Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Minutes of the Education Committee Meeting

Tuesday, June 18, 2019, 1:30 – 2:45 pm

Theater Level Conference Room #1

There were present:

Jil Womack Harris, Chair

Betty Crutcher, Vice Chair

Lynette Allston

Maura Bisceglia

Kelly Bisogno (DOE)

Kenneth M. Dye

Anne Noland Edwards

Carolyn Garner

Absent:

Cherry Gardner

William A. Royall, Jr.

Rupa Tak

Hiter Harris

Monroe E. Harris Jr., Ex-Officio

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director

Jeffrey Allison  
Carol Ann Bischoff

Caprice Bragg

Joan Brock

Celeste Fetta

Martha Glasser

Terrell Harrigan

Jan Hatchette

Jeffrey Humber

Laura Keller

Courtney Morano

Cynthia Norwood

Karen Palen

Suzy Szasz Palmer

Jayne Shaw

Michael R. Taylor

Ta Thongnopnua

Kimberly Wilson

1. CALL TO ORDER

At 1:31pm, Chair Jil Harris called the meeting to order and welcomed the committee. She introduced new committee member Kelly Bisogno, the Fine Arts Coordinator for the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education.

1. MINUTES APPROVAL

**Motion:** proposed by Ms. Harris and seconded by Ms. Edwards to approve the minutes of the Tuesday, March 26, 2019 Education Committee meeting as distributed. Motion approved.

1. EDUCATION UPDATES

Chief Educator Celeste Fetta reported that VMFA hosted the Virginia Docent Exchange in April, attended by 120 docents and staff from 9 museums. Although keynote speaker Elif Gokcigdem’s flight was cancelled, she gave a presentation on empathy and museum pedagogy via the Evans Distance Learning system. Ms. Fetta also reported that the museum would be recruiting docents for the first time since 2012. They will be accepting applications over the summer, and then begin training new recruits to give tours of *Sunken Cities*.

Next, Ms. Fetta announced that VMFA was selected as one of the six institutions to receive a 2019 Kress Interpretation Fellowship. The museum will also be the artist-in-residence for the VCU School of Business for the coming school year, collaborating with the school on integrating creativity into the business curriculum.

1. VMFA ON THE ROAD/STATEWIDE UPDATES

Manager of Statewide Programs and Exhibitions Jeffrey Allison updated the committee on VMFA on the Road. Since its launch on October 30, 2018, the Artmobile has hosted 75,000 visitors in locations from Bristol to the Eastern Shore. The truck has participated in events like the Boardwalk Arts Fair in Virginia Beach, One Love Festival, and Accomack Celebrate Us. The museum has also started a new partnership with Shenandoah University, working with the college on an Artmobile residency, distance learning sessions, and artist workshops. There was a discussion of the current and future exhibition on the truck. Ms. Bischoff suggested an exhibition of artwork from Mali or another culture in the SOL curriculum. Mr. Allison explained that the museum also offers educator kits and activities related to the SOLs, including resources on Mali.

1. VISITOR-CENTERED EVALUATION

Interpretation Manager Courtney Morano provided an overview of interpretation and evaluation at VMFA. She emphasized the way visitor-centered evaluation can inform decision-making across the museum. She explained that the museum has used interviews, Go Pros, and counting visitors in individual galleries to track hot spots in the museum. She reported that the education department recently conducted an accessibility audit to identify areas where the museum could improve.

Next, Gallery Evaluation Specialist Ta Thongnopnua reviewed some of the insights from data collected so far. She explained that certain areas of the museum become hot spots, whether due to a popular work of art or due to a gallery’s function as a main thoroughfare. She explained that studying visitor behavior in galleries can help curators decide where to place objects they want to receive more attention or how to change label placement to increase engagement. She touched on improvements that can be made based on data. For example, data showed that visitors to the Fabergé galleries had a more positive experience when entering from the Tapestry Hall instead of the Marble Hall, so security associates can be trained to guide visitors to that entrance instead. She noted that the department would be expanding the hours of evaluation to include evenings and weekends, the Artmobile, and programs.

1. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:53pm.

Recorded by: Laura Keller

Assistant to the Secretary of the Foundation