA European Gallery; Monet "Water Lillies"
2. CMA Apollo/ Muse gallery
3. CMA atrium; North wall to right



placement and design of the experience between the artwork and the visitor was not central to the design process. Or that Vinoly and the museum's curatorial staff failed in determining the scale, shape and arrangement of the galleries and/or their artwork placement and coordination. Either warrants a demerit.

The Monet 'Water Lillies' painting – one of the museum's most sought-out works - sometimes has a single bench in front of it, placed where people walking between galleries walk in front of those seated, trying to absorb and appreciate the large Monet masterpiece. This is callous. And the exceptional Picasso collection is dumped into the small space behind the chamber with placements pinched with the transverse wall featuring the Rousseau tiger painting. This is also impertinent.

Vinoly at times has delivered spaces like a retail 'white box,' with an indifference to the products to be displayed and resulting a dumping upon the tenant/ client of the responsibility to deploy the goods for the customers' excitement and consumption. The large Nevelson sculpture in all of its ritual blackness is particularly underlit.

The most successful spaces where the contents are displayed effectively are the Armor Court – previously renovated by Bergman and Streen and untouched by Vinoly - and the Apollo gallery off of the original main entry where the Muse paintings are displayed – again, an existing space unaltered by Vinoly.

Vinoly's most glaring "oopsie" is the south wall of the north gallery/ support mass that forms the north side of the atrium. In his first 'presentation' at Playhouse Square where he pretended to be doing a sketch problem on an overhead projector, Vinoly spoke about the south wall of the north gallery/ support area mass which he claimed would be a fantastic location for a massive video wall that would enable CMA to become a world leader in this new and exciting art form.

One problem: The wall faced south under a skylight that stretched all the way back to the Hubbell + Benes building, and as such, any video projected or displayed would be overwhelmed by daylight and would be rendered invisible until night time - when the museum is closed. That neither Vinoly, his staff nor the museum's staff would recognize this before a public presentation is startling.

Vinoly would never mention it again and inasmuch as the massing and space plan of the design had been determined prior to Vinoly's foolish claim, the north wall of the atrium became an appliqué – 'a lipstick to cover the pig' with the lipstick a series of large frightfully expensive pear wood horizontal batten stripes atop a black background. Expensive because pear trees are small trees and getting large pieces

of pear wood is very, very costly. Like the granite banding on the exterior, the pear wood bands seem gratuitous and indicative of a lack of a design thesis for the museum that integrates with anything other than the Breuer addition in the most obvious sophomoric manner.

It is obvious that the museum's restaurant and café – both of which are too small, located on the west side of the atrium, should have been located on the northeast corner of the museum, where they would have been independently accessible from East Boulevard and could share in and contribute to the energy along East Boulevard and what will replace the Cleveland Institute of Art site, now leveled, slated to become a park.

But Jeffrey Strean, the museum's director of design and architecture, said that Katharine Lee Reid, the museum's director from 2000 to 2005, determined that the institution's conservation lab belonged on the northeast corner to take advantage of the steady north light needed by conservators. Whether shielding conservation materials and personnel from the morning sun from the east or the afternoon/ evening sun from the west, Vinoly and Reid let the tail wag the dog on this issue.

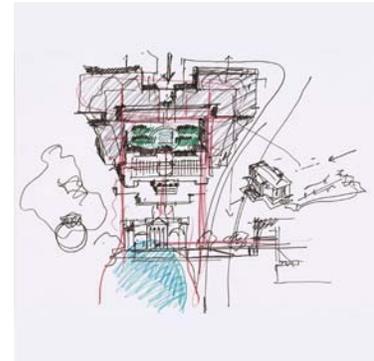
Litt stated that this was an example of how art came first in the Viñoly project.

I disagree and respectfully observe that this is Vinoly failing to integrate an otherwise opaque box with its context to maximize its legibility, accessibility, function and appeal.

