

Annual Report FY18

Wiregrass Museum of Art

10/1/17 - 9/30/18

On behalf of the Wiregrass Museum of Art's board and staff, thank you for your support in 2018. We are grateful to those who give generously to bolster WMA's mission to inspire lifelong learning through visual art, including the City of Dothan and Houston County Commission, WMA's corporate and individual members, donors, foundations, and community partners.

With strong support from the City of Dothan, WMA continues to provide free admission for all, improving the daily lives of our neighbors throughout the tri-state Wiregrass region through access to visual art and art education. Without the economic barrier of admission costs, Wiregrass students and residents find a place where they can discover their own creativity and can learn from others, making our communities more culturally aware, socially connected, innovative, and engaged.

This FY18 Annual Report presents a look at the museum's work and progress made over the past twelve months. We hope that you will take the time to read and discover more about the museum's accomplishments and future goals, and that you will be inspired to become more involved at WMA in the year to come.

Thank you for believing in the transformative power of art.

Dana-Marie Lemmer
Director

Mike Owen
President, Board of Trustees

Education Initiatives

WMA advocates for visual art as an essential component of comprehensive K-12 education, and works with regional school systems to provide access to broad educational resources. According to research compiled by Americans for the Arts, "In early childhood, the arts can boost IQ and get kids school-ready. As young people move toward adolescence, participating in arts programs shows significant improvement in conflict resolution, future orientation, critical response, and career readiness. Arts participation also correlates with higher rates of tolerance and lower rates of juvenile delinquency and truancy."

The Bus on Us program, which provides limited transportation reimbursement for field trips to the museum (for Dothan City and Houston County schools), grew this year to bring in a total of 1,727 students and 257 accompanying educators and parents. WMA's long-term strategy with this program strengthens relationships between educators and museum staff, builds students' civic participation and museum-going behaviors, and provides significant, cumulative art education experiences annually for students each year during their K-12 education.

While WMA encourages the use of its Bus on Us program for in-person learning in the museum's galleries and studio including hands on instruction, it also responds to the needs of educators statewide with a free, digital curriculum. Since the launch of the online curriculum on WMA's updated, more interactive website in January 2018, 142 users have accessed the digital lessons, which are written and designed in-house. Each lesson focuses on an object in WMA's Permanent Collection, and covers interdisciplinary subject matter, linking

visual art activities with subjects like Alabama history, English, Social Studies, Science, and Technology. These educator resources won an Honorable Mention in the 2018 Southeastern Museums Conference Technology Competition in Jackson, Mississippi.

WMA made available new resources to visitors to the galleries this year through hands-on technology and interactive in-gallery learning. Gallery guides focusing on works in the Permanent Collection were created to provide context for artists' lives and inspiration, and a distinct website (alabamareckoner.com) gave visitors the opportunity to see artist studios and interviews in longer formats on touchscreen tablets in the galleries.

With accessibility as an important part of WMA's education initiatives, summer provided extra opportunity to bring in area students for hands-on learning. Outreach summer art camps and field trips hosted 222 students from the Hawk Houston Youth Enrichment Center, Wiregrass Boys and Girls Club, and Dothan City Schools middle schools. These camps and trips were provided at no cost to students or organizations through a partnership with the Wiregrass Foundation.

WMA partnered this year with other local organizations to address shared initiatives in lifelong learning, including the Dothan Education Foundation, Southeast Alabama Community Theatre, The Saliba Center's HIPPPY Program (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters), and Vaughn-Blumberg Services.

"We've been to museums before and we just would glance and keep moving. Here, however, you have pulled them into the smaller details of the works of art. You had them all eating out of the palm of your hand, they were so engaged. I know that there are 3 or 4 works that he will be talking about when we leave."

– Visiting Homeschool Family



A Place to Gather

WMA has prioritized continuity, excellence, and personal connection in its programming over the past year, with long-running programs like First Saturday Family Day and reorganized programs like Third Thursday continuing to build new audiences. Each of WMA's 17 annual programs responds to a community need, providing physical space and a platform for dialogue for cultural conversation and civic dialogue.

