

## **Introduction**

In accordance with General Statute 140-5.14(10), the Board of Trustees of the North Carolina Museum of Art is pleased to submit this 2019-2020 Report. We offer this report as a governing body of the Museum, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

## **Facilities and Outreach**

The North Carolina Museum of Art remains one of North Carolina's top-ten visitor attractions and continues to maintain and expand its role as a leading state and regional arts institution with national and international acclaim. As the first major art museum in the nation to be formed by state legislation and funding, the NCMA has grown its collection from 139 paintings and sculptures to 4,691 works of art, 4,248 accessioned objects and 443 unaccessioned objects. The Museum includes the Ann and Jim Goodnight Museum Park in Raleigh and the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem. The NCMA consistently provides educational outreach through tours, classes, lectures, concerts, publications, and workshops; ensures preservation and safekeeping of the People's Collection; hosts public exhibitions; and showcases the work of North Carolina artists. Likewise, SECCA continues to host temporary exhibitions that promote contemporary art and emerging artists and to provide educational outreach in its geographical region.

In 2019, the Museum welcomed 718,102 visitors to its campus, and in 2020, the Museum proudly welcomed 1,059,350 visitors to its campus; in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 934,081 of the Museum's 2020 visitors spent time in the Museum Park. Typically, visitors enjoy a wide array of exhibitions and arts programming, and in the fall of 2019, the Museum featured the highly-successful exhibition *Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism*, drawing just over 98,000 visitors and placing it in the Museum's top-five most-attended exhibitions. The Museum continues to educate and engage over 100 touring docents, and while school and public tours were paused starting in March 2020, more than 6,464 individuals (4,638 students and 1,826 adults) enjoyed Museum tours from January 2019 to that time. The Museum continues to grow visitorship and programming in the 164-acre Ann and Jim Goodnight Museum Park, which has seen its highest visitation during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Summer 2019, the Museum's highly successful summer concert and movie series had its final season under the leadership of George Holt and welcomed North Carolinian bands like Mipso as well as national stars, including Lyle Lovett and Chaka Khan. During a regular season, this programming

continues to attract over 50,000 visitors annually. The NCMA is a Museum that offers indoor and outdoor opportunities to have compelling encounters with the arts, nature, and people.

The Board of Trustees is proud that the NCMA serves as a significant resource for educators at all academic levels across the state through tours; programs; professional development; and digital resources, including NCMA Learn, which served more than 150,000 educators and their students in this period and engaged individuals in 99 of our 100 counties. In 2019, more than 30,000 visitors learned about cultures spanning 5,000 years through self-guided and docent-led tours at the Museum, and in the 2019-2020 academic year, 4,524 students participated in virtual field trips. In the 2020-2021 school year and in the absence of Museum tours, we have served 1,919 students through virtual field trips and are currently scheduled to serve 2,376 more for a total of 4,295 public, private, and homeschooled students. The NCMA's virtual field trip program has grown significantly in the last five years, becoming a national standard among art museums and enabling us to serve students across North Carolina despite the barriers posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Summer 2019, the NCMA welcomed two new associate curators of European art, Dr. Lyle Humphrey, a specialist in early Italian art, and Dr. Michele Frederick, a specialist in Dutch and Northern European art. In Summer 2020, and with funding from the Mellon Foundation, the Museum hired an assistant curator, Maya Brooks, for a three-year position to assist with exhibitions and the reinstallation of the permanent collection. In the last two years, the Museum has added 130 works of art by North Carolinian, American, and international artists. Sculpture acquisitions include *Saul under the Influence of the Evil Spirit*, a gift from Anne Faircloth and now fully restored, King Saul sits in the American galleries listening to David play the harp. Additionally, the Museum acquired a sculpture titled *Corrugated* by Simone Leigh, an American artist who was recently chosen to represent the United States at the Venice Biennale in 2022; an abstract outdoor sculpture, *Union*, by North Carolina artist Hoss Haley; and sculptures by South African artist Wim Botha and Cambodian artist Sopheap Pich. Contemporary acquisitions include a painting, *Toy Pieta*, by North Carolina artist and renowned musician Scott Avett and a major video and mixed media installation, *KABOOM!*, by the South African artist William Kentridge, who is considered to be one of the most important artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Twenty-seven photographs by both American and international artists were added to the collection, including twelve works by North Carolina photographer Ralph Burns. The African art collection expanded significantly with 79 works, primarily gifts from private collections, featuring masks and masquerade

costumes, ceramics, textiles, paintings and sculptural objects. A 19<sup>th</sup> century American still life painting by William Harnett, a 17<sup>th</sup> century portrait by Dutch artist Gerrit van Honthorst, and a 20<sup>th</sup> century American painting by Jacob Lawrence were also added to the collection. The Museum also continued to build its nationally recognized Judaic collection with several works, including an 18<sup>th</sup> century Torah Shield, an 18<sup>th</sup> century Ceremonial Beaker, and a contemporary Havdalah set; at this time, the Museum's Judaic collection remains among the top three in the nation.

