

# **ANNUAL REPORT FY19** 10/1/18 - 9/30/19

On behalf of the Wiregrass Museum of Art's board and staff, we give our sincere appreciation for your support in fiscal year 2019. We are grateful to those who give generously to uphold WMA's mission to inspire lifelong learning through visual art, and partner with us to create long-term impact here in the Wiregrass and across the Southeast.

This year, we can be proud of the work we've done together and the accomplishments WMA achieved through planning and partnerships. From securing significant multi-year giving commitments, to peer award recognition as a regional leader in contemporary art, to our work in support of artists and a strong exhibition schedule that bridged art and social issues with new audiences -- all of it is possible because of your commitment to building a better quality of life for our region's people.

The FY19 Annual Report highlights the museum's work from October 2018 to September 2019. We hope that you will take the time to read and discover more about the museum's accomplishments and future goals, including upcoming plans to elevate the role of the arts through sustainability planning, bridging gaps between art and social issues, and the start of a series of community focus groups. With your support, WMA will continue to be a cultural gathering place that inspires innovation and creativity through art.

**Dana-Marie Lemmer** Executive *Director and Curator* 

M. Qu

**Mike Owen** President, Board of Trustees



# WMA BY THE NUMBERS







NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS 11% INCREASE IN CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP INCOME











**AND TOURS** 

The

PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS



# ONSITE + DIGITAL VISITORS FROM 40 U.S. STATES AND EUROPE

WMA visitors by gathered zip code information



# **EXHIBITIONS + ARTIST PROJECTS**

The Dothan community should be proud

to have such a dynamic arts organization

downtown, but the impact that WMA

has on the state is much broader. WMA

has partnered with ASCA for a multi-year

celebration leading up to Alabama's

bicentennial, which has highlighted the

work of many incredibly talented artists

from around the state. I encourage

everyone to make a visit to the WMA.

Regardless of if you have never been

before or if you attend regularly, there is always something new and exciting to

learn about and experience at the WMA.

- Dr. Elliot Knight, Director, Alabama

**State Council on the Arts** 

### THE WIREGRASS SUPPORTS ARTISTS

WMA's ongoing commitment to visual art in the Southeast is grounded in its practice of supporting artists through creative exploration, financial support, and exhibition opportunities. In FY19, the museum presented a total of 18

exhibitions, including solo and group shows featuring artists across Alabama and the Southeast. This year's slate of exhibitions and artist projects included collaborations with artists who created new work, had their first solo museum exhibition, realized a yearslong vision, or experimented with their practice in a surprising way. Alabama artists Sydney Foster, Jessica Smith, Sheri Schumacher, Tony Wright, Beverly Erdreich, Carlton Nell, and Carolyn DeMeritt worked closely with WMA to present innovative solo exhibitions and exposed the museum's audience to the diversity of contemporary art in the region. Group exhibitions, like this year's Echoes, created with the Alabama Women's Caucus for Art, attracted visitors statewide, and allowed multiple artists to showcase their work around a common theme.

During an April artist residency at WMA, artists Jared Ragland and Cary Norton visited historic Native American sites throughout the Wiregrass as part of their ongoing project, "Where You Come From is Gone". Created during Alabama's

bicentennial celebration, this project explored the importance of place, the passage of time, and the political dimensions of remembrance through the wet-plate collodion photographic process. Ragland and Norton's images seek to make known a history that has largely been eliminated and make visible the erasure that occurred in the American South between Hernando DeSoto's first exploitation of native peoples in the 16th century and Andrew

Jackson's Indian Removal Act 300 years later. Using a 100-year-old field camera and a custom portable darkroom tailored to Ragland's 4x4 truck, the two photographers journeyed more than 2,000 miles across 20 Alabama counties to locate, visit, and photograph indigenous sites. Their documentation while at WMA focused on sites in Omussee Creek Mound in Henry County, the Choctawhatchee River in Geneva County, and Hodby's Bridge in Pike County.

