

Dear Members of the Academy Community,

You may have read recent press reports about what happened to Maria Farmer at the hands of Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell while she was working for Jeffrey Epstein as an art consultant in the 1990s after she graduated from the school. The Academy is appalled by this tragic situation. However, allegations that anyone in our administration or board knew of or enabled this horrific abuse are not true. Had we known at the time the seriousness of the situation, we would have urged Maria to report the Ohio assault to law enforcement and done everything we could to support her in seeking justice.

Jeffrey Epstein was introduced to the Academy through one of its original board members, Stuart Pivar, in the 1980s. Epstein served as a board member from 1987-1994. Both men left the board in 1994. When Epstein returned to New York after serving his prison sentence in Florida, he purchased tickets to one fundraising event in 2012 and two events in 2014. He also made a donation of \$30,000 in 2014. There was no inappropriate contact or behavior during this time period that we know of. However with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight we wish we had barred him from the premises.

The Academy works hard to gain attention and exposure for the incredible work of our talented students. Because of our efforts, many are fortunate enough to graduate with a base of supporters already interested in their work and careers. This attention can make a significant difference in the crucial beginning stages of our students' careers when they are most in need of encouragement and support. However, we are reviewing this situation and will publish further guidelines, if needed, to assist students for how they can and should interact with art collectors. The Academy takes allegations of sexual harassment or assault very seriously and has a formal investigation process as well as a Title IX officer on staff.

As an institution, our mission is always to create a safe and optimal learning environment in which our artists can explore their artistic interests, grow their abilities, and achieve their creative vision. Though we do not control collector relationships after graduation when our alumni are pursuing careers as independent adults, we strongly urge anyone with any knowledge of inappropriate behavior to report it to the administration and we will take appropriate and immediate action.

Sincerely,

David Kratz  
President