



Annual Report FY17

Wiregrass Museum of Art

10/1/16 - 9/30/17

On behalf of all of us at the Wiregrass Museum of Art, thank you for supporting the mission and vision of WMA in 2017. This past year brought about new education programs, larger audiences for exhibitions, and more opportunities to highlight the Alabama arts community. Alongside the numbers in this report, you'll read words and sentiments from area residents and out of town visitors who experienced a personal connection to the inspiration and creativity happening every day at WMA. These stories are equally important as statistics and records: they reflect the remarkable impact that an art museum can have on an individual's life.

We are grateful to the City of Dothan and Houston County Commission, WMA's corporate members and individual members, donors, grant-making institutions, and community partners who provide consistent support for visual art education and exhibitions in the Wiregrass.

We hope that this FY17 Annual Report, with its numbers, narratives, quotes, and summaries, will deepen your commitment to the Wiregrass Museum of Art. Your support is essential to providing for the cultural needs of the Wiregrass community, and we sincerely thank you.

Dana-Marie Lemmer
Director

Andy Gosselin
President, Board of Trustees

Innovation in Art Education

New Program, Long-Term Impact

WMA's education department has, for many years, responded to significant needs in area public schools. Without formalized, K-12 art education, students are missing key components in creative, intuitive learning, and WMA continually seeks to fill in gaps in visual arts instruction. With feedback from area educators, WMA transitioned Smudges: 3rd Grade Outreach into a field trip reimbursement program called Bus on Us, which launched in August 2017. The program is a response to the long-term needs of Wiregrass students, and provides yearly opportunities for students to have significant, hands-on experiences in visual art. Bringing students to the museum allows them greater access to exhibitions, promotes the educational value of field trips, and grows their commitment to civic participation. It also builds students' creative thinking skills, as well as tolerance, empathy, and an understanding of historical context through art.¹

Bus on Us will more than triple the reach of the Smudges program, and is forging stronger relationships between area educators and museum staff. Funding for this program is provided by the Houston County Commission and the Southeast Alabama Community Foundation.

¹ Education Next 'The Educational Value of Field Trips'. 2014.

Growth in Program Attendance and Engagement

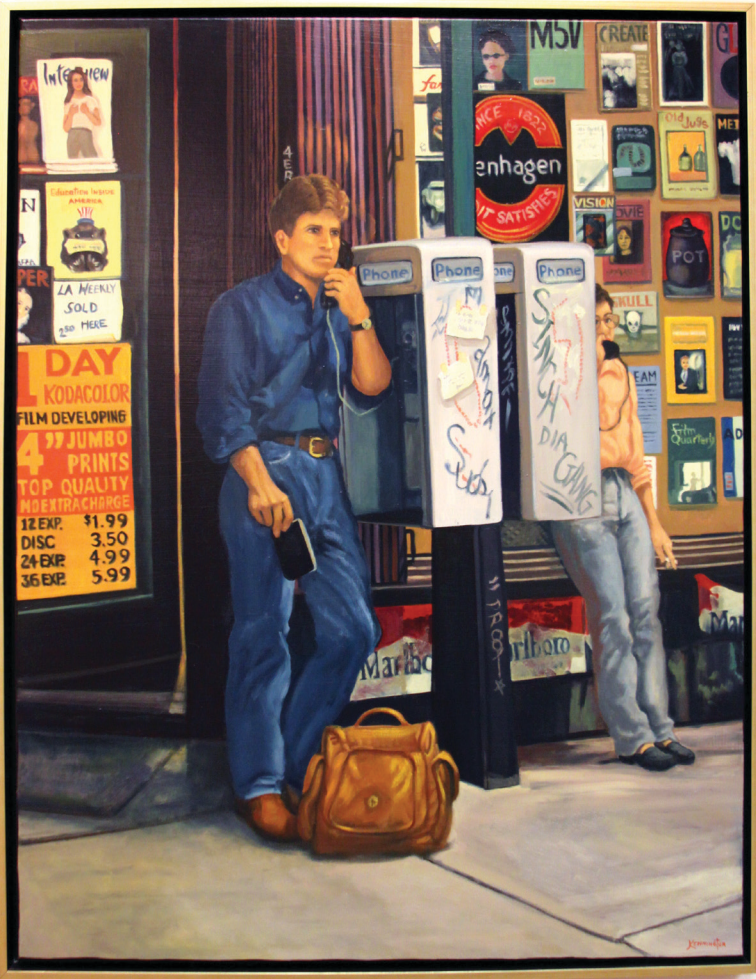
WMA's longest running program, First Saturday Family Day, experienced significant growth in FY17. The come-and-go, hands-on art workshop held each first Saturday of the month now averages over 100 participants monthly in its four-hour timeframe. Other programs like Screen on the Green and Youth Art Classes also contributed to the rise in this program's audience. Summer camps, including WMA's traditional in-house camps, explored more advanced mediums and techniques and expanded offerings to teens. Outreach summer camps, with support from the Wiregrass Foundation, provided the same enriching camp experiences to participating students at the



Wiregrass Boys & Girls Club and Boys & Girls Club Hawk Houston at no charge to the students.