### **Staff and Volunteers**

At the heart of the Museum is a talented staff of curators, conservators, educators, programmers, designers, horticulturists, visitor experience staff, and more. Many staff members have made a career serving the people of North Carolina, caring for and cultivating its most valuable collection while simultaneously enhancing public education across North Carolina, creating a gathering space for artists and community members, and developing the largest Museum-based art park in the United States.

We are also proud to boast a committed volunteer team of 250 individuals who continue to support our staff and visitors in multiple areas campus wide. This team of volunteers alongside our docents contributed 23,421 hours of service in 2019 and 10,721 hours of service in 2020; the reduced hours in 2020 are an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. From the galleries to the Park and trails, volunteers typically greet visitors; support wayfinding, camps, community programming; maintain the property; and take part in ongoing training and education to support public tours. While much of this work has been paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are grateful that the NCMA's committed volunteers have continued to participate in weekly education seminars and various training opportunities.

At the heart of this volunteer effort are the members of our own Board of Trustees and the members of the NCMA Foundation Board. These individuals devote significant time and expertise to numerous Museum projects and raise substantial funds for Museum initiatives, including community-based programming and art acquisition.

### **Recent Initiatives and Coming Attractions**

The NCMA's director, Dr. Valerie Hillings, came to the Museum from the Guggenheim in November 2018. Upon arrival, Dr. Hillings began leading internal and external stakeholders in the crafting of a

2020-2025 Strategic Plan that focuses on five key goal areas: collections and exhibitions, education and outreach, Museum Park, Museum identity, and operational excellence and fiscal sustainability.

A signature component of this strategic plan is the reinstallation of the Museum's collection in 2022 in conjunction with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the state legislative appropriation of \$1 million dollars to purchase the People's Collection; the last full rehang was in 2010 when West Building was inaugurated. The reinstallation aims to retain aspects of the traditional geographical and chronological organization of art museum collections and more current approaches, which include galleries that present thematic narratives to highlight both likenesses and contrasts in human experience across space and time. The strategic plan also places greater significance on statewide outreach, outlining partnerships with the Cardinal Libraries and other agencies within DNCR and emphasizing a shift in onsite to offsite and digital programming in an effort to engage more North Carolinian students and citizens.

In Spring 2020, the Museum had to rethink how it delivers consistent programming and outreach in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Though numerous education programs were already offered on virtual platforms, the Museum, through a truly collaborative cross-departmental effort, quickly launched the NCMA Recommends series to meet both old and new audiences where they were - at home. The NCMA Recommends, which features an object in the collection and bolsters audiences' engagement with the object through thematic online programming that ranges from Slow Art Appreciation, film panels, studio workshops, family art-making activities, and musical interchanges. The series highlighted 24 objects from March 28, 2020 to December 31, 2020 with over 10,000 participants engaged through its various virtual programs. We are pleased this work continues in 2021 and will continue beyond as it has given the Museum opportunities to engage with individuals across our state, our nation, and countries around the world; one notable NCMA Recommends panel discussion brought participants from 5 different continents.

Growth in the Ann and Jim Goodnight Museum Park has been significant since its 2016 expansion, and the COVID-19 pandemic and its encouragement of outdoor activity has brought our highest visitorship to date. We are excited to be breaking ground in winter 2021 on a welcome center as part of a Wake County grant; this building will also house our State Park Rangers as well as members of our visitor experience team, linking campus-wide security operations with public safety and information services in

the Park. The Museum was successful in its partnership with the City of Raleigh to increase transportation options to the NCMA campus; there is now bus service, Route 27, to campus and a Citrix bike-share station. These initiatives serve the citizens of our state, improving citizens' wellbeing and access to art, nature, and people.

Enhancing Park visitorship through our Art in the Environment initiative continues; the Art in the Environment fund invests in outdoor sculpture, providing engaging, accessible, and meaningful experiences for the people of North Carolina as well as visitors to our state. Most recently, the Art in the Environment fund has facilitated the installation of significant temporary works, long-term loans, and permanent sculptures, including art by North Carolinian Daniel Johnston as well as Heather Hart, Jaime Hayon, Leonardo Drew, George Rickey, Joan Miro, and Ellsworth Kelly. This summer, the Museum Park will showcase a significant permanent sculptural installation by Danish artist Jeppe Hein. We are excited to offer visitors opportunities to engage with both nature and art in the Museum Park.

