

ART-LESS

THE DAVIS DEMONSTRATES A VISION OF THE MUSEUM WITHOUT THE CONTRIBUTION OF IMMIGRANTS

Cultural Institutions around the Country Invited to Participate in Initiative

WELLESLEY, Mass. – From Thursday, February 16, through Tuesday, February 21, the [Davis Museum at Wellesley College](#) will demonstrate the critical role that immigrants to the United

States have played in the arts, both in their creative contributions as well as their stewardship of the visual arts, with an initiative called, ***Art-Less***.



In support of the American Association of Museum Director’s [statement](#) on President Trump’s recent [executive order](#), the Museum will de-install or shroud all works of art in its permanent collections galleries that were either created by or given to Wellesley’s art collection by immigrants to the United States. This means approximately 120 works of art—roughly 20 percent of the objects on view in the Museum’s permanent collections galleries—will be either taken down or covered in black cloth.

“Every permanent collections gallery will be affected by the subtraction of works

created by or given to the Museum by an immigrant to the United States,” said Claire Whitner, Assistant Director of Curatorial Affairs and Senior Curator of Collections, and overseer of the project.

“*Art-Less* demonstrates in stark and indisputable terms the impact of immigration on our collections,” said Lisa Fischman, the Ruth Gordon Shapiro ’37 Director of the Davis, “and we proudly take the opportunity to signal that impact, to honor the gifts of creativity and generosity that make the Davis Museum and the Wellesley community great.”

At the Davis Museum, paintings will be taken off the walls, and objects under cases will be covered in black cloth. Paintings, bronze and wood sculptures, ceremonial masks, and more from the European, American, African, contemporary, and modern collections will be disrupted by this intervention. Absences created by the removal or obscuring of works from view will be marked with labels that indicate “made by an immigrant” or “given by an immigrant.” Sympathetic institutions that would like to



underscore the contributions of immigrants to their own collections can download these labels for use at www.thedavis.org.

In one particularly poignant example, the space that is usually occupied by a stately portrait of George Washington will be bare, even as President's Day takes place on Monday, February 20. This portrait was painted by the Swedish-born artist, Adolf Ulrik Wertmüller, an immigrant who came to the United States in the 1790s.

Another illustration of significant impact will be in the African galleries: visitors will be met with a sea of black cloth as a majority of the works—nearly 80 percent—was donated by the Klejman family, who immigrated to the United States from Poland after World War II, just five years before their daughter became a student at Wellesley College.

With the help of arts advocates from cultures worldwide, the Davis Museum at Wellesley College continues to strengthen its culturally diverse collection, which spans global history from antiquity to the present and include masterpieces from almost every continent.

ABOUT THE DAVIS MUSEUM

One of the oldest and most acclaimed academic fine arts museums in the United States, the Davis Museum is a vital force in the intellectual, pedagogical and social life of Wellesley College. It seeks to create an environment that encourages visual literacy, inspires new ideas, and fosters involvement with the arts both within the College and the larger community.

ABOUT WELLESLEY COLLEGE AND THE ARTS

The Wellesley College arts curriculum and the highly acclaimed Davis Museum are integral components of the College's liberal arts education. Departments and programs from across the campus enliven the community with world-class programming— classical and popular music, visual arts, theatre, dance, author readings, symposia, and lectures by some of today's leading artists and creative thinkers—most of which are free and open to the public.

Since 1875, Wellesley College has been a leader in providing an excellent liberal arts education for women who will make a difference in the world. Its 500-acre campus near Boston is home to some 2,400 undergraduate students from 49 states and 58 countries.

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Image credit lines:

Wertmüller, Adolf Ulric (Swedish), *Portrait of George Washington* (1794-96). Oil on canvas
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James B. Munn (Ruth C. Hanford, Class of 1909) in the name of the Class of 1909

Unknown (African), *King or Warrior Figure* (19th century), Wood.
Gift of Susanne Klejman Bennet (Class of 1959)

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High-resolution images of shrouded works and interviews available upon request