Art After Hours, Write Night, and Screen on the Green were incorporated this year into the monthly, ongoing series known as Third Thursday, which offers extended hours at the museum, with special programming each month. This ongoing series provides avenues for residents and visitors to be an active part of the arts community in Dothan through hands-on creation and enjoyment of the museum beyond daily visits. Third Thursdays fulfill WMA's commitment to cultivating a cultural gathering space for its Wiregrass neighbors.

"I am so impressed by the many talented students found here in the Wiregrass. The visual art in the exhibition and the spoken word pieces presented at Youth Write Night prove that the next generation is thoughtful, capable, and eager to share their point of view."

– Write Night attendee



Top: The crowd at October's Art After Hours

Bottom: Screen on the Green

Acquisitions + Collections Management



Above: Pinky/MM Bass, *Reflections of Rhea*, 1990, Silver gelatin print from Polaroid Type 665. Gift of the artist.

In 2018, WMA added one new work to its Permanent Collection from Alabama artist Pinky/MM Bass. *Reflections of Rhea*, a double exposure self-portrait, was exhibited as part of the Alabama Reckoner exhibition at WMA in Spring 2018. The Wiregrass Museum of Art is pleased to bring Bass's work into its Permanent Collection in its continued commitment to preserving Alabama's rich cultural heritage, and is grateful to the artist for her generous donation.

WMA was accepted this year into the Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP) program, a highly competitive national program with The Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. As one of 81 selected museums in the nation, WMA was selected into the CAP program in a highly competitive year, with 60% more applicants than in the 2017 program year.

The CAP program provides small and mid-sized museums with partial funding toward a general conservation assessment. The assessment



Above: CAP Assessor David Goist inspects works from WMA's Permanent Collection.



Above: Collections and buildings specialists David Goist and Bill McCrea worked one-on-one with WMA staff and board to complete a two-day study of the museum's facilities and collections.

is a study of all of the institution's collections, buildings, and building systems, as well as its policies and procedures relating to collections care. Participants who complete the program receive an assessment report with prioritized recommendations to improve collections care. CAP is often a first step for small institutions that wish to improve the condition of their collections. WMA's assessment occurred in September 2018, and the finalized report will be used by WMA's Board of Trustees to prioritize ongoing collections care initiatives and building and capital plans in the years to come.

As a visual arts museum with a mission to collect significant works of art from early 20th century to present, WMA is dedicated to caring for and using those works as the basis for exhibitions and educational programs. With over 700 objects in the museum's Permanent Collection, holdings consist primarily of works on paper, and includes work from acclaimed Alabama artists, including Dale Kennington, Gary Chapman, Carolyn Sherer, and Scott Stephens, among others.

12 Months of Art

An Ongoing Commitment to Alabama Artists

With continued focus on artists who live and work in Alabama and the Southeast, WMA presented 16 total exhibitions in FY18, showcasing diverse mediums and themes throughout the year. Special guest curator Marcia Weber presented a significant exhibition of folk and self-taught art in *Folktopia: American Self-Taught Art*; *Alabama Reckoner*, WMA's second in a three-part series of Alabama Bicentennial exhibitions, highlighted the richness of the Alabama artist community and examined the "Honoring Our People" theme with narratives of artist Doug Baulos' life in the exhibition's corresponding catalogue; *B18: Wiregrass Biennial* introduced area audiences to 41 emerging artists from eight states across the region by showcasing new works that emphasize the studio practice of artists working today.

While providing exhibiting artists with exposure to new audiences, the museum also supported the career advancement of regional artists with prizes for *B18: Wiregrass Biennial*, awarded to Chiharu Roach (People's

Choice Award for *My American Ears*, \$1,000) and Elysia Mann (Judge's Prize for *Reading Narcissus*, \$1,000). Prizes highlight the museum's commitment to supporting the studio practice of artists living and working in the South.

WMA showed the work of 86 artists, through solo and group exhibitions, and highlighted the work of 173 K-12 students in *Youth Art Month* and *The Helen Keller Art Show of Alabama* exhibitions. Additionally, WMA showcased the work of 12 artists from the museum's Permanent Collection, many from Alabama in celebration of Alabama's Bicentennial.

The final bicentennial exhibition, *Semiotic Compass*, was installed in WMA's garden in Summer 2018. The functional sculpture debuted at Yard Party for Art, and has been a physical gathering space for daily and field trip visitors. Significant programming focused on storytelling will accompany the sculpture in 2019, the official 200th celebration of Alabama's statehood.