The Museum has continued to provide multigenerational audiences with exhibitions, lectures, classes, and events that reflect the citizens of North Carolina and engage participants both on the Museum's campus and virtually. This work is reflected in recent acquisitions, such as Simone Leigh's *Corrugated*; recent exhibitions, such as *Front Burner*, which provided a survey of contemporary North Carolina painting; *Christopher Holt: Contemporary Frescoes, Faith, and Community*, which highlighted an Asheville-based fresco artist; and partner exhibitions with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Boys and Girls Club featuring student work. In 2020, our educators have offered teacher professional development that explores global connections and science through art, virtual field trips that have reached nearly 2,000 students since September 2020, and collection-based art kits that are being distributed across the state to both elementary school and community programs. Likewise, our 2020 programming drew on both internal creativity and external collaborators to present programs focused on indigenous North Carolina voices, musicians in the galleries, the talents of local artists, free programming for teen audiences, panel discussions addressing art and society, and community projects across the state. The NC Museum of Art will continue to expand upon this work as we look ahead to 2021 and beyond.

Looking ahead, the Museum is excited to be opening *Golden Mummies of Egypt* in March 2021 and bringing an oft-requested exhibition to the visiting public followed by *Mucha and Art Nouveau* in

October 2021. Dr. Hillings has also prioritized a focus on collection-based shows. Supported by a Mellon Grant received in 2019, current and upcoming shows explore the history of the collection, photography, art and accessibility, and art and nature.

## **Needs and Concerns**

### ***Urgent Needs***

The NCMA needs to address the failing system of window shades and resulting lighting issues in West Building. These shades intend to block direct sunlight, and the interior curtains control ambient light in the galleries, working to maintain appropriate light levels for the collection. These systems have developed maintenance issues that need to be addressed as soon as possible to maintain the integrity of the People's Collection. We are grateful that the General Assembly included funds to address this urgent need in the fiscal year 2020 budget; the need for this funding remains critical.

There are immediate operational needs the Museum must address: staffing; operational funding; and four specific projects, the West Building entry doors, bridge and culvert repairs, Park equipment, and Voice-Over IP System. To reinstall the People's Collection, to expand fully in the digital realm following the COVID-19 pandemic, and to deliver high-quality outreach across the state, we are requesting an appropriation expansion. The four specific projects allow the NCMA to meet ADA and safety standards in West Building and the Museum Park, to reduce contractual and rental costs, and to transition to a VOIP in alignment with statewide shifts.

### ***Other Important Needs***

When built in 1983, the NCMA Art Conservation Center was state-of-the-art, but the scientific and best practice changes in the field of conservation as well as the growth of the collection have left this space inadequate in caring for the People's Collection. A significant investment in the Art Conservation Center is necessary for these reasons, and a shift in its location to the entry level of East Building will bring the traditional behind-the-scenes care of the People's Collection to the people. This investment will support existing and future partnerships with universities, allows paintings and sculptures such as *Bacchus* and *King Saul* to be conserved on view, and will make the NCMA a national leader in conservation science.

The Joseph M. Bryan, Jr. Amphitheater, soon 25 years old, requires renovation to support the Museum's current and future performing arts programming, which the Museum will be expanding to include

dance, theater, and festivals. This renovation will result in new restrooms to serve Park visitors year round; expanded seating, allowing increased participation in Museum events and meeting ADA requirements; permanent weatherproof lighting and sound infrastructure; and capacity for festivals and large-scale performative collaborations.

East Building windows, lighting, and electrical infrastructure need to be updated to meet current environmental, energy-efficient standards and to meet our collection and programmatic needs, particularly in the realm of multimedia objects and performing arts.

### **Closure**

The Board of Trustees has been partnering with Dr. Hillings, the NCMA staff, the NCMA Foundation Board, and the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to identify and prioritize the maintenance needs of the Museum and their costs. We respectfully ask the General Assembly to work with us immediately to meet the urgent needs of the North Carolina Museum of Art, one of North Carolina's major attractions and an educational and historical treasure.

This report is respectfully submitted this day, February 15, 2021, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the North Carolina Museum of Art.

Gratefully,

Joyce Fitzpatrick  
Chair, NCMA Board of Trustees