Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Minutes of the Art and Collections Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 27, 2019, 9:00 – 10:00am

Theater Level Conference Room #1

There were present:

Tom Papa, Vice Chair

Karen C. Abramson

Cindy Conner

Anne Noland Edwards

David Goode

Margaret N. Gottwald

Paul Monroe

Michele Petersen

Pamela Reynolds

Monroe E. Harris, Jr., Ex-Officio

By Invitation

Alex Nyerges, Director

Stephen D. Bonadies

Carol Ann Bischoff

Gilbert Bland

Caprice Bragg

Joan Brock

Edie Cabaniss

Jeffrey Humber

Laura Keller

Cynthia Norwood

Suzy Szasz Palmer

John Henry Rice

Michael R. Taylor

Daniel Young

Absent:

Ivan P. Jecklin, Chair

Janet Geldzahler

Steven A. Markel

Mary Gray Shockey

William A. Royall, Jr.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Tom Papa called the meeting to order at 9:04am and welcomed the committee. He introduced the newest members of the board: Carol Ann Bischoff, Gilbert Bland, Joan Brock, Anne Noland Edwards, Jeffrey Humber, and Suzy Szasz Palmer.

**Motion:** proposed by Mr. Papa and seconded by Ms. Abramsonto approve the minutes of the Wednesday, December 12, 2018 Art and Collections Committee meeting as distributed. Motion approved.

Mr. Papa announced that VMFA curator Valerie Cassel Oliver and her co-curator, Naomi Beckwith, won the 2018 George Wittenborn Memorial Book Award for *Howardena Pindell: What Remains to Be Seen.* The committee applauded all of the staff involved with the catalog and exhibition.

1. AWAKEN EXHIBITION PRESENTATION

Next, Mr. Papa explained that each of the curators has presented a collection plan, so the committee will shift focus to exhibitions, beginning with *Awaken: A Tibetan Buddhist Journey Toward Enlightenment*. E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Curator of South Asian and Islamic Art John Henry Rice provided an overview of the exhibition, which is designed as an immersive experience in which visitors are guided through the phases of enlightenment using Buddhist art created as early as the 9th century and as recently as 2016. Visitors are invited to contemplate and reflect, disengaging from the noise of daily life. The art in the exhibition is pulled from the collections of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Asian Art Museum. Mr. Rice and exhibition designer Daniel Young discussed the design of the exhibition, including some of the installation challenges, sharing a model of the show.

1. MELLON GRANT UPDATE

Chief Conservator and Senior Deputy Director for Conservation and Collections Stephen Bonadies updated the committee on the pilot initiative in African Art funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Using the grant, the museum invested in staff and equipment for the Susan and David Goode Center in Advanced Study in Art Conservation, with the objective to conduct in-depth examination and analysis of more than 90 African objects. Another goal of the project was to provide training opportunities for students interested in the field of art conservation. The staff has shared the results of the studies in public forums like Science Pub RVA and will also host an upcoming symposium on the subject. In response to a question, Mr. Bonadies explained that the museum plans to raise endowment funds to support the new positions permanently.

1. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

**Motion:** proposed by Mr. Papa and seconded by Dr. Harris to adjourn the meeting at 10:00am. Motion approved.

Recorded by: Laura Keller

Assistant to the Secretary of the Museum