Artist-related programming created opportunities for adult learners to discover and cultivate their own creativity, too. Artist workshops from Darius Hill, Cindy Wagner, Sarah Marshall, and Susie Bowman and artist lectures from Guadalupe Lanning Robinson, Darius Hill, and Mark Leputa gave area residents accessibility

to distinguished artists and facilitated one-on-one learning environments. Weekly youth art classes and monthly adult art classes at WMA built confidence of artists of all ages with new skills and techniques in a group classroom setting.



Above: Dale Kennington, *Last Attempt*, 2014, Oil on canvas. Anonymous gift.



Above: Cindy Wagner, *Falling to the Earth*, 2015, digital collage and antique frame. Museum purchase with funds from Elaine Johnson.



Above: Cindy Wagner, *Bric-a-Brac*, 2015, digital collage and antique frame. Museum purchase with funds from Jane Williams.

“ Art is beyond middle school and beyond high school. There is an opportunity for these kids to stay engaged even as an adult in our community. We’re going to utilize those bus trips so they understand this is a lifelong love of learning and there is a place for it in the community. - Maria Johnson, Beverlye Magnet School Principal ”

Acquisitions and Collections Management

WMA added three new works to its Permanent Collections; two from Huntsville artist Cindy Wagner. *Bric-a-Brac* and *Falling to the Earth* reflect the artist’s interest in the natural world through digital mediums. Both works were on display in Wagner’s *Guest Room in the Unconscious Mind* exhibition held from January 20th - March 25th.

Last Attempt by Dothan artist Dale Kennington was also added to the Permanent Collections. The artwork has been a focal teaching point and source of inspiration for students on field trips this year.

In addition to new works added to the Permanent Collections, museum staff continued to make progress on a multi-year project in collections management with support from funding from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. Through careful records management, including object numbering, digitization of records, and cross-referencing, museum staff has been steadily improving its collection inventory practices, and this work will allow WMA to more efficiently access its resources for exhibitions. In the future, this ongoing work will allow the museum to give improved access to the Permanent Collections to artists, educators, other art institutions, and researchers.

12 Months of Art

An Ongoing Commitment to Alabama Artists

WMA's 2017 exhibition schedule presented a platform for Alabama artists to show their evolving practices, and provided Wiregrass residents with plentiful opportunities to learn directly from them at artist lectures and workshops. With fifteen exhibitions featuring new and diverse works, the museum provided a channel for well-established artists to continue to tell their stories, as well as opened new doors to some artists for their first solo museum exhibition.

As we entered into a three-year period of Alabama bicentennial celebrations (2017-19), WMA's ongoing commitment to Alabama artists has become even more in focus. The museum's galleries dedicated to the Permanent Collection featured work exclusively from Alabama artists, including Dothan's own Dale Kennington, and other prominent artists like Scott Stephens, Amy Pleasant, and Gary Chapman. Butch Anthony's *Museum of Wonder* exhibition brought to life the 2017 bicentennial theme, "Discovering Our Places," by recreating his art environment in Seale, Alabama, and connecting Wiregrass residents to the distinct cultural and historical geography of a neighboring rural location in the state. WMA produced a catalog for this exhibition, giving an expanded look at the artist in context to the Alabama arts community.

FY 2017 exhibition support was provided by the Alabama State Council on the Arts and The Daniel Foundation of Alabama.

