

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
Tuesday, 20 September 2011, 11:15 am

Presiding: James W. McGlothlin, Co-Chair
Secretary: Ms. Suzanne Broyles

There were present:

James W. McGlothlin, Co-Chair
Karen C. Abramson
G. Moffett Cochran
John R. Curtis, Jr.
Ms. Susan S. Goode
Ms. Nancy H. Gottwald
Dr. Elizabeth F. Harris
Marlene A. Malek
Dr. Lindley T. Smith
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
Ms. Joan W. Murphy
Robin Nicholson
Ms. Alexis Vaughn

Absent:

Thomas F. Farrell II, Co-Chair
Mrs. Whitt W. Clement
Keith R. Kisse
Mrs. Stanley F. Pauley
Mrs. Deborah H. Quillen
Dr. Alvin J. Schexnider

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Co-chairman, James W. McGlothlin, called the meeting to order at 11:15 am and welcomed new Trustee Marlene Malek of McLean, Virginia.

II. MINUTES

Motion: proposed by Mr. McGlothlin and seconded by Dr. Smith that the minutes of the last meeting of the Art and Audience Committee held on the 16th of May 2011 be approved as distributed on the 13th of July 2011. Motion carried.

III. NEW TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

YouTube presentation—“Why social media is so important” – Robin Nicholson

Robin Nicholson, Deputy Director for Art and Education, showed the YouTube video *Social Media Revolution Socialnomics 2011*. Using a mass of statistics the video explained that social media is not a fad and the choice is not whether to use it, but how to use it. Mr. Nicholson said that social media and new technology were a critical part of the FY12 Strategic Plan initiatives that would be presented to the Full Board later for review and comment. The three presentations to follow would look at how they were being adopted in different areas of the Museum and statewide operations. He then introduced Alexis Vaughn, Deputy Director for Sales and Marketing.

VMFA social media and marketing initiatives – Alexis Vaughn

Alexis Vaughn informed the committee that we must adapt to the very fast paced social media marketing evolution, or revolution. She noted that VMFA goes for the best “bang for our buck” when choosing between traditional print and television ads, digital campaigns, social media, print & digital fusion or ongoing experimentation with things such as Living-Social. VMFA continues to invest in a combination of new and traditional, as some people will always read newspapers and watch television. Balancing our resources to increase our investment in new media, where the people are, and using social networks gets our word or brand out cohesively.

Ms. Vaughn told of our case study with Living-Social, a social media discount center that offers double the value deals for purchase. As an experiment we offered fifty percent off dinner at Amuse (\$50 value for \$25); and fifty percent off lunch at Amuse (\$30 value for \$15). Living-Social has 100,000 subscribers and we sold 188 dinner coupons (200 maximum offered) and 1192 lunch coupons (no maximum set). As of 9/18/11 the reported redemption rate was 49% for dinner with an overspend of 91% and 45% redeemed for lunch with an overspend of 70%. Fifty-one percent of the diners said they had never been to the Museum and 92% said they would return, giving us a positive return on the experiment with minimal cost.

Ms. Vaughn added that the rules of engagement with social media are: weight more toward generating dialog than commercials, keep content fresh and current, and monitor but don't censor (except where absolutely necessary). We have 29,000 social media followers, 4,000 daily post viewers, and our Klout score is 49 out of 100 (the average is about 20). Using social media keeps VMFA current and relevant to today's audiences and we will continue to invest in technology to enhance audience engagement.

Redefining the museum experience with new technology – Robin Nicholson

Mr. Nicholson said that we must now focus on key trends mentioned in *The Horizon Report*: abundance of resources and relationships offered by open content repositories and social networks, people expect to be able to work, learn, and study whenever and wherever they want to, and the

technologies we use are increasingly cloud-based, and our notions of IT support are decentralized. Collaboration and multi-disciplinarity are central to learning now.

He listed the technologies to watch in one year, mobile computing and open content; in two to three years, electronic books, augmented reality; and in four to five years, gesture-based computing and visual data analysis. He noted that Morgan Stanley Research estimates sales of smartphones will exceed those of PCs in 2012. Our goals are to enhance the visitor experience, enhance the social experience, and enhance our outreach. To reach these goals our next steps will be to evaluate platforms, delivery and content, evaluate the needs of our constituency, reorganize for efficient and effective implementation and to seek funding for new technology.

New technology and the permanent collection – Stephen Bonadies

Stephen Bonadies, Deputy Director for Collections and Facilities Management, gave a presentation on content management tools and the permanent collection. He noted that the computerized systems we are using now are very outdated so we are coming from behind. We need a Collections Management System (CMS) which is a searchable filing system that collates all the information on an object such as artist, title, exhibition and publication histories, provenance and acquisition information, and conservation records. Also needed is a Digital Asset Management System (DAM) which is a searchable collection of image/video/audio files showing object images, video clips and audio tour stops so that information can be retrieved quickly. Ideally information would flow between these two systems to ensure up to date content that can be tagged and delivered on any platform. Access to this information would give visitors a more meaningful experience.

Mr. Bonadies showed a slide of the Stuart Davis painting, *Little Giant Still Life*, from the VMFA collection and showed copies of telegrams from the artist from 1950 thanking the Museum's Director for the prize he won for what he considered his best painting and how the price of the painting was still being negotiated. We need to share these interesting stories about each piece with our visitors and upgrading our technology would allow for that. Mr. McGlothlin agreed that this major project would be absolutely marvelous and would make people linger longer and give us long term benefits as today's visitors want to know the stories behind each work of art. The cost of the systems mentioned is approximately \$350,000.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

No further business was brought before the Committee, and the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 12:22 pm.

Suzanne Broyles
Secretary of the Museum