Visiting artists included Anna Sue Courtney in January with a Silhouette Puppet Workshop, Chris Cruz in March with Scarf Dyeing and Mixed Media Workshops, and Aaron Sanders Head in June with an Exploring Hand-Stitching and Sashiko Workshop. Other artist offerings included demonstrations at Yard Party for Art: Charlotte Watts with aura photography, Devan Cole with glass blowing demonstrations, and PushCrankPress with virtual reality that intersected art, music, and technology. High quality instruction and diverse, unique offerings regularly brought in out-of-state

attendees and sustained the museum's vibrancy as a place to learn and create. Additionally, these workshops provided opportunities for artists to expand their audience and instructional experience.





### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Other exhibitions focused on the social impact of the arts, and created opportunity for significant community dialogue. *Home: Where I Live*, was an exhibition of photography created in partnership with The Harbor, a Dothan outreach program for residents who are homeless or housing-insecure. Photos taken by these residents illuminated their deeply personal experiences, and provided the basis for conversation in a corresponding housing panel hosted by Mayor Saliba, which approached the broader challenges in affordable housing for residents of all backgrounds.

Complementary exhibitions Continuum: 1808 to 2017 / Goya to Erdreich and Operation Art expanded on the museum's platform for cultural sharing through visual art. With open and guided discussions, subject matter expert panels and lectures, and innovative programs that approached the intersection of multiple artistic disciplines, these exhibitions invited daily visitors and area residents to discuss difficult topics, including the effects of war and violence, and to share their personal experiences and the long-term consequences of historical events. Partnerships with local and regional organizations, including Temple Emanu-El, Alabama Public Television, Patti Rutland Jazz, and others, helped to create programs for Continuum, and provided a platform for subject matter experts in history, psychology and sociology, and art history. Area eyewitnesses to historical events, veterans, and high school and university students came together in a rich, diverse collaboration, which allowed for significant intergenerational learning and new documentation of first-hand accounts of 20th and 21st century historical events in "Intergenerational Learning Project," a short video series available on the museum's YouTube channel. Dr. Jeneve Brooks advised this project, which received grant support from the Alabama Humanities Foundation.



#### collaborating individuals and organizations created *Continuum* programs



# **EXHIBITIONS + ARTIST PROJECTS**

### A YEAR IN EXHIBITIONS

Selections from the Permanent Collection
Ongoing

Semiotic Compass Ongoing

**Tony Wright: Form and Variation** July 20 - December 29, 2018

**Ground Beneath My Feet - Collaborative Portraits with Visual Artists in My Hometown - Work by Charity Ponter** October 19 - December 29, 2018

Echoes: A response to objects in WMA's permanent collection by the Alabama Women's Caucus for Art October 19 - December 29, 2018

Home: Where I Live January 18 - February 16, 2019

*Walks in the South* Sydney Foster January 18 - March 23, 2019

textile | assemblage | place Sheri Schumacher January 18 - March 30, 2019

A Salad of Servers: Innovative Flatware from the 20th and 21st Centuries January 18 - June 29, 2019

**Youth Art Month** March 2019

# ACQUISITIONS

Artists-in-Residence: Where You Come From Is Gone Jared Ragland and Cary Norton April 18-20, 2019

Helen Keller Art Show of Alabama April 8 - May 18, 2019

**Continuum: 1808 to 2017 / Goya to Erdreich** Beverly Erdreich April 19 - June 29, 2019

**Carlton Nell: Compositions** April 19 - June 29, 2019

**Operation Art** June 5 - September 28, 2019

**Sight Lines** Katie Hargrave and Meredith Lynn July 19 - September 28, 2019

#### As Long as the Waters Flow:

**Native Americans in the South and East** Carolyn DeMeritt July 19 - September 28, 2019

#### In Flux

Jessica Smith July 19 - December 28, 2019



WMA holds more than **1,100 objects** in the public's trust, including Permanent and Education collections, and uses these objects to tell the story of the South through art. This year, WMA received three acquisitions through artist gifts:

2019.1 Hugh Williams, Untitled drawing from the Folded Forms series, mixed media. Gift of Emerson Duhon.

2019.2 Leroy Coleman, Jr., *Wooden Bowl with Polyester Resin*, 2018. Gift of the artist (Education Collection).

2019.3 Beverly Erdreich, *Con razon o sin ella - With Reason or Without*, 2015-17, Collage, text, pastel, charcoal, paint, graphite, and erasure on paper. Gift of the artist.

