

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts  
Minutes of the Art and Education Committee Meeting  
Theater Level Conference Room #1  
Tuesday, 17 June 2014, 10:30am

There were present:

Susan Goode, Chair  
Karen C. Abramson  
Margaret Irby Clement  
Margaret N. Gottwald  
Frederica P. Gray  
Terrell Luck Harrigan  
Dr. Elizabeth F. Harris  
Ivan P. Jecklin  
Keith R. Kisse  
Jane Joel Knox  
Charles H. Seilheimer, Jr.  
Mary Gray Shockey  
Dr. Lindley T. Smith  
Shantaram Talegaonkar  
William A. Royall, Ex-officio

By Invitation:

Jeffrey Allison  
Austin Anderson  
Erin Brooks  
Dr. Lee Anne Chesterfield  
Celeste Fetta Neff  
Robin Nicholson

Absent:

Alexander Nyerges, Director  
Mary Anne Carlson  
John R. Curtis, Jr.  
Cynthia Kerr Fralin  
Richard B. Gilliam  
Cameron O'Brion  
Dr. Claude G. Perkins  
Jane H. Spilman

I. CALL TO ORDER

Susan Goode called the meeting to order at 10:36 am and welcomed the group. She announced Robin Nicholson's departure to the Frick Art and Historical Center, noting what a valuable asset he has been to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Mr. Nicholson thanked

the committee for their support, and he said he feels he is leaving them in very capable hands.

## II. MINUTES

**Motion:** proposed by Susan Goode, and seconded by Margaret Gottwald that the minutes of the last meeting of the Art and Education Committee held on the 20th of March be approved as distributed. Motion carried.

## III. NEW TECHNOLOGY

Erin Brooks, Senior Account Director and Web Strategist for RTS Labs, discussed VMFA's new, free mobile application which revolves around the onsite visitor experience. The content and interactive components will focus on what's currently on view with audio guides, "closer look" topics, and related digital content for highlighted works in the collection. The app will also provide details on current exhibitions, with the ability to review a calendar of events based on the day of the week. Meg Gottwald asked if it was interactive in any way. Ms. Brooks said after tracking app use, VMFA will use that information to extend the functionality to include additional two-way engagement features as opportunities are presented. Lindley Smith asked when the application would be available, and Ms. Brooks said ideally by the end of summer the BETA version would be available. At first, it will be available on museum devices, but eventually it will be available to the public on their own devices. Charles Seilheimer added that he hoped the app would not replace a physical visit to the museum, and Terrell Luck Harrigan suggested using QR codes or beacon devices so people will be more inclined to visit, using the app at the museum. Ms. Brooks addressed the updated search feature on the new website, reporting the site has created more gateways to get to the permanent collection. The next steps will be uploading more content and boosting search engine traffic for the content that already exists on the web.

## IV. STATEWIDE PARTNERSHIPS, PROGRAMS, AND EXHIBITIONS

Jeffrey Allison, Paul Mellon Educator and Statewide Programs Coordinator, stated that one of his goals has been to increase the number of statewide partnerships, which has grown from 300 to 680 in the last year. He wants to add more technical resources soon, which are critical to the museum's partners. VMFA currently offers staff consultations to partners all over Virginia, and he reviewed exciting happenings at the Moss Art Center at Virginia Tech, the Chrysler Museum, James Madison University, and the William King Museum. More recently, the Hunter Holmes McGuire Virginia Medical Center reached out to VMFA concerning their art therapy program in polytrauma. Art therapy is very important for their clients, and they want to showcase that work in an exhibition space. VMFA has also partnered with the Vision and Blind Rehabilitation Program, as well as Art on Wheels, contributing over 200 hours in assistance.

## V. EDUCATION

Celeste Fetta, Chief Educator, was asked to talk about new learning methods, focusing on how the museum teaches. Her aim is to be more visitor-centric, a trend consistent at

museums across the country. The Education department has started to use a dialogic approach: instead of giving the audience all the information, the audience guides the discussion themselves. As an example, Celeste showed an image of a work of art and asked the group to comment on something they noticed about the painting. Next she modeled a short discussion based on the response. Additionally, museum educators want to present information in a way that can appeal to all learning styles. She then proceeded to discuss the STEM curriculum (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) and the push to transform it into STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, **Art**, Math). Her colleague, Twyla Kitts, Teacher Programs Coordinator, is breaking down the Teacher Advisory Council into focus groups, who will concentrate on math and science, seeing what VMFA can do to better incorporate these subjects into resources and program offerings.

## VI. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

Bill Royall asked the committee and staff to consider the internship program, addressing the large number of students available to have a successful internship at VMFA. There is not currently a major initiative at the museum to develop a for-credit class that could help students seeking experience. He stressed that VMFA needs to think much bigger, asking the committee to consider how they can make internships completely different from any other museums. Jeffrey Allison said he has had great success with interns, and the experience really prepares them for jobs here or other places later. This would help VMFA establish leadership in the world of Art Education. The trustees agreed on the importance of this matter and discussed methods that could possibly be used.

There being no further business, Susan Goode adjourned the meeting at 12:04 pm.

Recorded by: Austin Anderson  
Administrative Assistant, Director's Office