



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We at the Kress Foundation tend to think of Kress as a “responsive” philanthropy, a charitable foundation that seeks, first and foremost, to support the communities it serves in their pursuit of values they have themselves identified and defined. Responsive philanthropy, to be sure, is by no means a passive affair. Practicing truly responsive giving requires one to partner actively with grantees in the joint pursuit of shared aspirations. This type of collaboration entails defining—together—the needs of the fields one cares about, formulating strategies for addressing those needs, and assessing both needs and strategies in ongoing ways. And yet, throughout this wide spectrum of activities, we at Kress seek to be guided by practitioners, and we have accordingly tended to eschew what is variously called impact or venture philanthropy. We believe that leadership can and should be participatory in this way.

Nor is the full scope of participatory leadership in philanthropy exhausted by responding unilaterally to the aspirations of the communities one seeks to support. It can and should extend to partnering actively with fellow funders whose missions overlap meaningfully with one's own. At Kress we practice this kind of philanthropic collaboration as well. Over the past decade, especially, we have intentionally sought to respond to the needs of the fields we serve by partnering—in ways both formal and informal, explicit and implicit—with fellow funders active within the same philanthropic ecosystem.

In this respect, annual reports can be profoundly misleading. Like most, ours list, by category, our own grant and fellowship awards for a given fiscal year. What these annual tallies unavoidably fail to suggest is the myriad ways in which our philanthropic support complements—sometimes deliberately and by design, but often less directly—the charitable programs of our fellow funders.

Looking back over the past decade, it is instructive to recognize that our own giving has most often overlapped meaningfully with that of other funders in precisely those arenas that are most experimental, innovative

and pioneering. And this seems to reinforce the idea that what is at stake is participatory leadership.

Sponsoring New Research at the Forefront of Art History

Our recent sponsorship of new research is a case in point: it has tended increasingly to take the form of partnerships with other funders. Thus while a 2012 study by Diane Zorich, *Transitioning to a Digital World: Art History, Its Research Centers, and Digital Scholarship* was independently funded by Kress, it was exceptional in that regard. By contrast, a 2013 study undertaken by researchers at Ithaka S+R, entitled *Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Art Historians*, was from the outset co-funded and shaped in close collaboration with the Getty Foundation. Similarly, a 2016 study undertaken by the American Institute for Conservation, *Charting the Digital Landscape of the Conservation Profession*, was jointly funded by Kress, the Getty Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. In other instances, our support has complemented that of other funders without such direct collaboration. Thus in 2014, Kress supported the preliminary research for a study, *Impact of Art Museum Programs on K-12 Students*, a study conceived, formulated and conducted by the National Art Education Association in partnership with the Association of Art Museum Directors. The project research team was able to leverage our early support to secure substantial funding from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services to complete the study.

Technical Art History

Another dynamic area of co-investment over the past decade has been the emerging field of “technical art history.” The annual, Kress-sponsored Summer Teachers Institute in Technical Art History (STITAH), collaboratively organized and hosted by Yale University and New York University’s Institute of Fine Arts since 2011, seeks to encourage teachers of art history at the undergraduate level to reconnect with the materials and techniques of art making – and with their own faculty colleagues in art conservation and in the material and

conservation sciences. This program directly inspired our friends at the Mellon Foundation to launch a similar program for doctoral students in art history, the Summer Institute in Technical Art History, hosted by NYU from 2013–2015. This program has recently taken on a new incarnation at the Harvard Art Museums under the name Summer Institute for Technical Studies in Art. While launched and funded independently, these highly complementary initiatives are working in tandem to build capacity across the academy and museum space by fostering increased knowledge and facility with the materials and methods of art production.

Digital Art History

A similar spirit of philanthropic collaboration has led the Kress and Getty Foundations to sponsor over several years a series of complementary summer professional development institutes in digital art history, hosted by an array of colleges and universities with strong digital humanities programs. More recently, this shared commitment to digital art history became explicit in our joint support of a professional development program for art museum curators — “The Networked Curator” — organized by the Association of Art Museum Curators. These initiatives are already demonstrating the potential of emerging technologies to expand and enrich the field of art history.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Kress is also making common cause with fellow funders in a shared effort to advance the cause of diversity, equity and inclusion within the fields of art conservation, art history and art museums. In our case, this support has assumed the form of support for professional development opportunities administered in partnership with the community of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and the emerging HBCU Alliance of Museums and Art Galleries. Thus, in 2013, Kress — along with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Henry Luce Foundation — supported the United Negro College Fund (UNCF)

and the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) in a joint pilot project intended to enhance diversity in the art museum field. This pilot initiative placed thirteen college juniors from private and public HBCUs in major American art museums for semester-long paid internships, while also supporting these students with career and job readiness coaching and professional development training. A second phase of the UNCF/AAMD partnership sustained the initiative through 2016. More recently, our support has focused on conservation and preservation training in libraries and museums. And while our support has been relatively modest, we are pleased to think that it helpfully complements more extensive diversity efforts sponsored by other foundations, including the Ford, Getty, Luce, Mellon, Terra and Walton Foundations.

Rethinking Libraries and Museums

In January 2016 the University of Miami hosted an inaugural Academic Art Museum and Library Summit, bringing together fourteen pairs of library and museum directors from leading North American academic institutions to address opportunities for deep intra-institutional collaboration. The Summit—organized in collaboration with the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries (AAMG), the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI)—focused on ways in which new pedagogical models and technologies are transforming the work of the academy, and the potential for art museums and libraries to engage more fully with faculty, students, and each other. Our colleagues at the Mellon Foundation responded warmly to our invitation to co-sponsor the summit alongside Kress. We are especially gratified to see that Mellon has now proceeded to invest heavily in potential library-museum synergies, supporting a wide spectrum of exemplary partnerships as well as a subsequent summit at Oberlin College. Meanwhile, Kress has been sponsoring a series of “cross-pollinator” fellowships for library and museum professionals, enabling and encouraging members of the Digital Library Federation, the Museum Computer Network and other

library and museum organizations to attend one another's conferences in order to foster learning and networking opportunities across the library and museum landscape.

Through our recent practice of partnering with other funders whose missions overlap in meaningful ways with our own, we have been able to leverage our resources and extend our philanthropic reach in ways that have proved to be truly catalytic. But the greatest benefit of this approach is surely the cultivation of a shared commitment—a *responsive* commitment embraced equally by the community members who are the direct beneficiaries of these programs *and* by the funders themselves.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Max Marmor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Max Marmor
President

Workshop of Giovanni Antonio Amadeo
(Lombard, c. 1447–1522)
Kneeling Angel, 1470/1480
Samuel H. Kress Collection
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

