



# THE NATIONAL ARTS CLUB

## ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Members of The National Arts Club are expected to make a contribution to the Club's mission. A "Contribution" is broadly defined and may include such activities as serving on a committee, developing a program, volunteering to organize an event, making a financial donation or helping to bring important viewpoints to the Club that contribute to its artistic and educational goals. Strong evidence of commitment to the Club and the arts in general is critical.

Each applicant for membership in The National Arts Club must have a sponsor/proposer and a seconder who are both members in good standing for at least one year and have known the applicant for at least one year. Attending lectures and other public events at The National Arts Club are opportunities for those interested in becoming a members of the Club to meet members.

Upon acceptance new members are granted the same status as the Proposer and Secunder and, after a year of membership, may propose other potential members. The membership process may seem lengthy but it is absolutely critical. The Club has been able to continue its record number of programs and exhibitions because of the unceasing efforts of its membership. Members are the lifeblood of The National Arts Club.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROPOSER

The proposer must act as the applicant's guide and mentor during the application process. The proposer has a weighty responsibility, and the success of the applicant's admission is dependent on the actions of the proposer.

The proposer must adequately prepare the applicant for membership. It is the proposer's duty to make sure that the applicant is aware of the financial obligations of membership. The proposer must acquaint the applicant with the mission and history of the Club as well as the dress code, house rules, monetary and other obligations of membership.

The proposer must organize the applicant's application packet including his/her own letter of support and that from the seconder.

## LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letters of support should address the following. How well do you know the applicant? What interests and organization affiliations do you share? How do you know one another? How familiar is the applicant with The National Arts Club? Why will the applicant make a good member? Why are you proposing the applicant? What will this person contribute to the Club? How would a biographer summarize the achievements of the applicant with respect to the arts? Please do not repeat information in the letter of support that is included elsewhere in the application packet.

## THE ADMISSIONS INTERVIEW

The last stage of the application process is the admissions interview. The interview must be attended by at least three members of the Admissions Committee and the applicant.



# THE NATIONAL ARTS CLUB

## History



*The Mission of the National Arts Club is to stimulate, foster and promote public interest in the arts, as well as educate the American people in the fine arts.*

The National Arts Club was founded in 1898 by author and poet Charles De Kay, the literary and art critic for *The New York Times*. He together with a group of distinguished artists and patrons conceived of a gathering place to welcome artists of all genres as well as art lovers and patrons. At the turn of the 20th century American artists began to look to our own country rather than to Europe for inspiration, and the American art world was alive with energy. The newly-formed National Arts Club took residence in a mansion on 34th Street. American art had a new home.

In 1906, when the Club outgrew that location, Spencer Trask, a financier, philanthropist and NAC Governor, helped the Club acquire the historic Samuel Tilden Mansion as its new home. The Tilden Mansion occupies 14 and 15 Gramercy Park South; both houses were built in the 1840s; and the original flat-front, iron-grilled brownstones matched the style of the homes still maintained on the west side of Gramercy Park. Samuel Tilden, the 25th Governor of New York, acquired 15 Gramercy Park South in 1863, purchased the adjacent house a few years later and gave the conjoined mansions a complete redesign. Tilden hired Calvert Vaux, a famed architect and one of the designers of Central Park, to modernize the façade with sandstone, bay windows and ornamentation in the Aesthetic Movement style. John LaFarge created stained glass panels for the interior of the mansion; and sculptors from the firm of Ellin and Kitson created elaborate fireplace surrounds, bookcases and doors. Glass master Donald MacDonald fashioned a unique stained glass dome for Tilden's library that crowns the room where the bar is now located.

In 1966 New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission declared 15 Gramercy Park South a New York City Landmark; and in 1976 the Federal government designated the building a National Historic Landmark.

The Club's Membership has included three U.S. Presidents: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Among the distinguished painters who have been members are Robert Henri, Frederic Remington, William Merritt Chase and Cecilia Beaux. Sculptors Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Daniel Chester French, Anna Hyatt Huntington and Paul Manship were all members as were composer Victor Herbert, conductor Walter Damrosch, photographer Alfred Stieglitz and architects Stanford White and George B. Post.

Renowned for its expansive American art collection, the Club owns works by Edward Potthast, Francis Mora, Ella Lamb, Charles Curran, Henry Watrous, Oscar Fehrer, Helen Turner and Will Barnet among many others. The National Arts Club is proud of its early recognition of innovative art media such as photography, film and digital media.

The National Arts Club hosts both members-only and public events honoring exemplary leaders in their chosen fields of art as well as exhibitions, theatrical and musical performances, lectures and readings. Feature programs focus on visual arts, literature, film, architecture, fashion, photography and music.