Interpretation and Audience Engagement

Artist workshops, special presentations, and lectures brought WMA's audience into closer understanding of new techniques, context, and personal narratives of regional artists through one-on-one learning.

Dr. Lorenzo Pace visited WMA in November of 2017 to present a fully-engaged, interactive musical reading performance of his book, *Jalani and the Lock*, to a full gallery of students and their families, including students from the Wiregrass Boys and Girls Club. The book examined retellings of the Middle Passage, African-American slavery, and emancipation; the performance was part of a collaborative partnership with The George Washington Carver Interpretive Museum, which hosted a corresponding program for local artists.

In Unison, presented by artist Jenny Fine, allowed for artist experimentation and flexibility in performance art, combining historical forms of dance with photography and costume design as a part of her ongoing work in multiple disciplines. The performance was documented as a part of *do it*, a reinterpreted exhibition at the Mobile Museum of Art.

Aaron Head taught "Introduction to Indigo and Shibori" to a sold-out spring workshop with a full day of hands-on instruction. Exhibiting artist Doug Baulos offered two workshops at the museum to complement the *Alabama Reckoner* exhibition; artists Pinky Bass and Jacob Phillips joined with Baulos to teach "Visual Ecology," and presented variations on origami and paper

arts to the general public and summer camp students. "Mending, Memory, and Placemaking" was also presented by Baulos as extended interpretation of his major exhibition at WMA, and highlighted Baulos' narratives on the cultural, artistic, and natural landscape of Alabama.

An artist-in-residence program elevated the role of artists in community planning through partnerships with the City of Dothan and Transportation for America/Smart Growth America to gather community feedback for the Hwy. 84 E Corridor Project. Artist Cosby Hayes lived downtown during the summer residency and witnessed firsthand the particular challenges facing residents of low-income neighborhoods along the north and south sides of the Highway 84 East corridor. Their experiences were documented and relayed to planning officials working on long-term transportation goals.

WMA was also a site for a town hall discussion and creative workshop for the nationwide For Freedoms initiative. Inspired by American artist Norman Rockwell's paintings of Franklin D. Roosevelt's *Four Freedoms* (1941) — freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear — the For Freedoms Federation uses art to encourage and deepen public explorations of freedom in the 21st century. Organized locally by Troy University Lecturer in Art & Design and WMA board member Beverly Leach, the discussion and workshop provided a platform for conversations to encourage a more creative, inclusive, and empathetic community, focusing on issues related to freedom in the Wiregrass area.



A YEAR IN EXHIBITIONS

Selections from the Permanent Collection

Ongoing

Full Circle - A Decade in the Deep South

Works by Mark Leputa

July 21 - December 30, 2017

Gravitation - Work by Jacob Phillips

October 20 - December 30, 2017

Folktopia: American Self-Taught Art

October 20 - December 30, 2017

Mike McCarty - The Music Years

January 19 - June 30, 2018

Observation as Contemplation

Works by Pamela Venz

January 19 - March 24, 2018

Root & All: P.H. Polk Images of George W. Carver from the Paul R. Jones Collection at the University of Alabama

January 19 - March 31, 2018

Through the Lens: Photography by Dr. William Hodges

January 19 - February 17, 2018

Youth Art Month

March 2018

Helen Keller Art Show of Alabama

April 2nd - May 19th

Alabama Reckoner

Work by Doug Baulos

Featuring works by Pinky/MM Bass, Merrilee Challis, Dariana Dervis, Brian Edmonds, Larry Louise Foster, Matt Grubb, Matt Posey, Chiharu Takahashi Roach, Ukuu Tafari, Victor Thompson, and Jon Woolley

April 20 - June 30, 2018

LETTERS, etc.

Works by Clayton Colvin

June 1 - September 29, 2018

Folded Form - Work by Hugh Williams

July 20 - September 29, 2018

B18: Wiregrass Biennial

July 20 - September 29, 2018

Tony Wright: Form and Variation

July 20 - December 29, 2018

Semiotic Compass

Ongoing



External Affairs

Development

In FY18, WMA continued to secure support for its mission through funding and visibility to the public and business community. Strategies for development focused on diversifying the museum's income, with greater emphasis on relationships with the business community, membership base, and foundation support.