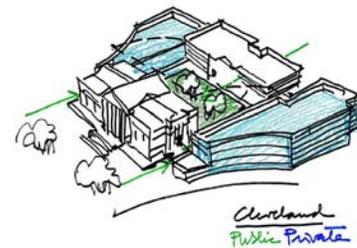
In his review of Vinoly's work, *Plain Dealer* architecture critic Steven Litt observed fairly that CMA is one the city's three standard bearers of its identity along with Severance Hall and the Cleveland Clinic. On the occasion of the museum's 100th anniversary, Litt pointed to five factors that make the museum a worthy local institution:

1. Its outstanding collection: With just under 45,000 items, the museum collection is dwarfed by the size of big city collections, but not in quality. Agreed. But in certain areas, CMA's collection lacks the balance most museums deliver. Under Sherman Lee, the museum indulged Lee's scholarship and enthusiasm in the Asian and African collections and neglected contemporary art. Lee has been gone for over 35 years and if the museum has ever been inclined to play catch-up, there is no evidence of it.

2. Global Citizenship: Litt states that the museum's nearly encyclopedic collection is a passport to more than 5,000 years of human history. You can use it to circumnavigate the planet like Magellan, figuratively speaking, within a two-hour visit. He notes that the collection's greatest strengths lie in the arts of Asia,



Top to Bottom:
1. CMA Vinoly Conceptual Plan
2. CMA Vinoly Atrium Concept Section
3. CMA Vinoly Conceptual Isometric
4. CMA ArtLens Digital Wall
5. CMA ArtLens Digital Wall





Top to Bottom:
1. Getty Center; Brentwood, CA; Richard Meier
2. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; I. M. Pei
3. National Gallery East Wing, atrium; I. M. Pei
4. Everson Museum; Syracuse, NY; I. M. Pei
5. Art Institute of Chicago; Renzo Piano



Europe and America, and that it is also very strong in ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman art, with outstanding examples of Islamic, pre-Columbian and African art. Agreed. But there are still gaps in modern art around the world.

3. “Real vs. Virtual:” Litt observes that “The world is awash in digital images as more and more of us interact through screens on computers and mobile devices. The museum’s collection embodies the reality that a digital reproduction can never match the experience of standing in front of an original. Digital art, video and other forms of high-tech creativity are certainly gaining artistic currency. Nevertheless, the museum remains a safe house for direct, non-mediated experience of traditional, physical artworks.” True, but I do not think that CMA is blazing any new ground in this area on an isolated or competitive level.

4. Architecture: Litt gushes about the museum; “The museum’s building, recently enhanced with a \$320 million expansion and renovation designed by architect Rafael Vinoly, is hands-down one of the best art museum complexes in the United States.”

I’m not sure how many museums belong on the list of ‘one of the best’ but I personally find a number of museums far more balanced than CMA after Vinoly. The National Gallery of Art by I. M. Pei in DC, and the Getty Center by Richard Meier in Brentwood, CA both tower mightily over Vinoly’s efforts in their architectural achievement and integration of fine art that deliver fresh and impactful experiences that inform and delight.

Squarely in the second tier ahead of CMA are the Art Institute of Chicago by Renzo Piano, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, warts and all, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Museum of Modern Art in New York, and Pei’s Everson Museum in Buffalo.

5. Endowment: The \$759 million makes it one of the top four or five museums in the US. But the museum’s modern art collection has been second-rate as acknowledged by Litt and numerous scholars – for decades. And the museum seems to be moving – if it is moving at all - at a glacial pace to do anything of genuine consequence about it. The endowment means nothing if it is not put to constructive purpose.

Litt has observed that the museum is not yet performing at a level commensurate with the enormous wealth lavished on it by the community; “Despite the Vinoly project, the museum isn’t there yet. Thanks to high turnover among its directors over the past 15 years, it hasn’t had the sustained focus necessary to provide a steady stream of temporary exhibitions of the highest caliber, creativity and innovation.”

