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News Release

## Metal Museum poised for growth with expansion to Overton Park, transformation of Rust Hall

*Finalized lease agreement ushers in exciting new era for Memphis arts institution, the only one in the country dedicated to fine metalwork*

**MEMPHIS, Tenn. (May 31, 2022)** – A lease agreement appointing the Metal Museum the new tenant of Rust Hall sparks an exciting era for the venerable arts institution, transforming the former home of the Memphis College of Art into an inclusive community space for the creation and promotion of fine metalwork. As the only institution dedicated to fine metalwork in North America, the Metal Museum will expand its footprint by renovating the award-winning mid-century modern building in Overton Park into a multi-use space for art exhibitions, educational activities, community events, and more while keeping its original site along the Mississippi River as a residence for working artists visiting from around the globe.

“As the future tenant of Rust Hall, the Metal Museum is elated for the possibilities an expansion of this magnitude provides not only for the Museum but for Memphis, the Mid-South and the international metalworking community,” said Metal Museum Executive Director Carissa Hussong. “We consider this a tremendous honor and responsibility to preserve this mid-century architectural icon and breathe new life into this beloved building in the heart of Memphis.”

The Museum is in the process of raising \$35 million to renovate the existing 80,000-square-foot building and add a new state-of-the-art Metals Studio to house spaces for forging, casting and large metal fabrication. Under lease terms from the City of Memphis, renovations to create a versatile and vibrant community space devoted to the art of fine metalworking will begin once \$25 million has been committed.

At the time of the release, the Museum has secured more than \$16.3 million in commitments. The campaign got off to a strong early start with a generous \$12 million commitment from the Windgate Foundation (Little Rock, Ark.). Additional support has been received from ArtsMemphis, the Assisi Foundation, First Horizon Foundation and Hyde Family Foundation, among others.

As part of the project, the Museum will enhance the existing landscape and preserve the old growth forest found in Overton Park while embarking on new partnerships with other institutions in the park. Additionally, the expansion and renovation provide the Museum six times the space for education programs, dramatically transforming its capacity to offer educational programming to learners of all ages, while also creating more space for world-class exhibitions.

“The Metal Museum has long been one of the cornerstones of Memphis creative community, bringing international exhibitions to the region and introducing the art and craft of metalwork to our city,” said Mayor Jim Strickland. “I am inspired by the collaborative aspects of this endeavor and look forward to the day that the doors of Rust Hall open again for everyone to enjoy.”

As a center for metal arts, the Museum promotes artists and their work through award-winning exhibitions, contributes to teaching the next generation of artists, and advances the education of the public through innovative and active arts education programs.

“The Metal Museum is more than a unique museum with amazing art to see,” said Capital Campaign Committee Chair Dr. Richard Aycock. “Through its outreach and education programs, it is also an education center that enhances the entire community through metal arts.”

According to Aycock, the expansion allows the Museum to grow and diversify the educational experiences offered and provide new opportunities for everyone, from the world-renowned artist to the rural hobbyist welder to the second grader in South Memphis who has never seen blacksmithing or casting in progress.

“The impact the Metal Museum has on our local arts community is significant for several reasons, one of which is the continued education it offers to Memphis students to not just see but to create,” said ArtsMemphis President and CEO Elizabeth Rouse. “The Museum has opened doors for generations of learners who are looking to the arts and metalsmithing as a viable career goal.”

A selection of architectural renderings is available online at [metalmuseum.org/reignitingthefire](http://metalmuseum.org/reignitingthefire). To stay up to date on the project, register for Metal Museum emails at [metalmuseum.org/subscribe](http://metalmuseum.org/subscribe).

### **About the Metal Museum**

The Metal Museum is the only institution in the United States devoted exclusively to the preservation, promotion, and advancement of the art and craft of fine metalwork. This mission is achieved through four primary program areas – exhibitions, collections, studio practice, and community education and engagement. Programs are facilitated on the Museum grounds and at locations across the Mid-South. Located on 3.2 acres of historic property overlooking the Mississippi River, the Museum grounds include the main Museum building as well as the Metals Studios, Library + Resource Center, and private artist residences. Learn more about the Museum and its programs by visiting [metalmuseum.org](http://metalmuseum.org).

The Museum receives operating support from ArtsMemphis and the Tennessee Arts Commission. Programming support is received from the Hyde Family Foundation, the Windgate Charitable Foundation, and hundreds of corporate, foundation, and individual supporters.

High-resolution architectural renderings of the Rust Hall renovation are available upon request. Please contact Jenn Godwin, Communications Manager for the Metal Museum, at (901) 774-6380 or [jenngodwin@metalmuseum.org](mailto:jenngodwin@metalmuseum.org).