“ WMA is the visual arts hub of southeastern Alabama and provides high quality arts experiences for thousands of people each year. ASCA is proud to support these efforts that directly benefit Alabama artists as well as many thousands of visitors and students who will attend the exhibitions and participate in related programming. - Elliot Knight, Visual Arts Program Manager for the Alabama State Council on the Arts ”

Selections from the Permanent Collection

Ongoing

Assimilation: From Clay to Cotton

Works By Guadalupe Lanning Robinson
July 21-Dec 31, 2016

Southern Abstraction

October 21-December 31, 2016

Bud Harris - Firmly Planted in the Black Belt

October 31-December 31, 2016

Soul Glow: A Black Experience

Works By Darius Hill
January 20- February 18, 2017

Connected

Works By Susie Bowman
January 20-June 24, 2017

Guest Room in the Unconscious Mind

Works By Cindy Wagner
January 20-March 25, 2017

Youth Art Month/Out of the (Art) Box

March 1-31, 2017

Helen Keller Art Show of Alabama

April 1-May 13, 2017

documentingBlues

Works By Jenn Ocken
April 21-June 24, 2017

From Here to There: Printmaking in Alabama

April 21-June 24, 2017

Red, White, Blue, and Black All Over

May 24-July 1, 2017

Museum of Wonder

July 21-September 30, 2017

Full Circle: A Decade in the Deep South

Works By Mark Leputa
July 21-December 30, 2017

“ I came yesterday for Yard Party for Art, and got to view Museum of Wonder. I was moved nearly to tears by Butch Anthony's work. It's beautiful to experience his views on the fragility of mortality. I had a fantastic experience and when we roll through Dothan again, we are definitely making a stop at WMA first! - Kate M. ”



Communication and Development

In FY17, WMA's external affairs focused on educating the general public on the museum's offerings, promoting its role as a cultural gathering-space, and building relationships within the business community. Significant local media coverage from traditional media outlets expanded the museum's reach, and the museum's social media following grew by 20% over the year.

Museum staff took part in National Museums Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C., in February, relaying the importance of a visual art museum and museum funding for rural communities in Alabama to elected representatives. Through increased advocacy at the local, state, and federal level, staff and board worked more diligently throughout the past year to educate leaders on the value of WMA for area residents.

Event fundraising for WMA served to boost the museum's profile with new audiences in the Wiregrass, celebrating art, community, food, and drink at Wine Experience and Yard Party for Art for a combined income of \$24,279. Fundraising events raised awareness of WMA's role in the region, built

community goodwill, and provided truly unique cultural experiences for residents and museum supporters to enjoy, whether that was tasting an Italian wine, enjoying musical acts from around the Southeast, or being an active part of an outdoor art installation.

This year's implementation of the corporate member program strengthened new and existing relationships in the business community, and built the basis for multi-year agreements of support that will grow WMA's Annual Fund. The corporate member program allows corporate leaders to re-invest in the arts and culture sector of the Wiregrass as a whole, and within their own organizations through the benefit of museum memberships for their employees. WMA's corporate members are advocates for the arts, and have a keen understanding of the mutually beneficial opportunities for economic and social growth between the business and arts communities.

Generosity from grant-funding organizations fulfilled WMA's programming needs and the museum thanks the following for their gifts to art education and exhibitions:

The Daniel Foundation of Alabama

\$30,000 for Exhibitions and Programming

Alabama State Council on the Arts

\$10,000 for Exhibitions and Programming
\$5,000 for Collections Management Project
\$33,000 for Alabama Bicentennial Projects

Wells Fargo Foundation

\$5,000 for First Saturday Family Day

Wiregrass Foundation

\$5,000 for Outreach Summer Camps

Arts License Tag Fund

\$4,000 for Youth Art Education

Southeast Alabama Community Foundation

\$2,500 for Bus on Us and Art Education
Technology

The Year Ahead

In 2018, WMA looks to lead the regional conversation on the importance of the arts for the Wiregrass while maintaining a high level of excellence in art education and exhibitions. Technology will play a new role in programming, expanding current resources to meet needs of area educators and magnifying learning for in-gallery visitors of all ages. The benefits of highly accessible art education and a focus on implementing creativity as a workforce development skill are areas of long-term impact that WMA will continue to communicate to partners in regional school systems and in the business community. We thank our members and donors for their continued support, and look to the year ahead with great enthusiasm!



301

Member Households

185

students from Boys & Girls Clubs in outreach summer camps

134%

growth in tours

100%

giving from Board of Trustees and Staff

34

media interviews

20%

increase of social media followers

17

total programs

15

exhibitions

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Gifts of \$1,000+

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Support

WMA's Board of Trustees and Staff give sincere thanks to the companies and individuals who financially support the museum's mission, and who advocate for WMA's role in the community. Listings in this section reflect membership and donations for the timeframe of October 1, 2016 - September 30, 2017. Support received outside of this timeframe will be listed in the FY18 Annual Report.

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October 1, 2016 - September 30, 2017

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