Litt acknowledges that the respected William Griswold who

came on board in 2014 as CMA's ninth Director, "is rebuilding his senior curatorial and administrative staff and has the potential to move the institution to even higher ground over the next decade. But that will only happen if he stays long enough to achieve the kind of positive impact he had at his previous post, the Morgan Library and Museum in New York."

Litt also points out that the atrium has become a "social hub" but "is still somewhat of an artistic void." Griswold has pledged to address that issue, but he hasn't yet, over five years since the opening celebration.

THE NEXT CHAPTER:

After Fred Bidwell served as interim director during the search for a successor to Franklin, William M. Griswold was appointed director of the Cleveland Museum of Art in May 2014. As the museum's ninth director, Griswold is responsible for the actions and accomplishments of the 450-member team responsible for building, preserving, displaying, and interpreting the museum's renowned collection of some 60,000 works of art. He is also charged with deepening the museum's uneven engagement with the local community and for elevating its profile and reputation.

In 2016, Griswold undertook the development of a comprehensive new strategic plan designed to amplify the impact of the museum's permanent collection, leverage its extended campus, and grow and diversify its audience locally, regionally, and globally. The museum's board of trustees unanimously approved the plan, titled "Making Art Matter: A Strategic Framework for Our Second Century," in September 2017, and under Griswold's guidance, the staff immediately began its implementation.

Griswold's tenure has seen the acquisition of numerous important works of art by gift as well as purchase, and he has overseen a program of ambitious exhibitions ranging from "Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse" to "The Ecstasy of Saint Kara" and "Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors." In January 2019 the museum announced that it had achieved both record attendance and record membership in 2018. A week later, the museum made comprehensive information and images of works of art in its collection universally available, free of charge.

From 2007 to 2014, Griswold was director of the Morgan Library & Museum, in New York. He was previously director and president of the Minneapolis Institute of Art (2005–2007), acting director and chief curator at the J. Paul Getty Museum (2004–2005), and associate director of collections at the Getty (2001–2004). Prior to the Getty, Griswold was Charles W. Engelhard Curator and Head of the Department of Drawings and Prints at the Morgan Library (1995–2001), and he served as assistant and later associate curator in the department of drawings and prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (from



Above:
CMA director William Griswold; 2014 -

1988 until 1995.

Griswold is a member of the Association of Art Museum Directors and is chair of its task force on archaeological material and ancient art. He serves on the board of the American Friends of the Shanghai Museum and is a former president of the Master Drawings Association and a former member of the boards of the Courtauld Institute of Art and the American Trust for the British Library.

In 2008, he received France's insignia of Chevalier of the French Order of Arts and Letters. In 2015 he was awarded the medal of Cambodia's Royal Order of Sahametrei. In 2018 Griswold was the first recipient of the new Barbara Robinson Prize for arts advocacy by the Cleveland Arts Prize. He earned his bachelor's degree at Trinity College, in Hartford, CT, and his PhD at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London.

PROLOGUE:

The question any resident or patron should ask is whether the museum is performing at a level commensurate with the enormous wealth lavished on it by the community.

Even Litt does not think it is; "Despite the Vinoly project, the museum isn't there yet. Thanks to high turnover among its directors over the past 15 years, it hasn't had the sustained focus necessary to provide a steady stream of temporary exhibitions of the highest caliber, creativity and innovation." That said, the Museum deserves high marks for the 2018 Jazz and Katsuma exhibits which boosted attendance mightily.



Above Left: CMA Contemporary gallery
Above Right: CMA Kusama special exhibition, 2018



And despite clear and justified criticism of art critics, including Litt, for decades, the museum's commitment to achieving any semblance of balance in the quality and depth of its contemporary art collection with its Asian and Egyptian and European collections is AWOL. This deficit cannot be explained away by the museum's painful history of revolving door of seven interim and permanent directors since Bergman's untimely death in 1999. It dates back to Sherman Lee and his bias to focus on Asian art, due in part to his service in Japan in WWII.

