



LIVING ART
for 200 YEARS
TAFT HISTORIC HOUSE
BICENTENNIAL

Sarah Ditlinger | Senior Manager, Marketing & Strategic Engagement
sditlinger@taftmuseum.org | (w) 513.684.4526 | (c) 317.507.4491
taftmuseum.org | 316 Pike Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Deborah Emont Scott to Retire as Taft Museum of Art President/CEO

CINCINNATI, OH—August 25, 2021—Deborah Emont Scott, the Louise Taft Semple President/CEO of the Taft Museum of Art, announced Monday to the board of directors that she will conclude her tenure in summer 2022 following the completion of the museum’s widely publicized [Bicentennial Infrastructure Project](#). Followed by a transition period and a national search for her successor, she will mark over 12 years of distinguished leadership and be named Director Emerita.

“Scott has elevated the Taft Museum of Art’s visibility and influence within the Greater Cincinnati community as well as within the national and international museum sector, positioning the museum for sustained success,” says Gerald H. Greene, Jr., board of directors’ chair.

Scott was named museum director in 2009 and has led the organization through the trials of the Great Recession and global COVID-19 pandemic. As the museum faced challenges due to the current pandemic, she collaborated with other arts organizations navigating the closures and financial trauma. Yet, in the past 18-months, the museum published, *Highlights from the Collection*, refreshed the website and brand, and digitalized almost 100 highlights from the collection—now available to the public on the Taft’s website.

Among many achievements under her leadership, Scott has ensured the successful sustainable growth of the museum’s operations. During her tenure, the Learning and Engagement team has been redesigned, leading to expanded learning experiences for all, and enhanced outreach opportunities with award-winning programs including the Duncanson Artist-in-Residence and Art for All. The museum’s endowment has more than tripled to \$44 million accounting for almost 40% of the operating budget. Scott has led multiple fundraising campaigns to also ensure the financial future of the museum. This includes the \$12 million endowment campaign in 2013-15 and the upcoming conclusion of the \$12.7 million Love This House capital campaign to preserve and protect the Taft historic house, home to the museum’s permanent collection. Notably, Scott also secured the \$5 million gift to endow the position of the Sallie Robinson Wadsworth Chief Curator in 2017.



LIVING ART
for 200 YEARS
TAFT HISTORIC HOUSE
BICENTENNIAL

Sarah Ditlinger | Senior Manager, Marketing & Strategic Engagement
sditlinger@taftmuseum.org | (w) 513.684.4526 | (c) 317.507.4491
taftmuseum.org | 316 Pike Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202

Early in her tenure she initiated the transformation of the Orientation Gallery into the Sinton Gallery enabling the Taft to show smaller shows highlighting the works of living artists. The artists whose works have been shown range from Kehinde Wiley and Cedric Cox, to Vanessa German and Cynthia Lockhart. Expanding the Taft's audience and engagement, Scott has brought exhibitions such as *Dressing Downtown: Changing Fashions for Changing Times*, *Louis Comfort Tiffany: Treasures from the Driehaus Collection*, and *Ansel Adams: A Photographer's Evolution*. The impressive list also includes the Taft-led exhibition, *Daubigny, Monet, Van Gogh: Impressions of Landscape (DMVG)* in collaboration with The Scottish National Gallery in Edinburgh and the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. This project included raising over \$1 million in support to bring works of art from around the world to Cincinnati and garnering two prestigious peer-reviewed grants from the National Endowment for the Arts.

"Not only has Scott invested in the museum and its collection, but she has also put special emphasis on the board, staff, and community—paying special attention to growing the diversity of the organization," says Greene. "At the conclusion of the Bicentennial Infrastructure Project she will leave the museum's historic house in excellent shape for generations to come and provide a welcoming embrace to the community and beyond with a robust special exhibition schedule, a reinterpreted permanent collection, and powerful programs."

Under Scott's leadership the museum instituted the first Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion Board/Staff Committee in the museum's history. Scott initiated Free Sundays at the museum, which have increased the museum's accessibility, and which will continue to expand with strategic partners including the Cincinnati Public Library's ArtsPass, free admission for the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, and as a Blue-Ribbon Museum, providing access to military families.

"I want to express my gratitude to the Cincinnati community, the Taft's donors and members, our passionate audience, and especially our dedicated team of staff and volunteers who have helped the Taft Museum of Art thrive throughout my tenure. It is because of everyone's support and commitment, that I am confident the Taft is poised for a fruitful next era and know that the Taft will still be Cincinnati's special place for art, history, programs, and more," says Scott.

Scott will conclude her time at the Taft following a prolific career in the museum sector, including over 25 years at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri. An



LIVING ART
for 200 YEARS
TAFT HISTORIC HOUSE
BICENTENNIAL

Sarah Ditlinger | Senior Manager, Marketing & Strategic Engagement
sditlinger@taftmuseum.org | (w) 513.684.4526 | (c) 317.507.4491
taftmuseum.org | 316 Pike Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202

expert in contemporary art with a deep appreciation of earlier periods, Scott organized numerous exhibitions including those featuring artists Louise Bourgeois, Ursula Von Rydingsvard, and Joel Shapiro, among others. Scott also served as project director for the development of the 22-acre Donald J. Hall Sculpture Park that surrounds the museum, helping to transform The Nelson-Atkins campus.

In retirement, Scott will continue to be active in Greater Cincinnati's arts and culture community as a donor, spokesperson, and advocate. She and her husband, Andy, will continue to reside in Cincinnati.

#####

About the Taft Museum of Art:

The Taft Museum of Art is a living landmark tucked away in downtown Cincinnati, where art and history lives on the walls—and *in* the walls. Built around 1820 as a private home for several of Cincinnati's most prominent citizens, the Taft Museum of Art is now one of the finest small art museums in America and holds National Historic Landmark status for its historic house and Duncanson murals. Throughout our grounds, guests can enjoy special exhibitions, the historic outdoor garden, the Museum Shop and Lindner Family Café, events and programming for all ages, and complimentary on-site parking. It is all under one roof, culminating in a one-of-a-kind, multi-sensory experience that puts you at the center of art and history.

For more information, visit taftmuseum.org.