Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Joint Meeting of the Art & Education and Operations Committees

Reynolds Lecture Hall

23 June 2016, 10:30am

There were present:

Susan S. Goode, Co-Chair, Art & Education Committee

Ivan P. Jecklin, Co-Chair, Art & Education Committee

Karen C. Abramson

Tyler Bishop

Cindy Conner

Dr. Betty Neal Crutcher, MPH

W. Birch Douglass, III

Terrell Luck Harrigan

Jil Womack Harris

Dr. Monroe E. Harris, Jr.

Keith R. Kissee

Dr. Paul S. Monroe

Sara O’Keefe  
Dr. Claude G. Perkins

Michele Petersen

Michael J. Schewel

Charles H. Seilheimer, Jr.

Shantaram Talegaonkar

By invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director

Stephen D. Bonadies

Dr. Lee Anne Hurt Chesterfield

Claudia E. Keenan

Dr. Mitchell Merling

Rebecca L. Morrison

Hossein Sadid

Cameron O’Brion

Dr. Michael R. Taylor

Cathy Turner

Absent:  
Thomas F. Farrell, II, Co-Chair, Operations Committee

Satya Rangarajan, Co-Chair, Operations Committee

Kenneth M. Dye

Cynthia Kerr Fralin

Richard B. Gilliam

Margaret N. Gottwald

Kenneth S. Johnson, Sr.

Steven A. Markel

Dr. Judith Niemyer

Stanley J. Olander

Pamela C. Reynolds

Mary Gray Shockey

William A. Royall, Ex-officio

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Goode and Mr. Jecklin called the meeting to order at 10:38 a.m.

1. MINUTES APPROVAL

**Motion:** proposed by Mr. Charles H. Seilheimer, Jr. and seconded by Dr. Monroe E. Harris, Jr. that the minutes of the last meeting of the Art and Education Committee held on the 16th of March be approved as distributed. Motion carried.

**Motion:** proposed by Mr. W. Birch Douglass III and seconded by Dr. Monroe E. Harris, Jr. that the minutes of the last meeting of the Operations Committee held on the 16th of March be approved as distributed. Motion carried.

1. ART AND EDUCATION REPORT

Dr. Taylor reviewed the upcoming exhibition, *The Rachel Mellon Lambert Collection of Jean Schlumberger*, which will be on view in the Evans Court Gallery from January 28 until June 19, 2017. The collection was acquired by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts two years ago from a bequest by Rachel Mellon Lambert and is the largest in the world of the French jewelry designer’s work. The checklist for this exhibition will encompass every piece in this collection. Dr. Merling, the curator for this exhibition, spoke in detail about the collection and its history, and discussed the details of this forthcoming exhibition.

In response to Ms. Abramson, Dr. Taylor confirmed that VMFA has not yet decided whether the exhibition will travel to other museums.

Next, Dr. Taylor presented VMFA’s schedule of exhibitions through FY2020—

*Gordon Parks: Back to Fort Scott*; July 23 – October 30, 2016; Evans Court Galleries

*Jasper Johns and Edvard Munch: Love, Loss, and the Cycle of Life*; November 19, 2016 – February 20, 2017; Lower Level Galleries

*Yves Saint Laurent: The Perfection of Style*; May 6 – August 27, 2017; Lower Level Galleries

*The Rachel Mellon Lambert Collection of Jean Schlumberger*; January 28 – June 19, 2017; Evans Court Galleries

*Hear My Voice: Native American Art of the Past and Present*; August 19 – November 26, 2017; Evans Court Galleries

*Wenceslaus Hollar: Baroque Etcher*; September 1 – November 25, 2018; Evans Court Galleries

*Terracotta Army: Legacy of the First Emperor of China*; Nocvember 18, 2017 – March 11, 2018; Lower Level Galleries

*The Crazy Years: Paris Fashion Designers and Art Deco*, 1910-1930; November 17, 2018 – February 24, 2019; Lower Level Galleries

*Awaken: A Tibetan Buddhist Journey to Enlightenment*; May 18 – August 18, 2019; Lower Level Galleries

*Hopper’s Hotels*; November 16, 2019 – March 8, 2020; Lower Level Galleries

Following his review of the exhibition schedule, Dr. Taylor announced VMFA’s receipt of a $1 million grant from an anonymous foundation which will support the creation of a program that will allow VMFA to serve a larger statewide audience per its 2020 Strategic Plan, as well as the hire of an in-gallery evaluation specialist. The program is still in its implementation phase and will include a Learn Portal, Orientation Gallery, and In-Gallery Distance Learning Studio.

In response to Ms. Ambramson, Dr. Taylor informed trustees that this program will reach constituents of all ages across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Dr. Taylor closed his division report by announcing two new staff members in the Art and Education Division who were both hired as result of competitive international searches. Courtney Freeman has been promoted from Exhibition Design Project Manager to Director of Exhibition Planning and Design.

Dr. Leo Mazow has been hired as Louise B. and J. Harwood Cochrane Curator and Head of the Department of American Art, joining VMFA from his previous role as Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Arkansas. Dr. Mazow’s first major VMFA exhibition, *Hopper’s Hotels*, will open in 2019.

Dr. Taylor confirmed that the search for the Sydney and Frances Lewis Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art has resulted in a top finalist, and VMFA is currently negotiating this candidate’s formal job offer.

In response to Ms. Goode, Dr. Taylor reminded trustees that the new Faberge Collection galleries will open to the public on October 22, 2016, and the opening gala will be held on October 19, 2016.

1. OPERATIONS REPORT

Mr. Bonadies discussed the status of three recent capital projects. VMFA has received bids for the Robinson House renovation project, which were higher than anticipated at approximately $4.4 million. The pre-qualification process for contractors will begin over the summer of 2016, aiming to bid on contractors in the late fall for mobilization by the early spring of 2017. The ground floor of the Robinson House will be dedicated to educating visitors about the history of VMFA’s grounds. Visit Richmond, the city’s tourism group, will have an office located in the Robinson House. The upper floors of the Robinson House will house staff offices.

Currently, Buildings & Grounds staff are also working to replace two air handling units in the main museum building, located near the Mellon Galleries. This project will coincide with the tour of the Mellon Collection and will not impact environmental conditions in these areas of the museum.

Lastly, Mr. Bonadies reviewed progress to date on the renovation of the Fabergé Collection galleries and catering kitchen, and trustees viewed the new floor plan. This project will increase the square footage of the Fabergé galleries threefold, allowing VMFA to display approximately 300 objects. Mr. Bonadies presented the itemized budget and funding sources for this project, recognizing The Council for its support through *Fine Arts and Flowers* and Mrs. Edie Cabiness. Construction costs for this project have been greater than first anticipated after seeking cost estimates from three independent contractors. Due to unforeseen staff changes in the Collections and Facilities Management Division, VMFA sourced the gallery design to an outside firm to finalize the drawings for these bids. VMFA is presently designing new digital interactives as well.

Mr. Sadid noted that the $630,000 difference in the budget for the latter project will be funded from Fabergé exhibition loan fees, which were targeted but not used in 2015.

Mr. Bonadies concluded his report by leading the trustees on a tour of the new Fabergé galleries, which are currently in construction.

There being no further business, Ms. Goode and Mr. Jecklin adjourned the meeting at 11:52 a.m.

Recorded by Rebecca L. Morrison

Executive Assistant to the Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Art and Education