With the completion of the Vinoly expansion, the museum now fully occupies its 4-acre site in the midst of Wade Oval and Cleveland's Fine Arts Garden. Litt has observed that if the museum needs more gallery space in the future, it could find it within its existing structure by moving nonessential functions, such as its library, off-site.

It can also expand to the northeast towards the Botanical Center. And as a hedge on its bets, CMA in 2017 purchased the 4.1-acre property across East Boulevard from the Cleveland Institute of Art for \$9.2 million in collaboration with CWRU. Some locals find it challenging to imagine how those two 'big dog' institutions with competing interests will manage to share the land in any way but to bisect it. Litt processed that act as the possibility of creating a nationally significant art history institute across the street from the museum, possibly with an underground connection.

In the meantime, the museum should animate its present site with a sculpture garden or other forms of public art, and figure out how it could be better connected to surrounding neighborhoods, particularly to Hough

and the future CWRU western campus to the west, across Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and East 105th Street instead of building a park on Bellflower and East Boulevard with CWRU.

The museum should resume publishing complete annual reports, a tradition it somehow neglected starting in 2012.

CMA should also routinely and visibly share information on its website about its capital and fundraising campaigns, attendance, the cost of its exhibitions and the retirement of \$165 million in debt it took on to keep cash flowing during its big construction project, add address openly how much it has drawn from its art purchase endowment to help pay for the Vinoly expansion and renovation.

The museum should also make information readily available on its website about the ownership history or provenance of the many antiquities in its collection whose precise origins are unknown. Having previously published online information on the ownership history of objects that changed hands during the era of Nazi looting and theft from 1933-1945, CMA must do the same with antiquities.

The museum should make a pronounced and meaningful acquisition initiative to shore up its weak Contemporary collection, which has been a source of justified criticism for fifty years. There is no excuse for its continued neglect. The quality and depth of CMA's Contemporary collection continues to be a recognized weakness and a civic embarrassment.

Even in its March/April 2019 monthly magazine, in highlighting the 2018 acquisitions, CMA delivered 19 pages of text and photos before it got to its two – only

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two! – notable Contemporary acquisitions of 2018. It's prized new pieces were Dutch master Dirck van Baburen 1623 "Violin Player with a Wine Glass" and Jacob van Hulsdonck's 1620 "Still Life With Meat, Fish, vegetables and Fruit" as if our European collection needed more support – though the van Barburais is exceptional and fun. Next came a donation of 33 Tiffany pieces from Clevelander Charles Maurer and a pair of 1773 Chippendale candlesticks. The handsome American painting from August Biehle "Cleveland West Side Hillside" was a gift from a St. Louis collector.

It would be completely reasonable to argue that CMA nor any single Circle institution has no obligation to involve itself in the urban renewal of surrounding neighborhoods. But the mission of CMA at its founding - and any of the other UCI institutions is surely to elevate the well-being of our citizens. And for over 100 years, CMA has concerned itself with deference to its constituents defined as the socio-economic upper crust from the city's elite white East Side.

But as one of the wealthiest inhabitants of University Circle, it is not unreasonable for CMA to leverage its human and financial resources to function as a catalyst to initiate the physical rehabilitation of its immediate neighbors - Hough and Glenville.

As Maurice Cox, Director of Planning and Development for the City of Detroit, pointed out in his keynote address at the Cleveland Restoration Society Community luncheon of 2019 in March, the templates exist. They need not be reinvented. It is time that someone got the philanthropic and civic leaders in the community to collaborate for the sake of the community. And as the city's most significant and prominent philanthropic engine, CMA is uniquely positioned to play that role. What CMA lacks is the will and the leadership to try.

