

THE WESTMORELAND MUSEUM of AMERICAN ART

Director's Report January 26, 2021

Exhibitions

Smithsonian Museum of American Art exhibition African American Art in the 20th Century closed on January 12, 2021 and we are now installing *Pattern Makers*, which was developed in collaboration with Dr. Alex Taylor and his graduate students from the University of Pittsburgh. This exhibition was developed to fill the gap of moving our 2020/21 exhibitions one year out to 2021/22.

Education/Programs

Virtual offerings continue, though we have determined not to continue the virtual community days. Instead, with funding from PNC, we are creating 6 family activity booklets with a take-home art activity. As we plan for future programming, we will continue to offer virtual programs if they cannot be held outdoors. We are looking at a potential target of fall, 2021 to resume in-person events and programs.

Gavin Benjamin will be the next Artist-in-Residence. Gavin Benjamin is a multifaceted artist who combines original analog photography and appropriated images with collage, paint and varnish to create rich, luxurious works that call back to baroque traditions, but uses elements of current culture to provoke, critique, and explore. Benjamin investigates the intersection of culture, media, politics, fashion, and design, addressing questions that (continue to) confront a man of color in America today. Born in Guyana, South America and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Benjamin received his BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. During this time, he interned with legendary portrait photographer Arnold Newman. From there, he went on to work at Edge Reps and Exposure NY, agencies representing commercial and advertising photographers, prop stylists, and hair and makeup artists. After Exposure NY, he went to work as a freelance production coordinator/photo editor with stints at Kenneth Cole productions, *Esquire* Magazine, Hachette Filipacchi Media, and *Good Housekeeping* magazine. His work has appeared at the Slick Paris, Sotheby's NY, *Architectural Digest* Home Design Show, Art Hampton, Affordable Art Fair, Scope Miami, Palm Beach Modern, Context Miami, Context NY, Art Silicon Valley, and the LA Art Fair.

During the course of the four month residency, Benjamin will work to create relationships within the Greensburg African American community and bring them into the museum by centering community members as the subjects of his photographic work. His goal is to invite 12 of the community members as sitters for portraits that will then be the core of the presentation and final product of his time in residence. By being given access to the museum's collections and archives, he can begin to examine the objects, their meaning and context, and how his work specifically can make them accessible to the surrounding community. In conjunction to these photographs, Benjamin will produce workshops, short films, a curated gift shop with local poc/women/queer makers, and a magazine and catalogue to accompany the exhibition. He aims to include peer creative collaborators to help accomplish each aspect of the exhibition and accompanying programs.

THE WESTMORELAND MUSEUM of AMERICAN ART

Marketing

Attendance: (October 1 – December 11, 2020 – the Museum was forced to close beginning Saturday, December 12 due to COVID-19 restrictions implemented by the State and will remain closed until Sunday, February 7.) When looking solely at the General Visitor attendance category, our weekly average for the roughly 10-week period of October 1 – December 11 is **41% of our 2019 calendar year weekly average**. Given the circumstances, we are very pleased with this attendance turn out, which is higher than the 20% visitation rates some of our Pittsburgh peer museum organizations have been reporting. Due to attendance for our Holiday Mart and two socially distanced in-person events – Octoberfest and Winter Lights Illumination Night, which both sold out – **our overall attendance for the Oct-Dec ten weeks was 25% higher than an overall attendance from Aug-Sept.**

General Visitors	1094	1096
Drop In (Community Days & Summer Saturdays)	Virtual	37
Youth Programs	Virtual	Virtual
Adult Classes and Lectures	Virtual	Virtual
Art on Tap	138*	n/a
Tours	n/a	n/a
Other (includes Yoga, Shop Only, etc.)	195	7
Museum Special Event (example: Big Art Party)	n/a	n/a
Exhibition Opening	n/a	n/a
Outside Rentals	n/a	n/a
Culinary Events	n/a	Virtual
TOTAL	1,427	1,140

Earned Media: For the Oct-Dec 2020 quarter, there were 39 articles for a total reach of 254,300,303 (compared to only 43,344,592 for last quarter). In 2019 for the Oct-Dec time period, there were 65 articles for a total reach of 172,068,085. Our reach for this past quarter compared to the same quarter in 2019 increased by 48%, which is really significant given the current circumstances, and compared to last quarter, we had the totally dramatic increase of 487%. Much of the increase in our reach was due to articles in Forbes.com and Bloomberg on the Diversity Billboard Art Project.