WMA received funding for special bicentennial projects from the Alabama Bicentennial Commission, as well as funding for ongoing programs from local and regional foundations, including the Alabama State Council on the Arts. Homegrown support for WMA's mission is generously demonstrated through appropriations from the City of Dothan (\$242,500) and Houston County Commission (\$10,000).

As shown, income for Fiscal Year 2018 drew from a diversity of sources. Earned income includes event rental fees, book and catalogue sales, tours, workshops/classes, merchandise, and exhibition fees. Special events included Wine Experience and Yard Party for Art, and related beverage sales. Donations totaled \$38,677, and WMA board and staff gave exemplary commitment to WMA's mission with a 100% fulfilled pledge rate.

Household memberships contributed \$19,100; in its second year, the corporate membership program added \$22,611 to the Annual Fund, a 126% increase over the year before. The overall number of WMA member households increased 24% within the past year; WMA's membership drive in February, increased engagement through programs, and active membership recruitment at Third Thursdays help to account for this increase.

In the next year, WMA will continue working towards its goal of 600 member households, garnering support from residents in the Wiregrass and Southeast region. Strengthening relationships with members through increased volunteerism and cultivating an overall culture of giving will continue to be important for membership growth.

Communication

During the 2018 fiscal year, WMA launched a newly designed website that is easier for visitors to navigate and includes free online educator resources. More than 13,000 people have visited our page in search of information, including more than 140 who have clicked on the site to use the free educator resources. The new website also has a blog page to present additional content about exhibitions, artist interviews, and special features throughout the year.

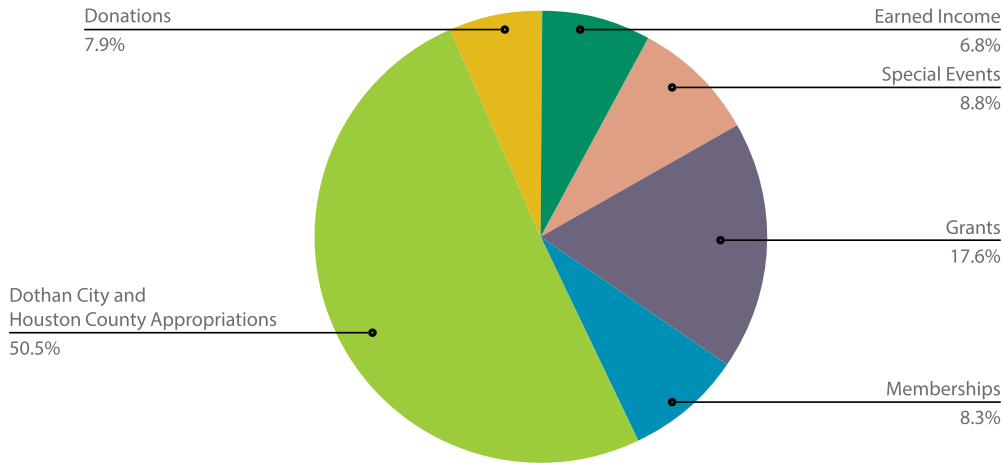
In addition to the museum's new website, WMA launched an exhibition website in support of the spring bicentennial exhibition, *Alabama Reckoner*, which featured mixed media portraits of Alabama artists by Douglas Pierre Baulos. The site provided background information on Baulos and the other artists, as well as images of original work by each of the artists represented in the exhibition and video interviews with several of the artists. The website will remain live as an archive and resource for people wanting to learn more about Alabama artists.

The 2018 fiscal year also saw a shift in the allocation of marketing funds from billboard advertising to digital marketing. The communications department began to use marketing funds to pay for more frequent boosted content on social media platforms to promote WMA's exhibitions, programs, and special events. We continued to run monthly promotional ads with Troy Public Radio through their underwriting program, and the museum strengthened ties with local television and commercial radio stations through regular on-air appearances to promote museum happenings.

WMA was presented two publication awards at this year's Southeastern Museums Association Conference. The museum earned a bronze medal for the screen printed poster for 2017's Yard Party for Art, designed by PushCrankPress, and an Honorable Mention for the online educator resources created by Amanda Holcomb, WMA's art educator.



