Position Statement on Excellence in Art Museum Teaching
[Adopted March 2012; Reviewed and Revised March 2015]

NAEA believes that the opportunity to discover, experience, and appreciate original works of art from diverse cultures, times and places is a vital part of a complete education and can be an important component of life-long learning. Furthermore, NAEA asserts that excellent teaching is necessary to foster profound and memorable learning experiences in the museum environment. Excellent museum educators use art to help people see and understand the world in a variety of ways and provide them with knowledge and skills to engage with and interpret art on their own.

To achieve excellence in art museum teaching, museum educators:

• Create a learning environment where people feel welcome, comfortable, safe and respected, enabling them to engage in dialogue with works of art, with each other, and with the museum educator.

• Actively engage people in processes of creative and critical thinking.

• Employ a variety of teaching approaches and strategies to connect effectively with diverse learners.

• Connect art to people's lives by choosing objects that reflect the complexity and diversity of human cultures and experiences.

• Collaborate with and support Pre K-16 educators and other community partners to create meaningful museum experiences that support and intensify learning in and beyond the classroom.

• Design learner-center experiences that address the needs and wants of their audience.

Education and preparation for excellent art museum teaching requires:

• An understanding of the needs and characteristics of museum audiences.

• Knowledge of aesthetics, art history, art practice, art criticism, and other disciplines as they relate to works of art.

• Knowledge and application of educational theory, research and practice relevant to the field of museum education.

• Knowledge of individual works of art and their makers.

• Professional development, ongoing learning and reflective practice to enhance their effectiveness as art museum educators.

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