

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

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NEWS

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ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TAMMIS GROFT ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Groft's impressive 45 year career at the Albany Institute started as an internship

ALBANY, NY— Tammis K. Groft has announced that she will retire as Executive Director of the Albany Institute of History & Art, a role she has served since June 2013. Groft, who started at the Albany Institute as an intern in 1976, will remain at the museum through the transition of a successor.

“My career at the museum has been a job of a lifetime,” Groft said, “and I have enjoyed each and every opportunity afforded to me. I am grateful to all of the board, staff, and community members I have had the pleasure of working with and learning from over the years.”



Groft started as an intern at the Albany Institute in 1976 and was hired as Assistant Curator of Collections and Exhibitions in 1978. She was promoted to Chief Curator in 1987, became Deputy Director in 2000, was named Interim Director in January 2013, and was appointed Executive Director in June 2013.

Under her leadership, the Albany Institute focused on achieving financial sustainability, experimented with new community-based programs and outreach projects, upgraded technologies, and grew museum and library collection holdings to better tell the stories of people in the region. In 2015, the museum was re-accredited with the American Alliance of Museums, the museum field's mark of distinction since 1971. This last year, she led the museum through the uncertainty of the pandemic and worked with committees and community members to focus on greater community engagement and diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion initiatives.

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"Tammis Groft has dedicated her distinguished career at the Albany Institute of History & Art to ensuring our mission reflects the rich cultural heritage of New York's upper Hudson Valley," said F. Michael Tucker, President of the Board of Trustees. "Through her knowledge, experience and exemplary leadership, she built a strong foundation that has allowed the Institute to grow and evolve over the years, and she has well positioned the Institute for success well into the future. Tens of thousands of visitors to the museum have benefitted from her keen eye as a curator and committed leadership as our Executive Director. She exemplifies the passion for art and history that the Albany Institute of History & Art works to foster throughout the region and beyond. The Board of Trustees are extremely grateful for her dedication and commitment and wish her the very best in her next chapter in life."

During her time at the museum, Groft organized and researched or supervised the development of almost 100 exhibitions, including *A Sense of Time: The Historical Art of L. F. Tantillo* (2021), *Painting the American Southwest: The Work of Otto Plaug* (2020), *'An Orphan No More': A Recently Discovered Oil Sketch by Anthony Van Dyck* (2019), *Heavy Metal: Cast Iron Stoves of the Capital Region* (2019), *Shape and Shadow: The Sculpture of Larry Kagan* (2019), *A Menagerie of Whimsey: The Art of William B. Schade* (2018); *Spotlight: Albany & Anti-Suffrage* (2018), *Wampum World: An Art Installation by Renee Ridgway* (2017); *The Capital Region in 50 Objects* (2015), *Triple Play: Baseball at the Albany Institute* (2015); *GE Presents: The Mystery of the Albany Mummies* (2013), *Hudson River Panorama: 400 Years of History, Art & Culture* (2009), and *Matters of Taste: Food and Drink in 17th Century Dutch Art and Life* (2002). An advocate for contemporary art and artists, she has been a key collaborator for the annual *Exhibition by Artists of the Mohawk Hudson Region*.

Groft has also written and or contributed to numerous publications, including *The Mystery of the Albany Mummies* (2018), *Hudson River Panorama: A Passage through Time* (2009), *Richard Callner: A Fifty-Year Retrospective, Albany Institute* (2003), *Albany Institute of History & Art: 200 Years of Collecting* (1998), *Robert Cartmell Paintings, Prints, and Drawings 1971-1996: A 25 Year Retrospective* (1996), *Thomas Cole: Drawn to Nature* (1993), *The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Art Collection and Plaza Memorials* (1987), *Cast with Style: Nineteenth Century Cast-Iron Stoves from the Albany Area* (1981), and *The Folk Spirit of Albany: Folk Art from the Upper Hudson Valley in the Collection of the Albany Institute of History & Art* (1978).

In addition, Groft successfully secured over 30 museum grants from federal and state agencies, including National Endowment for the Arts, Institute of Museum and Library Services, National Endowment for the Humanities, New York State Council on the Arts, Greater Hudson Heritage Network, New York State Environmental Conservation/Hudson River Estuary Fund, the Capital District Library Council, the New York State Documentary Heritage Program, and New York's Regional Economic Development Council; as well as national and regional foundations, including The Henry Luce Foundation, the David and Candace Weir Foundation, the Picotte Family Foundation, the Bender Family Foundation, the Standish Family Fund, the Review Foundation, the Carl E. Touhey Foundation, and the Cornelia Cogswell-Rossi Foundation.

Throughout her career, she has shared her knowledge and training with students of art and history. She has served as an Adjunct Professor for the Public History program at the University at Albany, teaching a graduate level course called Curatorial Practices. She also served as a study leader for the Smithsonian Travel Program on the Hudson River. She has lectured on a variety of topics, including nineteenth century cast iron stoves, the Hudson River School, American folk art, nineteenth and twentieth century American

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art, decorative arts, and museum practices. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Williamstown Art Conservation Center, in Williamstown, MA, and currently serves as a board member for Discover Albany and Women@Work, is on the advisory council for Albany's Heritage Tourism, and is a member of the Forum for Executive Women. In 2018, Groft was honored by The College of Saint Rose with a Community of Excellence Award. In 2013, Groft was awarded the Downtown Albany Business Improvement District (BID) Norman S. Rice Arts, Culture & Education Award, recognizing her lasting contribution to arts, culture, and education for the Albany community.

The Albany Institute Board of Trustees will establish a committee to begin a national search to find Groft's successor, who will remain as executive director to oversee the transition.

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Founded in 1791, the Albany Institute of History & Art is New York's oldest museum. Its collections document the Hudson Valley as a crossroads of culture, influencing the art and history of the region, the state, and the nation. With more than 35,000 objects and one million documents in the library, it is an important resource for the region, giving our community a sense of the part the Hudson Valley played in the American story, and our own place in history. Permanent and temporary exhibitions are open year-round and create a sense of place, allowing visitors to meet the people who helped shape this region. Among the museum's best-known collections are the 19th century Hudson River School landscape paintings by artists like Thomas Cole and Frederic Church. For more information, please visit www.albanyinstitute.org and be sure to follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute), Twitter (@AlbanyInstitute), and Instagram (AlbanyInstitute).

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