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**Major Grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Helps
Balboa Art Conservation Center Prep for Next Chapter
Janet Ruggles, Executive Director, to Retire after 37 Years of Service**

(San Diego, Calif., September 24, 2019 —) A \$700,000 grant awarded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in collaboration with the Nonprofit Finance Fund is helping the Balboa Art Conservation Center (BACC), the region's premier art conservation facility, move into its next phase as an institution. Given "to support change and growth capital, as part of the Foundation's Comprehensive Organizational Health Initiative," the grant has already allowed BACC to improve infrastructural elements. Soon it will provide support while the organization searches for its next executive director. Janet Ruggles, BACC's chief executive, has announced her retirement effective December 31, 2019 after 37 years of service to the organization.

Founded in the 1970s, BACC is a nonprofit organization that offers museum-quality art conservation treatments, investigative technical imaging and analysis, and extensive preservation services for institutions and individuals. It also offers conservation education and often mentors conservation interns and fellows who require years of specialized training before entering the workplace. Like other regional conservation centers in the United States, BACC is dealing with significant structural changes in the field, coupled with funding uncertainties. While art conservation is a field that requires great care and training to protect and restore artistic history, it usually does so with little fanfare or support compared to other fields.

That is where the Mellon funding has stepped in. The first phase of the grant allows for both upgrades to existing equipment and investments in new equipment, giving highly trained BACC staff even better and more cutting-edge tools to do their job. These infrastructure improvements include upgrades to BACC's paper lab, upgrades to BACC's digital infrared reflectography (IRR) system, purchase of a portable x-ray fluorescence (XRF) tool (that helps identify inorganic

materials more precisely when examining objects such as paintings on canvas and panels, polychrome sculpture, works on paper, and gilded ornamental frames), and IT upgrades in support of imaging and for tracking projects.

The second phase of the Mellon grant will help BACC look for its next executive director as Janet Ruggles, who has served in the role for more than two decades, has announced her retirement. She currently serves as both chief conservator of paper and executive director, splitting her focus between these two critical areas. The Mellon grant will assist the transition to a new organizational model that provides equal focus on museum-level conservation and organizational sustainability by separating these roles out into distinct positions. The new model also looks toward partnerships with institutions of higher learning, enhancing relationships with museum and private clients, as well as implementing innovative fundraising strategies. Ruggles notes the grant funding could not have come at a more perfect time in BACC's development.

BACC board president Jennifer Nelson says, "Ruggles has been a resourceful leader for the BACC, developing and overseeing programs that have spanned conservation, education, scholarship and field services throughout the Western United States. I'm especially impressed by her expert conservation work as chief conservator of paper. We are so grateful for the foundation she has laid through her tireless work, and acknowledge her great contribution to the field of art conservation."

Karen Coutts, vice president of BACC's board, says "The Mellon Foundation has been a partner of the Center for decades, and they have always been supportive of conservation as a practice across the country. This funding is allowing us to evolve, to better meld tried-and-true practices with cutting edge technology. The expertise of our staff, combined with new equipment and innovative practices, will allow us to make great strides in preserving and restoring important art — important history — for years to come."

With funds from the Mellon Foundation, and an invigorated board that has been diligently planning next steps, BACC looks forward to launching a new business and leadership model.

For those interested in applying to the Balboa Art Conservation Center's executive director position, please visit www.bacc.org/job-opportunities.html

About the Balboa Art Conservation Center

With more than 40 years of experience, the Balboa Art Conservation Center (BACC) is the region's premier art conservation facility, offering museum-quality conservation treatments, investigative technical imaging and analysis, and extensive preservation services for institutions and individuals. A nonprofit organization, BACC is located in the heart of Balboa Park. Learn more at www.bacc.org

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