Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Minutes of the External Affairs Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 19, 2019, 9:00am

Founders Conference Room & Publicly Posted Conference

There were present:

Kenneth Johnson, Chair

Martin J. Barrington

Ukay Jackson

Martha Glasser

Sara O'Keefe

Pamela C. Reynolds

By invitation

Carol Ann Bischoff

Caprice Bragg

Joan Brock

Kristine Craig

Jan Hatchette

Jody Green

Tom Gutenberger

Cynthia Norwood

Karen Palen

Hossein Sadid

Jayne Shaw

Charlie Whitaker

Absent:

Tyler Bishop, Vice Chair

Karen C. Abramson

Cindy Conner

Ankit Desai

Kenneth M. Dye

Janet Geldzahler

David Goode

Margaret N. Gottwald

Michele Petersen

William A. Royall, Jr.

Monroe E. Harris, Jr., Ex-officio

1. CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES APPROVAL

Chair Ken Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:01am and welcomed the committee members.

**Motion**: proposed by Mr. Barrington and seconded by Ms. Brock to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2019 meeting of the External Affairs Committee as distributed. Motion approved.

1. COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Deputy Director for Communications Jan Hatchette provided a marketing update on *Awaken: A Tibetan Buddhist Journey Toward Enlightenment,* which welcomed more than 18,500 visitors by June 16. Ms. Hatchette passed around collateral, including coasters that have been created for the exhibition. Additionally, advertising for VMFA exhibitions can now be found in the main hallway at Richmond’s International Airport. Ms. Hatchette also showed the committee a brief video interview featuring Dr. John Henry Rice, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Curator of South Asian and Islamic Art and co-curator of *Awaken*. Additionally, she reviewed marketing tactics for *Awaken* including a micro-influencer campaign. She noted that her team has also been working on scavenger hunts and pop-up yoga events to engage the community.

Next, Ms. Hatchette provided the committee with an update on *A Return to the Grand Tour: Micromosaic Jewels from the Collection of Elizabeth Locke*, noting that it has done extremely well thanks to Ms. Elizabeth Locke and Foundation Board member, Mr. John Staelin as they have provided support toward the exhibition’s marketing. The exhibition has been featured in *Elle Décor*, *Veranda Magazine*, and more, helping to boost VMFA’s national reputation. She noted that just as with *Awaken*, the catalogue for *Micromosaics* was designed in-house by the VMFA team.

She also discussed the recently opened exhibition, *Cosmologies from the Tree of Life: Art from the African American South* as well as the upcoming *Edward Hopper and the American Hotel*. Lastly, she shared an update with the committee regarding the opening of Jean Schlumberger: Twentieth Century Treasures from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts at the National Museum of China in Beijing on May 30, 2019. Ms. Hatchette noted that the exhibition extends VMFA’s international reach and reputation. Ms. Hatchette then responded to several queries and ideas regarding *Awaken* and its marketing reach as well as social media surrounding exhibitions overall.

1. ADVANCEMENT AND MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Next, Deputy Director for Advancement Tom Gutenberger introduced Kristine Craig, Director of Membership, to provide an update. She reminded the committee of steps that were taken to refresh the membership structure in January of 2019, and of the statewide partnership with other museums; at present, VMFA now has 37,000 members with 33,285 active households and 6,000 statewide members. Family/Dual memberships account for the majority of VMFA’s members. The group then discussed potential options for connecting with student members to keep them engaged with VMFA, including communication with local universities.

Ms. Craig then reviewed membership’s fiscal year 2021 goals based on anticipated attendance at the upcoming exhibition *Egypt’s Sunken Cities*. She noted a combination of acquisition and retention tactics, as well as the addition of a new team member to help with the process.

Given time constraints, the committee agreed to send any ideas regarding the Young Professionals Task Force to Ms. Craig or Mr. Gutenberger. Mr. Barrington also suggested that VMFA continue to connect with peer institutions regarding best practices for membership overall.

1. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

**Motion:** proposed by Mr. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Barrington to adjourn the meeting at 10:10am. Motion approved.

Recorded by: Jody Green

Administrative and Project Coordinator to the Director