

SHELDON'S NEW MISSION STATEMENT

As you might expect, a new director introduces new developments to a museum. Though the staff and I do have many plans to pursue and propose for the growth of Sheldon, they are rooted in the history, traditions, and collections of the Museum. They will be organic to Sheldon and conducted in concert with Museum stakeholders. You will learn about some of these changes in the pages that follow.

In the last Newsletter, I described the Museum's core values and how we, as a staff, came to them. Since then the Museum—with the approval of the Sheldon Advisory Board—has adopted a new mission statement, one that reflects those values and recognizes the work of a 21st-century museum.

In essence, we draw on Sheldon's history of outreach programming to bring into sharper focus the democratic principle of civic engagement, a principle guiding museums today and one especially appropriate to a state university museum, such as ours. The new statement reflects inclusive thinking in art, as in society:

The Sheldon Museum of Art collects, studies, and presents American art in its historical diversity and transnational origins. Housing one of the country's premier collections of American art, Sheldon is committed to being a national leader in developing multidisciplinary approaches to the visual arts. Our programs and activities explore manifold relationships among the arts, from music to architecture, philosophy to film, and performance to literature. We invite inquiry and imagination by fostering creative and critical thinking.

Located on the campus of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Sheldon supports the University's objectives in academic research and teaching. In the public service tradition of land-grant institutions, our activities and outreach programs foster collaborations within the University and among our constituents in the community, Nebraska, and the nation.

Inclusive rather than exclusive, our mission makes clear Sheldon's commitment to working collaboratively with University and community programs. Better still, the Sheldon Museum can facilitate new relationships between the two. One example of working collaboratively is Sheldon's new partnership with the UNL School of Music, led by Dean John Richmond. We begin with Jazz in June this summer and continue into the next year with performances on Tuesday evenings, featuring ensembles from chamber music to jazz, free of charge, serving University as well as civic audiences.

Our reach will also be regional. We are thrilled to be working with The KANEKO—a new multidisciplinary space in Omaha—bringing the work of Jun Kaneko to Sheldon this summer. More exciting partnerships are underway. You can take part in helping to craft them by becoming an active member of the Sheldon Art Association.

— Jorge Daniel Veneciano,
Ph.D., Director