Dr. Susan Bandes Steps Down As Kresge Art Museum Director

Dr. Susan Bandes stepped down as director of the Kresge Art Museum on May 1, 2010. Bandes came to MSU in 1986 and began her career at MSU as museum director and faculty member in the Department of Art and Art History. She served as curator for the museum’s pre-19th-century holdings and its print collection, and as co-director of the Museum Studies Program.

In Susan Bandes’ nearly quarter-century as director of the Kresge Art Museum, she doubled the size of the collection and the staff. Among her important contemporary acquisitions have been works by Jim Nutt, Chuck Close, Cindy Sherman, Edward Burtynsky and John Scott. Susan also greatly improved the Museum’s collection of Dutch old masters and landscapes across the centuries.

Under Bandes’ direction, the photography and print holdings were significantly expanded and the collection – now totaling more than 7,500 – doubled in size. Additionally, she reconnected the Friends of Kresge, a large and active support group which recently raised $1 million toward the construction of the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum.

Bandes established the first endowment funds for the Kresge Art Museum and added to them to the point where the Museum is able to make very significant acquisitions. Over the years, she was responsible for bringing many exhibitions to the Kresge that responded to campus-wide interdisciplinary and global initiatives.

Bandes forged ongoing partnerships with Jewish Studies, the Residential College in Arts and Humanities, American Studies and the MSU libraries. In addition, she initiated more unusual partnerships, including an exhibit on Freud with the Department of Psychology, and one on breast cancer with the medical schools.

She has authored various publications, presented public lectures and served on a variety of professional boards and associations including the Michigan Humanities Council. Most recently, Bandes was elected to the prestigious Print Council of America.

At MSU she was chairperson of the university’s Collection Council and was a member of the Public Art on Campus Committee and the Cultural Engagement Council among others. Her numerous curatorial projects ranged from exhibits of ancient art to the current “American Modernism 1920s–1940s.”

Bandes’ exhibit of Baroque paintings from the Detroit Institute of Arts which circulated in Michigan received wide acclaim. The exhibit on Frank Lloyd Wright’s Goetsch-Winkler House in Okemos in 1990 received national attention, and will be the subject of a new book that Susan is working on during her research assignment.

Dr. Bandes will remain a full-time faculty member within the Department of Art and Art History.

Susan Bandes (center) flanked by Kresge Art Museum staff members was honored for her many accomplishments as Museum Director.