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Santa Barbara Museum of Art Announces Retirement of Larry J. Feinberg Robert and Mercedes Eichholz Director and CEO to Retire after 15 Years at SBMA

February 6, 2023 — The Santa Barbara Museum of Art (SBMA) announced today that Larry J. Feinberg will be retiring as the Robert and Mercedes Eichholz Director and CEO later this year. Feinberg will continue in his position through a transition process that will commence with a formal search for his successor. The Museum’s Board of Trustees will be fully engaged in a search for new leadership and key stakeholders will be involved in the selection process.

Feinberg took up his post at SBMA in March 2008 and brought with him more than 30 years of museum experience. Nicholas Mutton, Chair of the Board of Trustees, states, “Our gem of a museum will long benefit from the outstanding leadership of Larry Feinberg. By far the longest tenured of our past Directors, Larry has guided SBMA to new levels of accomplishment and recognition. Through personal dedication, Larry assisted in raising \$50 million for the *Imagine More* capital campaign and oversaw the most significant renovation in the Museum’s history, which assures the integrity of the building’s structure and permanent collection for the community’s future enjoyment. In addition, he was responsible for bringing many exhibitions of major importance to the Museum to fulfill our mission of ‘integrating art into the lives of people.’ His stewardship of the institution through the very difficult COVID years without impacting the staff has set us up for continued success. The Museum’s outreach programs are back in full force, including those serving schools, teachers, adults, and families.” Mutton continues, “The Board extends a deep appreciation for the outstanding work he has done.”

Feinberg states, “With a very talented and hardworking staff and a dedicated and supportive board of trustees, together we have accomplished over the past 15 years virtually everything we set out to do. I feel honored to have been a part of this phase in SBMA’s history and take great pride in the fact that the Museum is in a stronger position to serve the community.”

In his 15-year tenure at SBMA, Feinberg has raised the stature of the Museum nationally and internationally by elevating its exhibitions programs and the diversity of its collection. Under his leadership, major exhibitions were organized and presented at SBMA along with scholarly publications, including *Through Vincent’s Eyes: Van Gogh and His Sources* (2022), *Puja and Piety* (2016), *Delacroix and the Matter of Finish* (2013), *Labour and Wait* (2013), *The Artful Recluse: Painting, Poetry, and Politics in 17th-Century China* (2013), and *Picasso and Braque: The Cubist Experiment, 1910 – 1912* (2011).

During Feinberg’s time at the Museum, SBMA’s Education Department greatly expanded its programs, including outreach into the schools throughout Santa Barbara County, Ventura County, and beyond. Before COVID, more than 25,000 students were involved annually and more than 1,100 teachers trained each year in how to use the visual arts to teach across the curriculum. Partnerships were established and strengthened among more than 40 other educational and cultural institutions. Adult education programs were significantly expanded with the development of lecture series and classes, including Art Matters, Curator’s Choice, Director’s Dialogue, Parallel Stories, Writing in the Galleries, Sketching in the Galleries, various art-making workshops, and scholarly symposia.

All the while, the Museum’s leadership achieved continued fiscal stability, and is one of only a small number of non-profits to receive Charity Navigator’s highest rating of four stars for the last six years in a row.

Previous to SBMA, Feinberg had 30 years of curatorial experience in major museums, including the Allen Art Museum of Oberlin College, The Frick Collection, the National Gallery of Art, and, between 1991 and 2008, the Art Institute of Chicago, where he was the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Curator in the Department of Medieval through Modern European Painting, and Modern European Sculpture.

After his retirement, Feinberg plans to spend more time traveling and writing, and perhaps teaching and consulting. He and his wife, Starr Siegele, will continue to live in Santa Barbara.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is one of the finest museums on the West coast and is celebrated for the superb quality of its permanent collection. Its mission is to integrate art into the lives of people through internationally recognized exhibitions and special programs, as well as the thoughtful presentation of its permanent collection.

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA.
Open Tuesday – Sunday 11 am to 5 pm, Free Thursday Evenings 5 to 8 pm
805.963.4364 www.sbma.net

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