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Statement from the New Museum

June 30, 2020

[Updated: July 14, 2020]

Due to the prolonged, ongoing closure of the New Museum and a continuing loss of earned income, the Museum has had a 30% financial shortfall and is expecting an even greater projected loss of revenue for the coming fiscal year. In light of this, the Museum was not able to retain all staff who were on furlough. On July 1 we laid off 18 full and part time staff of the 41 furloughed, or 23% of our full-time staff. The layoffs were across every department and at every staff level, from entry level to middle management to executive level, including both union and non-union staff members, whose work had been drastically reduced or eliminated. For those affected, we provided severance based on the length of tenure and extended health benefits through the end of August. In the case of union employees, this extension exceeds the layoff provisions agreed to in our collective bargaining agreement. The cuts to executive salaries that were announced in April 2020 will remain in force. Though we have not yet announced a reopening date, we plan to bring back furloughed staff when we are safely able to reopen.

The decision to proceed with layoffs during this unprecedented time was extraordinarily difficult for the Museum, a decision we had hoped not to have to make. We worked hard to preserve as many positions as possible and made a concerted effort to honor our core commitment to equity and diversity. People of color now constitute 51% of the New Museum's staff.

Though the Museum has been cast by the union as being hostile to it, we were proud to have jointly reached an agreement and CBA in October 2019, when many organizations have still yet to do so, and we continue to respect those terms of the CBA. However, disagreement is not disparagement, and further progress will be made through cooperation and exchange.