#### WIREGRASS MUSEUM OF ART

# **PRE K-12 EDUCATION + LIFELONG LEARNING**



Through partnership and collaboration, WMA's education programs excelled in innovation and student engagement in Fiscal Year 2019. The museum's comprehensive field trip program for preK-12 education, Bus on Us, continued to provide needed support for schools and students in Dothan City Schools and Houston County Schools systems. By eliminating the barrier of transportation costs for educators and their students, WMA fills crucial gaps in education, and encourages lifelong learning through repeat visits to the museum. For many students, their Bus on Us trip is their first art museum experience; hands-on creative

Thank you again for a great experience. The students truly enjoyed themselves and were able to take home some new appreciation and knowledge."

- Beverlye Intermediate School for the Arts Wiregrass Foundation, WMA worked with area educators and community leaders to fill 19 scholarship seats at in-house camps, and collaborated with Boys & Girls Clubs of the Wiregrass, Hawk Houston Youth Enrichment Center, and Dothan Housing Authority to ensure that students in their summer programs received high-quality, enriching art instruction at no cost to their participants. Summer camps offered an impressive scope of projects for students to explore the museum's resources and cultivate their own creativity. Instruction included techniques in clay, handstitching, photography, mixed media collage,

projects and guided, inquiry-based tours with knowledgeable docents make each field trip memorable and valuable for building students' cross-curricular skills and appreciation of visual art.

In March, two programs highlighted area students and their creativity in the museum's galleries. Out of the (Art) Box, a two-day installation competition at WMA for teams of area high school students, hosted four teams from Wiregrass schools in southeast Alabama and southwest Georgia. By pairing students with professional artist mentors, WMA gave students with art and design interests a truly unique workforce development experience, and a chance to work in a setting that mirrors real-life practices and partnerships between artists and exhibition spaces. Museum staff, volunteers, and artist mentors challenged students to create installations of artwork in environments that required effective communication and teamwork, safe handling of materials and tools, proper rest and working space, and consideration of interpretation for public audiences. This project accompanied the Youth Art Month exhibition, which received a record number of submissions from students in 2019.

The museum's art summer camps bridged school years and offered unique learning experiences for students from all backgrounds. With support from

stop-motion animation, painting and more, and taught students at all camps how to translate their conceptual ideas into artmaking through various mediums.

Monthly youth art classes continued through weekly series of small group, hands-on instruction. Students learned about and created their own works of art in ceramics, hidden illustration, hand-stitching, and fundamentals of art within a teaching environment that encourages creative expression.

Lifelong learning at WMA included opportunities for adults to try something new or refine their skills at artist workshops and quarterly adult art class series. WMA's Studio offered quarterly series of classes in diverse mediums, including oil painting, papermaking, book-binding, eco-printing and suminagashi paper marbling, and ceramics. First Saturday Family Day, one of the museum's longestrunning programs, welcomed new and returning visitors to create art projects and explore exhibitions throughout the museum. Each month offered new opportunities to experiment with fresh techniques and high-quality supplies, and participants were instructed with help from the museum's educators and volunteer base.

# **A PLACE TO GATHER**



WMA attracts art lovers and lifelong learners, and is a vibrant place for visitors and residents who want to explore new ideas, or are looking for unique social events and activities. The museum offers opportunities for all ages to gather and enjoy art, without needing a background in art. This year, WMA created space for ongoing programs and new events that welcomed residents and visitors to the museum to gather and connect in unique cultural sharing. Third Thursday programs offered extended evening hours to broad audiences and invited the public to experience the galleries within the format of innovative programs. Write Night, a popular Third Thursday program, provided local creatives with an opportunity to perform written and spoken word, and intersected performance art with spontaneous creation. Art After Hours opened a diverse exhibition schedule and gave attendees the chance to meet exhibiting artists in person and make social connections at informal artmaking stations. Screen on the Green presented a full schedule of films that served as an accessible entry point to the museum for residents of Dothan and our surrounding counties.



