

## ***For Immediate Release***

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## **ARTIS—NAPLES, THE BAKER MUSEUM RECEIVES ACCREDITATION FROM THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS**

**Naples, FL (April 25, 2025)** — Artis—Naples, The Baker Museum is proud to announce that the museum has achieved accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the highest national recognition afforded to museums in the United States. Accreditation signifies excellence within the museum community as well as to governments, funders, outside agencies and the public. This distinction places The Baker Museum among approximately the top 3% of museums in the U.S., one of only 1,100 museums to receive this honor out of an estimated 33,000 nationwide—and the only accredited museum of any kind in Collier County.

Accreditation from the AAM is a rigorous but rewarding process that evaluates all areas of a museum's operations, from education and collections stewardship to governance, planning and community engagement. Opened in 2000, The Baker Museum began laying the groundwork for its accreditation years ago. The challenges posed by Hurricane Irma in 2017 spurred an ambitious repair and expansion project, undertaken as part of the Future—Forward Campaign for Cultural Excellence, which concluded in May 2023. The experience also led to the development of the revised Artis—Naples Emergency Preparedness and Action Plan, adopted in September 2023 to ensure the well-being of all staff, artworks and facilities. A comprehensive site visit and institutional review in late 2024 culminated in Artis—Naples, The Baker Museum officially receiving accreditation at the AAM Accreditation Commission meeting in February 2025.

“This achievement reinforces our organizational commitment to excellence across all of Artis—Naples,” says CEO and President Kathleen van Bergen. “AAM accreditation speaks to the quality of our visual arts programming, as well as the high standards we uphold in every aspect of operations—from education and safety to collections care, storage and the stewardship of our facilities and financial resources. It demonstrates the strength, integrity and artistic ambition of our organization as a whole.”

“As Artis—Naples continues to grow and evolve, this accreditation affirms our organizational commitment to artistic excellence,” said Alexander Shelley, Artis—Naples artistic and music director. “It is a meaningful recognition of the role the visual arts play within this institution's broader cultural mission—and of our responsibility to inspire, engage and challenge our audiences through thoughtful and dynamic programming.”

The site visit committee praised The Baker Museum for its outstanding exhibitions, deep community partnerships and educational outreach—including its work with school groups across Southwest Florida

and its regular schedule of free-admission events. The museum's integration with the broader multidisciplinary mission of Artis—Naples was also recognized as a defining strength.

“Accreditation with the American Alliance of Museums is a testament to the incredible work and dedication of the Artis—Naples team and the unwavering support of the community,” said The Baker Museum Director and Chief Curator Courtney McNeil. “It reflects the care we take with every exhibition, every school partnership and every visitor experience. We’re honored to share this achievement with all who have championed and supported the museum over the past 25 years.”

Accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums affirms The Baker Museum's position as a leader in the field, recognized not only for its professional excellence but also for its deep commitment to education, community engagement and artistic innovation. As the museum prepares to celebrate its 25th anniversary, this milestone marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in its mission to inspire and serve audiences across Southwest Florida and beyond.

For more information about the Future—Forward Campaign for Cultural Excellence, please visit [artisnaples.org/about/future-forward](https://artisnaples.org/about/future-forward).

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### **ABOUT THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS**

The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) is the only organization representing the entire museum field, from art and history museums to science centers and zoos. Since 1906, the AAM have been championing museums through advocacy and providing museum professionals with the resources, knowledge and connections they need to move the field forward. For more information, visit [aam-us.org](https://aam-us.org).

### **ARTIS—NAPLES**

Home of The Baker Museum and the Naples Philharmonic, Artis—Naples is unique among cultural institutions nationwide, equally dedicated to both the visual and performing arts featuring artists of global distinction.

### **KIMBERLY K. QUERREY and LOUIS A. SIMPSON CULTURAL CAMPUS**

Led by CEO and President Kathleen van Bergen and Artistic and Music Director Alexander Shelley, Artis—Naples offers more than 800 paid and free events annually across its 8.5-acre Kimberly K. Querrey and Louis A. Simpson Cultural Campus. Artis—Naples welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors each year for a broad array of artistic and educational opportunities perfect for audiences of all backgrounds and interests. The cultural campus is home to five buildings, including two performance halls (Frances Pew Hayes Hall and Myra J. Daniels Pavilion), The Baker Museum, the Toni Stabile Education Building and the Kohan Administration Building.

### **NAPLES PHILHARMONIC**

The Naples Philharmonic has long been recognized as one of the cornerstones of Southwest Florida's arts community. As part of Artis—Naples, the Naples Philharmonic performs more than 140 orchestral and chamber music concerts, as well as opera and ballet, education, community and special event concerts annually between September and June in the 1,477-seat Hayes Hall, the 283-seat Daniels Pavilion and around Southwest Florida. The Naples Philharmonic has enjoyed a history of working with world-class music directors. Following a successful designate year in 2023-24, Alexander Shelley begins his new role as artistic and music director in the 2024-25 season. Renowned violinist James Ehnes continues as artistic partner through the 2024-25 season, working with Naples Philharmonic musicians in a variety of settings with a focus on inspiring and embodying a high level of artistry. Podium leadership also includes Principal Pops Conductor Jack Everly, celebrating 15 years in this role in the 2024-25 season and bringing pops performances that celebrate music across genres.

## **THE BAKER MUSEUM**

The Baker Museum is the foremost fine art museum in Southwest Florida, presenting an ambitious slate of exhibitions annually to complement installations of works from its permanent collection. Comprising more than 3,000 objects, the museum's broad holdings of 20th- and 21st-century art reflect particular strengths in modern art of the United States and Mexico. The Baker Museum's collection demonstrates the generosity and commitment of area collectors, including significant gifts from the collection of the late Olga Hirshhorn.

In 2025, The Baker Museum was accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the highest national recognition for museums in the United States, affirming the museum's commitment to excellence, accountability and public service.

With more than two decades of collecting and exhibiting, the museum is committed to the stewardship and scholarship of its collections and to fostering inspiring and transformative experiences with the visual arts. At the same time, The Baker Museum partners with the world's leading arts institutions to make extraordinary exhibitions accessible to the Southwest Florida community—including recently the National Portrait Gallery, London and the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. In 2020, Artis—Naples celebrated the renovation and expansion of The Baker Museum and adjoining Norris Garden, designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism, which created new spaces for multidisciplinary exploration and social interaction.

## **EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY**

In addition to creating and presenting visual and performing arts, Artis—Naples provides robust education and community activities for students of all ages in Collier and Lee counties. Each season, thousands of Collier County Public School students interact with Artis—Naples education programming, both on our cultural campus and in their classrooms. Beyond our commitment to youth education, the Lifelong Learning program provides informative lectures and study opportunities for adults seeking to engage more deeply with the arts.

The Friends of Artis—Naples, comprised of more than 3,500 donor households, offers activities, travel experiences and events designed to foster a deeper relationship between patrons and the arts.

In 2017, Artis—Naples acquired the Naples International Film Festival (NIFF), expanding its film offerings and providing a platform for the festival's continued excellence and growth. In 2023, the festival's 15th anniversary year, NIFF was named one of *MovieMaker* Magazine's "20 Great Film Festivals in Vacation Destinations."

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