

To: David Creery, Chief Administrative Officer

From: Mary Reid, Director/Curator, Woodstock Art Gallery

Re: Presentation of Exhibition *John Hartman: Many Lives Mark this Place* at the Embassy of Canada, Washington, D.C.

AIM:

To provide Council with information and updates from the presentation of the exhibition *John Hartman: Many Lives Mark this Place* at the Embassy of Canada in Washington, D.C. from July 1 to September 30, 2024.

BACKGROUND:

As per the presentation to Council on February 16, 2023, regarding the update on the touring exhibition *John Hartman: Many Lives Mark this Place* to the High Commission of Canada to the United Kingdom, London, England this exhibition was able to secure one last venue at the Gallery embedded in the Embassy of Canada located in Washington, D.C.

As mentioned in the past council report, this touring exhibition raises funds for the Woodstock Art Gallery through the collection of exhibition fees. In this case the Embassy of Canada paid the Woodstock Art Gallery \$8,700 to borrow this exhibition. The exhibition tour was also supported with a substantial grant of \$56,000 from the Canada Council for the Arts.

Additional elements to this exhibition included an impressive hard cover book as well a short documentary film and website <http://manylives.art/>. All of these elements were funded by an anonymous donor and the artist's commercial representative Nicholas Metivier. The Woodstock Art Gallery also received two grants totaling approximately \$30,000 from the Government of Canada and Province of Ontario to develop a digital tour guide app to support not only this exhibition but all our future exhibitions moving forward.

Due to the successful reception of the exhibition at the High Commission of Canada to the United Kingdom, London, England, the High Commission staff contacted their colleagues at the Embassy of Canada in Washington, D.C. urging them to mount this exhibition. There are only four galleries attached to Canadian Embassies through the world. The other two are in Tokyo, Japan and Paris, France. The Woodstock Art Gallery was short-listed for the Tokyo presentation but was not successful in the final round of programming deliberations. The Gallery in Paris is a curated space focusing on French-Canadian artists.

COMMENTS:

The Woodstock delegation to Washington, D.C., included Mayor Acchione and Brad Hammond, Economic Development Officer. While in Washington, Mr. Hammond met with staff from Ontario's Economic Development office to make an introduction and share information about Woodstock's foreign direct investment (FDI) attraction model in the United States. During the meeting, discussion was held around Woodstock's competitive advantages and advice on opportunities to consider was received. Mayor Acchione also joined Mr. Hammond in a second meeting with International Business Development staff from

the Embassy where Woodstock's FDI efforts in the US was discussed along with other areas to consider for investment attraction.

During his speech given for the special reception held for the exhibition Mayor Acchione commented: *"This exhibition truly highlights how the soft power of cultural diplomacy is at the front stage of Canada's foreign policy. To support the 2019 report of the same name that was passed by Senate in 2023, Mary Reid, Director/Curator of the Woodstock Art Gallery presented as a witness to Canada's Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade on the topic of Cultural Diplomacy in April 2023 regarding this very exhibition project we are celebrating this evening."*

At the event Mayor Acchione connected with Major General Michel-Henri St-Louis, Canadian Armed Forces Defence Attaché to the United States who posted the following comment on his social media channels: *"Sometimes military-diplomacy, makes way to art-diplomacy!!! I got to experience this last night at an event that celebrated our current exposition of the work of John Hartman, a Canadian painter and member of the Order of Canada. He came to our Embassy, in Washington DC, to explain and celebrate his work. The exposition of "Many Lives Mark This Place" seeks to represent renowned Canadian authors juxtaposed with landscapes that have particular meaning to them. Benefiting from his presence, the Embassy was able to use art as a means of promoting cultural understanding and cooperation between nations. His work is a powerful tool to promote cultural understanding, while breaking down language and other human barriers. Thank you to the Embassy team at 501 Pennsylvania Ave, to Mayor Jerry Acchione from the City of Woodstock (Ontario), to the Woodstock Art Gallery and Mary Reid, as well as the whole Events Planning Team. I felt fortunate to be there."*

Other highlights of the trip included a tour of the White House organized by Sister City Mayor Craig Stough, Sylvania, Ohio. Dedicated to highlighting the very best of American Art, the White House's art collection was impressive. I was also able to visit the National Museum of Women in the Arts, with a goal to foster conversations regarding Woodstock's collection of painting by notable historical painter Florence Carlyle (1864 – 1923). Additionally, I was very fortunate to view the extraordinary exhibition *Paris Salon: 1874* at the National Gallery of Art. A mere twenty years later Florence Carlyle would be exhibiting her work at the Paris Salon.

Undoubtedly a career highlight I am quite proud that in the last two years the Woodstock Art Gallery has been able to promote the City of Woodstock three times on the international stage. These opportunities are distinct honours that help propel and promote the economic and cultural strength of our community. Plans are already in motion to develop a partnership exchange project with Woodstock, Oxfordshire, UK in 2026 and I know our sister city colleagues in Sylvania, Ohio would be keen to engage in another cultural exchange. Both opportunities and those listed above are a testament to the soft yet mighty power of cultural diplomacy.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Woodstock City Council receive the report regarding the presentation of the exhibition *John Hartman: Many Lives Mark this Place* at the Embassy of Canada, Washington, D.C., as information.

Authored by: Mary Reid, MA, MBA Director/Curator, Woodstock Art Gallery
Approved by: David Creery, M.B.A., P.Eng. Chief Administrative Officer