Our members only party One Night Only celebrated the museum's membership, and encouraged attendees to see the museum's exhibitions and spaces in new light through escape-room style activities, comedic tours, and live music from local artists.

Yard Party for Art, WMA's annual art and music festival, continued in its evolution as an awareness event to raise the museum's visibility as a platform for artists across the Southeast. Unique offerings of multiple musical genres, public art installations and experiences, and diverse artistic disciplines built on the museum's reputation for experimentation and exemplified WMA's leadership in contemporary artistic practice. With upwards of 750 in attendance, this event is important for the Wiregrass region because it expands the cultural experiences in visual art available for residents, and attracts visitors from surrounding regions to experience WMA as a unique, innovative tourist destination. This year, Yard Party for Art raised a net income of \$14,688.





# **EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

As an advocate for the arts and for the role of artists in the Wiregrass community, WMA's approach to communication and support-building focuses on long-term impact. Staff and board emphasized strategic messaging in 2019 year that linked nationwide trends in the arts with an understanding of the role our vibrant art museum plays in its local region. Internal evaluation and research on the museum's audiences and programs allows WMA to clearly communicate the value of its present and future opportunities for growth through the arts.

WMA remains committed to the social, cultural, and economic development of the Wiregrass region, and designs its partnerships to respond to shared needs and goals. Growth within the museum's corporate member program has come not only through the number of new members in FY19, but also in a greater understanding of how WMA's presence and work in the community positively affect employer recruitment and retention, sustainability, and community buyin. This year, the corporate member program grew to a total of 22 corporate members, including the following new members: Eye Center South, The Harbor, Michelin North America, Mural City Coffee Company, PREmployer, Inc, and RealTime, LLC.

Along with support from the business community, WMA pursued grant funding for specific education programming and artist projects, and was awarded 11 total grants, including a major capital grant from Wiregrass Foundation for technology. This grant funded an overall upgrade for internal systems and connectivity, and helped to create a digital app that will launch January 2020. The app will better connect visitors in the museum's galleries to expanded content for exhibitions, including artist interviews and audio tours.





WMA secured multi-year agreements with Michelin Charity Golf Tournament and The Daniel Foundation of Alabama in fiscal year 2019, which support operations and allow the museum to remain flexible to respond to the needs of its community. Unrestricted giving is vital for building the museum's capacity, and WMA is grateful for the partnership with these foundations.

This year, board and staff participated in diverse professional development opportunities to build crucial skills and understand museum industry best practices for fundraising, long-term planning, and feedback-based programming. Staff attended Southeast Museums Conference in Jackson, Mississippi at the start of the fiscal year, and staff and board held a retreat in May to focus on fundraising and identifying long-term needs and goals.

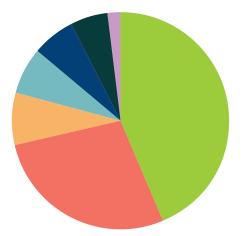
WMA received recognition for its final Alabama Bicentennial project, Stories of the Wiregrass. This project, a digital archive of stories submitted by residents of the Wiregrass, earned a bronze medal from the Southeastern Museums Conference Technology Competition in Charleston, SC. Funded by the Alabama Bicentennial Commission, this project is a culmination of a years-long collaboration to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Alabama's statehood.

> The Daniel Foundation of Alabama sees the consistency of multiyear operational funding as an opportunity for the Wiregrass Museum of Art, as a major provider of arts programming in the region, to continue to focus on and strengthen the wide variety of programming the community has come to expect. Our hope is the dependability of this support over the next three years will provide WMA with the opportunity to consider programs, projects or exhibitions that may have been out of reach without such consistency in funding.

