The Émile Levassor Museum of Art (ELMA)

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November 5, 2015
To: Dr. Scott Whittenburg, Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship

Dear Professor Whittenburg:

I am writing you to report on the research proposal and Small University Research Grant that I co-wrote with Professor Brad Allen. This grant helped finance the development of an alternative exhibition and mobile art museum for outreach and promotion of visual arts research in Montana and abroad. These funds were critical in creating what has become a vibrant art venue for the presentation of artworks by University of Montana students and professional artists locally, nationally and internationally.

I am happy to report on the broad success associated with the development of this mobile art museum, formally titled, The Émile Levassor Museum of Art (ELMA). Thus far, ELMA has featured exhibitions by six(6) University of Montana MFA candidates, twelve(12) BFA candidates, and two(2) nationally established, professional artists. Exhibitions have been presented locally, rurally, outside the state of Montana, and as far abroad as Japan. Some recent highlights on our exhibition schedule have been Beth Huhtala’s (MFA Candidate 2016) presentation of her creative research in Okunoshime, Japan, A group exhibition of work by our current BFA candidates at Portland State University in Portland, OR, and an exhibition exchange by professional artist, Brian Gillis, at the University of Oregon in Eugene, OR and again in Missoula. Most recently, Brad Allen and Ed Morrissey completed and recruitment and outreach tour of area high schools including Glacier High School in Kalispell, Havre High in Havre, and Helena High School and Capital High also in Helena. On this tour, the UM School of Art programs were presented along with items from ELMA’s emerging permanent collection of artworks. A complete identity system, business cards, website (www.elma-museum.org), and social media system have been developed for ELMA as well.

One item referenced in our original grant proposal that has not been completely resolved is the completion of a dedicated vehicle to house the museum. Costs associated with the repurposing of our vehicle to a safe standard have limited us. As an alternative, we created a portable museum structure that can be transported via a variety of means including mail or freight. However, we remain dedicated to following through with our original vision, which will resolve in the completion of this dedicated mode of transportation and promotion.

While still a work in progress, The Émile Levassor Museum of Art has become an effective platform supporting individual research, mobile collaborative research projects, and curricular outreach nationally. The museum has served as a traveling exhibition space, extending University of Montana creative research for exhibition rurally and in metropolitan centers beyond Montana. Additionally, it has served as a curated space presenting work in the Missoula community from artists outside the region. We remain excited about the continued development of this venue.
Sincerely,

Matt Hamon
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