In Philadelphia, that power belongs to the University of Pennsylvania which has become an economic development engine that has produced over \$3 billion in redevelopment projects around its campus in the last 15 years and now delivers a benefit of \$29.6 million per day to the City of Philadelphia. Per Day.

At the hands of yet another out-of-town design firm, UCI has spent \$15 million to create a lawn – the Nord Greenway - from CWRU's Tinkham Veale student center west to the former Mt. Sinai Hospital site at the edge of Hough. Conceived by CMA and the Cleveland Foundation, it stretches from in front



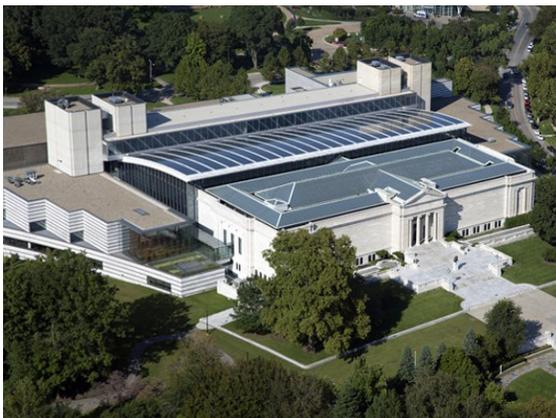
Top Left Clockwise: CMA 2018 Acquisitions:

1. Thomas Chippendale, "Pair of Candlesticks," 1773
2. Dirck van Baburen, "Violin Player with a Wine Glass," 1623
3. Jacon van Hulsdonck, "Still Life with Meat, Fish, Vegetables and Fruit," 1620
4. Filippo Parodi, "Sleeping Christ Child," 1675
5. Jared French, "Washing the White Blood from Daniel Boone," 1939
6. August Biehle Jr., partial of "Cleveland West Side, Hillside Houses," 1917
7. Emma Amos, "Sandy and Her Husband," 1973





1. Nord Greenway; Sasaki Associates, Boston, MA
2. Doan Brook Landscape Design
3. Cleveland Museum of Art



of CMA's south elevation to the Maltz Performing Arts Center, a half mile to the west. Even Steven Litt in his January 2018 article questioned whether the project, complete with its ironic invitation-only dedication ceremony – “can heal the racial and economic breach that has characterized University Circle for decades.” Of course it cannot.

At a macro level, the greenway recalls the token front lawn initiatives from the 1960's that meant nothing to Hough residents because they resulted in no meaningful renewal/ redevelopment improvements of consequence and only served to harbor and elevate distrust and resentment among the residents.

The reality is that CWRU got a wide, unobstructed walkway to connect its main campus east of CMA with its newer western campus. In March 2018, Cleveland Ward 7 Councilman Kevin Conwell was stopped by CWRU police on Ford Drive – a block north of the greenway - walking home to Little Italy in an embarrassing example of racial profiling.

CWRU President Barbara Snyder defensively pointed out that CWRU offers a 6-week summer educational/ recreational program for hundreds of Cleveland children and provides a dozen scholarships to CMSD students annually. With an annual budget of \$1.156 billion - \$200 million in student aid, we should hold our applause.

For its part, CMA is planning to upgrade seven acres north of the greenway along Doan Brook and MLK Drive which will visually enhance the auto entry/ exit experience of CMA guests. CMA and CWRU will also create a park on the former Cleveland Institute of Art site at Bellflower and East Boulevard. However, the notion that landscape plays a key role in addressing the racial segregation and unmet needs for urban renewal in Hough is simply a foolish justification for CMA and University Circle to continue to turn its backs on Hough and Glenville.

Remedying that indifference is a lot to hope for from a board with a disappointing history in managing the money for the renovation and expansion and the atrocious lack of transparency and ethics and leadership lapses over the Franklin - Gaston affair and suicide. Clearly, the skills needed for the ethical and effective management and stewardship of the museum's resources and assets have not been in place at CMA when needed.

March 2019