

Date: _____ Approved: _____

THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
Minutes of the Art and Audience Committee Meeting
Held, pursuant to due notice, Theater Level Conference Suite Room #1
Wednesday, 15 February 2012, 12:00 pm

Presiding: Thomas F. Farrell II, Co-Chair
Secretary: Ms. Suzanne Broyles

There were present:

Thomas F. Farrell II, Co-Chair
Karen C. Abramson
Mrs. Whitt W. Clement
Michael M. Connors
John R. Curtis, Jr.
Ms. Susan S. Goode
Dr. Elizabeth F. Harris
Keith R. Kisse
Mrs. Deborah H. Quillen
Charles H. Seilheimer, Jr.
Thurston R. Moore, Ex-Officio
Mrs. Suzanne T. Mastracco, Ex-Officio

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director
Stephen D. Bonadies
Ms. Suzanne Broyles
Dr. Lee Anne Chesterfield
W. Birch Douglass III
Ms. Linda Lipscomb
Ms. Joan W. Murphy
Robin Nicholson

Absent:

James W. McGlothlin, Co-Chair
G. Moffett Cochran
Marlene A. Malek
Mrs. Stanley F. Pauley
Dr. Alvin J. Schexnider
Dr. Lindley T. Smith

I. CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair, Thomas F. Farrell II, called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm and welcomed new Trustee, Charles H. Seilheimer, Jr. of Orange.

II. MINUTES

Motion: proposed by Mr. Farrell and seconded by Dr. Harris that the minutes of the last meeting of the Art and Audience Committee held on the 17th of November 2011 be approved as distributed on the 28th of December 2011. Motion carried.

III. REVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO USE OF PERMANENT AND ROTATING GALLERIES

Robin Nicholson, Deputy Director for Art and Education, indicated that today's first order of business is to discuss proposed changes to the use of permanent and rotating galleries. We now have seen data showing the high degree to which special exhibitions relate to revenue and we have learned many lessons regarding how different spaces, budget cuts, and staffing impacts an exhibition. Mr. Nicholson explained that our experience with banner exhibitions in the lower level temporary galleries of the expansion has shown us that the most effective way to use these galleries is to use the entire 12,000 square feet of the lower level for each show.

The original architect's plan for the lower level special exhibition galleries was for three separate exhibition spaces, the large NewMarket space, the smaller Altria space, and the corridor space. We have found that using the entire space for 3 different exhibitions is not feasible for us. For instance, the Tiffany exhibition would have been less cramped and the visitor experience more rewarding if the whole lower level had been used. Therefore we will use the whole lower level for the next four banner exhibitions. Also, exhibitions traditionally run for three months, but Mr. Nicholson said this makes for an untenable workload for staff and higher overall costs, so from now on, exhibitions will run for four months with a longer turn-around time in between shows.

We also need a medium sized temporary exhibition space for exhibitions such as *Ife*, *Xu Bing*, and *Elvis*. The Evans Court Gallery has been working well for this purpose as it is a nice sized flexible space where we can build walls in any configuration we like. Therefore we will be retaining it as a temporary exhibition space moving forward; instead of making it part of the permanent collection galleries as once planned. We will then use the Focus 1 & 2 galleries for permanent collection spaces. The Deputy Director said this will make the Evans Court Gallery a destination; visitors will be able to see more of our permanent collection as they walk through other parts of the Museum, and thus create a sense of ongoing activity in the building.

IV. REVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGE TO STATEWIDE PARTNER BENEFITS

Robin Nicholson led the Art & Audience Committee in a discussion of a proposed new model for Statewide Partnership structure and benefits. He gave a snapshot of the current statewide partner benefits saying we have stagnant numbers and are only serving a small percentage of Virginians. It was thought that our benefits are outdated and not in demand so we have come up with a new model. Mr. Nicholson reviewed the distributed Summary of Proposed New VMFA Statewide Partnership Structure/Benefits document showing the proposed four levels of benefits.

He explained that Level 1 would be free and used for statewide public and private K-12 schools, and home school organizations. It would offer password access to restricted webpages with SOL resources and images, powerpoints and lesson plans, teacher workshops, and artist interviews and lectures. We would charge \$50 for Level 2 which would serve non-profit community-based organizations, libraries, retirement communities, churches, hospitals, and K-12

schools. This level would provide Level 1 benefits plus access to VMFA statewide speaker and artist programs, and exhibitions of reproductions from VMFA collections. Level 3 would serve art centers, galleries, and non-accredited museums and would cost \$250. In addition to Level 1 and 2 benefits, we would provide access to VMFA library resources and article database, password controlled access to the VMFA exhibition database (Fellowship and partner exhibits), full technical assistance and a VMFA staff-led tour of the museum and/or a special exhibition. The charge for Level 4 would be \$500 and this would serve museums with VMFA-compliant environmental and security controls. It would provide Level 1, 2, and 3 benefits plus access to VMFA collections to develop exhibitions, and an opportunity to host VMFA-curated permanent collection exhibitions.

Mr. Nicholson explained that this was a first outline of our ideas and we would like to roll out this new structure with the new membership scheme next fiscal year. The committee discussed the ideas as Robin Nicholson fielded questions from the group. Mr. Farrell asked if there were other thoughts for Mr. Nicholson and added that it sounds like the Trustees feel this is the right way to go. Mr. Nicholson announced that when the plan is further developed and finalized, it will be brought to the Full Board. The Director said it was hoped that corporate sponsors will be found to cover the fees for the higher level partners.

V. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

No further business was brought before the Committee, and the Co-Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:50 pm.

Suzanne Broyles
Secretary of the Museum