Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Minutes of the of the Art and Collections Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 26, 2018, 9:00am

Theater Level Conference Center #1

There were present:

Tom Papa, Vice Chair

Karen C. Abramson

Janet Geldzahler

Margaret N. Gottwald

Dr. Monroe E. Harris, Jr.

Dr. Paul Monroe

Michele Petersen

By Invitation :

Alex Nyerges, Director

Jody Green

Tom Gutenberger

Laura Keller

Cynthia Norwood

William A. Royall, Jr.

Jayne Shaw

Dr. Michael R. Taylor

Absent:

Ivan P. Jecklin, Chair

David Goode

Steven A. Markel

Pamela Reynolds

Mary Gray Shockey

1. CALL TO ORDER

At 9:05am Vice Chair Tom Papa called the meeting to order and welcomed the committee.

**Motion:** proposed by Mr. Royall and seconded by Ms. Abramson to approve the minutes of the Thursday, June 14, 2018 Art and Collections Committee meeting as distributed. Motion approved.

1. MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY COLLECTION PLAN

Curator Valerie Cassel Oliver provided an overview of the Modern and Contemporary art collection and outlined her acquisition priorities. The collection begins chronologically with French Modernism and German Expressionism and extends to present day. She attributed the strength of the collection to the generosity of collectors like the Lewises, Fischers, and Royalls. Under the 2020 Strategic Plan, she has worked to acquire art by African Americans including photography, painting, sculpture, works on paper, and artist archives. She emphasized the importance of cultivating relationships with collectors and living artists. She also explained that the museum is working to locate additional artwork looted from the Fischer family collection.

She outlined her acquisition priorities: origins of modernism, especially Surrealism and Dadaism; international modernism in Africa and Asia; modern African American art; female and local artists; contemporary black photography; and commissioned, site-specific artwork to activate unused spaces in the museum.

1. PROVENANCE RESEARCH AND RESTITUTION IN MUSEUMS

Registrar Karen Daly provided an overview of the museums provenance research and restitution of looted artwork. She explained that the museum researches pieces in the collection to ensure the provenance is accurate. Many works looted by Nazis were renamed and given a fake provenance in order to sell them through dealers. The museum has participated in four restitution cases, with three works returned to the rightful heirs and one work donated to VMFA after being returned to the rightful heir by another institution. She explained that the full board will vote on whether to restitute *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints Nicholas of Tolentino and Sebastian*. The work belonged to an art dealer named Jacques Goudstikker, and the museum conducted extensive research into whether the work was sold fairly or under duress. The staff has recommended returning the painting to Goudstikker’s heir, Marei von Saher. Mr. Papa asked whether the museum would have a case against the gallery that sold the work to the museum, and Mr. Nyerges said that he would work with legal counsel and the museum staff to research the idea.

1. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00am

Recorded by: Laura Keller

Assistant to the Secretary of the Foundation