THE WESTMORELAND MUSEUM of AMERICAN ART

Social Media: We have growth in our followers across the board on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn with a 6% increase in followers on Instagram specifically. We saw a decrease in engagement of Facebook and Twitter but experienced a significant increase on Instagram. There has been conversation across the industry about reasons for decrease in engagement on Facebook in particular, although there is nothing really to conclusive to report at this time. Our Traffic Clicks metric for Facebook and Twitter were both great with 123% and 124% increases respectively.

Website: Overall, the report comparing this quarter to the previous quarter shows that our website Users are up by 37% and New Users are up by 36%, which is great. For the report comparing the quarter to the same quarter for the year prior, we have a 2% increase in Users and a 3% increase in New Users. Also, saved in the folder is a report showing our top pages for the entire 2020 calendar year, and it is no surprise that our virtual tour and online collection pages of the site have had huge traffic increases compared to the year prior, with the virtual tour page having an increase of 125%. Additionally, ranking within the top 10 pages on our site for the year was our newly created Virtual Experiences page.

Advancement

Government Relations: (DCED) Marketing and Tourism Grant (\$100,000 budgeted in FY '21) – Supported by lobbying efforts and ongoing engagement with Senator Kim Ward and Representative Eric Nelson, the Museum received an invitation to submit a \$300,000 grant. Invited submissions the last two years were \$250,000; this year's request is a surprising outcome of the budget negotiations.

DCED EITC (\$30,000 corporate contributions budgeted in FY '21) – Corporate contributions and pledges totaling \$45,000 received from Robindale, NexTier, and Swank Construction Company. Application renewal including letters of support from area school districts submitted in January.

PA Council on the Arts (PCA) – CARES COVID funding of \$1,930 was awarded. Budget negotiations resulted in an additional operating allocation of \$13,000 with \$5,238 in October and \$7,762 in January. Given earlier uncertainty, funds from PCA were not budgeted for FY '21. The Museum was notified that going forward, its operating allocation will remain at this lower level (previous allocations were \$18,000) as agency funds will be distributed more equitably to BIPOC and rural arts organizations, and not based on larger organizations receiving larger allocations.

PA Council on the Arts (PPA) – In August, The Westmoreland was notified that it had been selected as a PCA Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts regional partner to re-grant small PCA grants to art museums in Region 12 (Westmoreland, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fayette and Somerset Counties). The Westmoreland was awarded \$66,323 with \$36,000 allocated to be re-granted and \$30,323 for staffing costs and travel for Daria Jarani to administer the program. Grants were awarded in late December.

Foundation Relations: Allegheny Foundation – A grant award of \$250,000 was received in December for general operating support for FY'21.

THE WESTMORELAND MUSEUM of AMERICAN ART

Eden Hall Foundation – A stock gift of \$160,515 was received in November to cover staffing costs for COVID-19 funded projects.

Hillman Foundation –The Westmoreland received its 9th payment in December as part of a 10-year \$1M pledge for Exhibition support. December 2021 is the last payment and outreach is underway to discuss future funding.

Laurel Foundation –Request denied for \$35,000 to support the *Permanent Collection – Out of the Vault* exhibition.

Fisher Fund at The Pittsburgh Foundation – Awarded \$50,000 including \$35,000 for Artists-in-Residency program and \$15,000 for a paid internship program.

Community Foundation of Westmoreland County – Permission was received to use Revitalizing Westmoreland grant for Spring Avenue Park renovation in Greensburg.

Membership: Westmoreland Society (\$500 and above) – The Westmoreland Society Dinner was held virtually on Friday December 4th. Through a special virtual voting platform set up for the evening, 38 members participated and chose their favorite work of art resulting in the selection of Leroy Lamis, *Construction #227*, 1975. The purchase of the \$35,000 sculpture was made possible through Westmoreland Society membership dues and additional contributions to the Museum’s art acquisition fund.

Annual renewals were strong at year-end with a 90% retention rate. A majority of members are renewing reflecting a strong loyalty to museum programming during COVID and commitment to free admission. Renewals are trending to meet membership goals for FY '21.

Annual Appeal: Annual appeal requests were sent at Thanksgiving with coordinated online and social media messaging throughout the weeks that followed in December. Gift receipts are above budgeted goals and will be totaled when all gifts are accounted for at the end of January. Annual year-end gifts of note included an increase of \$20,000 from the Livingston L. Biddle & Elizabeth Collin Biddle Charitable Foundation, and \$10,000 from the R.K. Family Foundation on behalf of Armour Mellon. Additionally, the Museum received contributions of \$10,000 from the Hurtt Foundation and Nat Hwilt Foundation.