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## **DE KOONING FOUNDATION PROVIDES MULTI-YEAR SUPPORT TO LICM**

### **Unique Collaboration with Children's Museum Promotes Art Understanding**

The Willem de Kooning Foundation has made a \$300,000, multi-year grant to the Long Island Children's Museum (LICM) to expand its capacity to provide innovative art programming that inspires young children and teens' interest in visual arts exploration. The support extends a collaboration begun in 2008 between the Foundation and the Children's Museum that serves a kindergarten through high school age audience.

"Thanks to the vision, encouragement and confidence of The Willem de Kooning Foundation, the Long Island Children's Museum is able to take a giant step in meeting our shared goal of promoting art appreciation and awareness among young children and teens," said LICM President Suzanne LeBlanc. "We are proud that the Foundation has singled us out to develop lessons that promote children's visual problem solving and critical thinking techniques."

Executive Director of the Foundation Amy Schichtel affirmed the partnership saying, "LICM approaches its educational programs with the risk-taking, nimble hand of an artist, while focused on the fun and wonder of the visual world. It was easy to say YES when its team expressed they were ready to expand their reach."

Schichtel continued:

"Abstract Expressionist artist Willem de Kooning was a master at finding ways to get himself out of a corner and to overcome obstacles. Abstract thought is a key component of a creative, progressive individual and society. These programs use abstraction in art to break down the barriers of inhibition and self-consciousness that can thwart personal expression. Our goal is to lead children to push against limitations and move to a place of exploring *what is possible* just as de Kooning did in his art."

With the new three-year grant from The Willem de Kooning Foundation, LICM will build on the success of popular elements such as workshops, outreaches and exhibitions to address new audiences and provide enhanced programming. The Children's Museum will

expand its abstract art education program to include day-long professional development training for teachers; providing them with access points to incorporate abstract expressionism into their classrooms. LICM will also broaden its museum-based offerings to include summer outdoor art workshops (Art in the Garden) and monthly workshops exploring abstract art themes and techniques.

Community-based workshops, currently offered at multiple public libraries in Nassau County will expand to include art clubs and after-school programs targeting teen audiences. The expanded initiative will be guided by a full-time, dedicated Art Program Manager who will work closely with the Museum's Education staff and The Willem de Kooning Foundation in the creation and delivery of educational program content.

Individual and collaborative art pieces created during workshops and community outreach programs will be displayed during an annual month-long exhibition, "Dedicated to de Kooning."

The goals of the collaboration between the Children's Museum and the Foundation include:

- Introducing children and families to the world of abstract art and artists, particularly through the life and work of Willem de Kooning
- Inspiring children to create and talk about art thereby building critical thinking skills through art analysis and process
- Providing adults with strategies to discuss art with their children and gain information about children's creative development
- Bringing art education to underserved communities
- Supplementing art education in schools and libraries where art programs are increasingly jeopardized by fiscal constraints and curriculum restrictions

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**Long Island Children's Museum** invites visitors of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to explore freely, discover their passions, and appreciate the communities and world we share. The 40,000-square-foot museum is a learning laboratory where hands-on exhibits invite visitors to experiment, examine, and play. The Museum welcomes 250,000 children and adults annually. The private, not-for-profit institution chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, offers museum-based educational programs and cultural experiences, as well as an extensive community outreach program offered in schools, libraries and youth centers across Long Island. The Museum is the recipient of the 2012 National Medal for Museum & Library Service, the highest honor conferred on museums

for extraordinary civic, educational, economic, environmental, and social contributions.

**THE WILLEM DE KOONING FOUNDATION** is an artist-endowed, private, operating foundation which received its 501(c)(3) status in 2001. Its mission is to foster the study and appreciation of Willem de Kooning's life and work through research, exhibitions and educational programs. Through its initiatives, the Foundation strives to encourage new discussion and a deeper understanding of de Kooning, his contemporaries, and their historical moment among scholars and the general public. As a part of this mission, the Foundation looks to de Kooning's own practices for lessons and opportunities that can advance arts education for students of all ages. For further information about de Kooning and the Foundation, please go to [www.dekooning.org](http://www.dekooning.org) .