

C A C

Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property

A C C R

Association canadienne pour la conservation et la restauration des biens culturels

Pierre Theberge,
Director,
National Gallery of Canada
380 Sussex Drive
P.O. Box 427, Station A
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1N 9N4

April 11, 2008

Dear Mr. Theberge,

The membership of the Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property wish to convey our shock and extreme disappointment over the National Gallery of Canada's recent decision to eliminate a full time position in the Conservation/Restoration Laboratory. Works of art on paper are among the most fragile and unforgiving of the Gallery's collections, and are readily subject to irreparable damage if handled inexpertly.

The CAC finds it unthinkable that the Gallery would dismiss a Conservator as highly regarded nationally and internationally as **Anne Maheux**, and assure you that we believe that neither the Gallery's impressive collections of works of art on paper nor its professional reputation will be well served by this short sighted decision.

The letter of explanation delivered to Gallery staff notes that the aim of the cuts was a 5% reduction in the "least performing programs". By what measure, we ask, is Ms. Maheux's work considered to be "underperforming"? Ms. Maheux is widely regarded as one of the preeminent leaders in the field of conservation of works of art on paper worldwide. As well as a graduate of both Queens and Harvard Universities' conservation programs, she is a fellow of the American Academy in Rome, an accredited member of the Canadian Association of Professional Conservators, a former President of this organization and member of our Board of Directors for many years. Her enormous commitment to her profession is self-evident. Among her many internationally significant accomplishments are her seminal research into the works of Degas, her contributions on development of mounting systems for oversized works, her work with contemporary works of art, and her efforts toward establishment of a federal Museums Policy. Colleagues with whom I have spoken are unanimous in describing her work as exemplary.

The CAC urges you to reconsider the elimination of this position and the employment of Ms. Maheux personally. Not to do so will cause the Gallery's reputation irreparable harm in the eyes of the Canadian conservation community.

Sincerely,

Dee A. Stubbs-Lee
President, CAC/ACCR

CC:

Mr. Donald R. Sobey - Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, National Gallery
Mr. David Franklin - Deputy Director and Chief Curator, National Gallery
Mr. Stephen Gritt - Chief, Restoration Conservation Laboratory, National Gallery.
Ms. Lise Labine - Director, Human Resources, National Gallery