- Maria Kennedy, Executive Director, The Daniel Foundation of Alabama

# **EXTERNAL AFFAIRS CONT.**

### **FY19 INCOME**



City of Dothan - 43.8% Grants - 27.8% Memberships - 7.9% Special Events - 6.9% Earned Income - 6.2% Donations - 5.7% Houston County Commision - 1.8%



of expenses at WMA supported programs in FY19 Financial information available online at wiregrassmuseum.org/about





### FY19 GRANT AWARDS AND FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Alabama Humanities Foundation \$5,000 for Continuum exhibition programming

Alabama State Council on the Arts (combined) \$11,300 for annual arts programming, exhibitions, and Out of the (Art) Box program

The Caring Foundation (Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama) \$2,000 for Youth Art Month

The Daniel Foundation of Alabama \$35,000 for operating costs, 3-yr agreement

Visit Dothan **\$2,500 for area attraction** 

Publix Super Markets Charities \$1,000 for Youth Art Month

Southeast Alabama Community Foundation

\$1,500 for Bus on Us and digital educator resources

Wells Fargo Foundation

\$5,000 for Bus on Us and digital educator resources

Wiregrass Foundation \$9,305 for outreach art summer camps

Wiregrass Foundation **\$50,371 for technology project** 

Many thanks to WMA's government, foundation, and corporate partners for their annual support of our mission to inspire lifelong learning, and for believing in the transformative power of art.

#### The City of Dothan The Daniel Foundation of Alabama

Houston County Commission Visit Dothan

### CORPORATE MEMBERS

#### Benefactor

AAA Cooper Transportation Wiregrass Construction

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DSI Security Services Eye Center South The Harbor LBA Hospitality Michelin North America, Inc. Mural City Coffee Company

#### **ANNUAL REPORT FY19**

RealTime, LLC SunSouth Bank Team Linda Simmons - Vimal Patel

#### Friend

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#### In-Kind

Nantze Springs PushCrankPress Troy Public Radio

# THE YEAR AHEAD



SUPPORT

In fiscal year 2020, WMA will pursue a new phase of thoughtful, strategic planning built on community feedback through a national visitor survey and a series of facilitated focus groups. This planning period will inform future decision-making and will emphasize the understanding and application of the many theories around diversity and inclusion when increasing access at the museum.

The museum will continue to create opportunities for artists to connect with residents through exhibitions, special projects, and residencies in the year to come, including *B20: Wiregrass Biennial*, exhibitions with hyperlocal, regional, and international artists, and three artist residencies with artists from Alabama and around the Southeast.

The launch of the museum's digital app will continue WMA's long-held commitment to accessibility to the arts, which is emphasized in free admission, and upheld in thoughtful programming and interpretative methods. Additionally, collaboration between WMA and area educational institutions will expand to include new partnerships with medical related programs and organizations, building on the idea that access to the arts has long term, positive impact on medical professionals in training. Programs at WMA will include initiatives for students in medical related programs to utilize visual thinking strategies critical to develop critical skills needs to better care for patients.

To meet ambitious goals for the future and provide high-quality offerings that reflect the museum's core values, WMA will pursue opportunities in funding, leveraging multi-year support to plan for sustainability, and emphasizing its commitment to excellence in the stewardship of all gifts.

Importantly, WMA will remain as a vibrant space for Wiregrass neighbors to have transformative experiences with visual art, and to connect socially. Museum staff, board, and key stakeholders are committed to keeping art accessible, fun, vibrant, and inspiring for broad audiences within its community.

WMA's Board of Trustees and Staff are grateful for the individuals and companies who support the museum's mission through annual giving, and who advocate for the role of the arts in the Wiregrass. This listing reflects membership and donations for the timeframe of **October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019**.

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### **MISSION + VISION**

The Wiregrass Museum of Art inspires a lifelong appreciation for the visual arts by providing innovative educational programs that engage diverse audiences through the collection and exhibition of quality works.

As a cultural anchor, the Wiregrass Museum of Art inspires creativity to enhance the everyday lives of its community and leads the regional conversation on the importance of the arts.

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