FY18 Income



FY18 Grant & Foundation Support

Alabama State Council on the Arts
\$43,500 for bicentennial projects, annual arts programming, and digital educator resources

Alabama Bicentennial Commission
\$20,000 for Stories of the Wiregrass projects

Smart Growth America
\$10,000 for artist-in-residence program with the Hwy. 84 E Corridor Project

Wiregrass Foundation
\$5,000 for summer outreach art camps

Wells Fargo
\$5,000 for First Saturday Family Day

Visit Dothan
\$2,500 for area attraction support

Southeast Alabama Community Foundation
\$2,000 for Bus on Us and digital educator resources

The Year Ahead

2019 brings WMA's three-year celebration of the Alabama bicentennial to its culmination with Stories of the Wiregrass, WMA's ongoing storytelling and documentation project, and an emphasis on storytelling and personal narratives within next year's exhibitions. Related programs will highlight individual stories of our community members, and focus on the cultural diversity of our region.

WMA will continue its engaged work of fulfilling goals and objectives as outlined in its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, which is available in the "About the Museum" page at wiregrassmuseum.org. Guiding values of integrity, excellence in leadership and professionalism, and excellence in education will direct WMA's dedication to providing our audience with exceptional experiences of direct contact with unique objects and works of art through access to our collections and diverse exhibition schedule.

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In-Kind - Nantze Springs, Push Crank Press, Troy Public Radio

WMA BY-THE-NUMBERS

119

STUDENT WORKS
ON DISPLAY DURING
YOUTH ART MONTH

95

TOTAL OF EXHIBITING
ARTISTS

222

STUDENTS PARTICIPATING
AT NO COST IN SUMMER
OUTREACH CAMPS AND
PROGRAMS

7,263

FOLLOWERS ON
SOCIAL MEDIA

13%

INCREASE IN GRANT
FUNDING FROM THE
PREVIOUS YEAR

1,828

PARTICIPANTS AT THIRD
THURSDAY EVENTS

81

TOTAL PROGRAMS AND
EVENTS THROUGHOUT
THE YEAR - 61 FREE
TO THE PUBLIC!

46%

INCREASE IN
EXHIBITING ARTISTS
FROM LAST BIENNIAL

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, 2017 - September 30, 2018. Support received outside of this timeframe will be listed in the FY19 Annual Report.

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Student

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Gifts of \$1,000+

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CapSouth Partners	Sharon and William Nichols	Rosalyn Timbie
Cultural Arts Center	Mike Schmitz	Ann and Bill Thompson
Dothan Tuesday Rotary	Southeast Alabama Community Theatre	Jane Williams

Gifts of \$500 - \$1,000

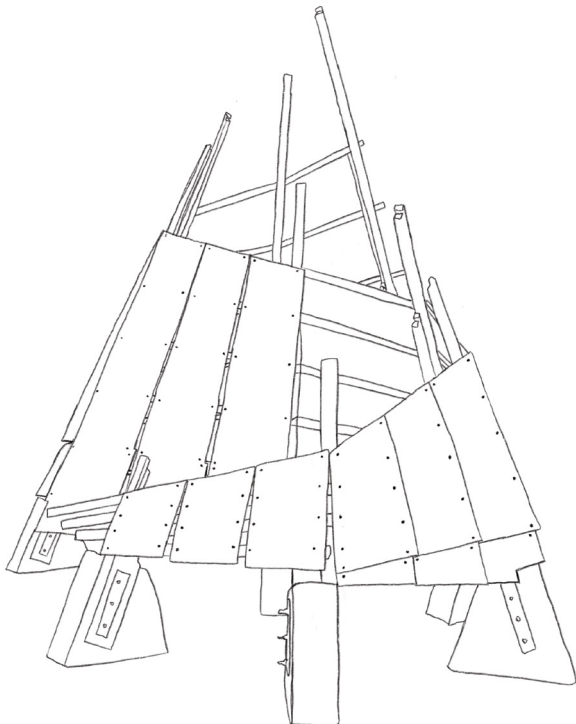
Sandra and Top Bishop	Susan and Alan Livingston	Claudia Sims
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Gifts of \$250 - \$499

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Gifts of \$1 - \$249

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