STATE OF THE MUSEUM – OCTOBER 2019

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and staff of the Asheville Art Museum, we share this letter with you as an expression of our gratitude for your continued support and commitment. Your participation conserves priceless works of art, positively impacts thousands of students, produces high-quality exhibitions, and allows the Museum to reach underserved communities through outreach programs and scholarships. Please join us in celebrating the Museum milestones achieved over the past year as we look forward to the opening of the new Asheville Art Museum in November 2019.

The Museum is close to completing the major renovation and expansion project that will transform its presence in the community. Museum staff moved into the new facilities at 2 South Pack Square in March 2019 and began the significant work required to migrate our Collection (nearly 5,000 works of art) into the building, as well as equipping and outfitting the new vaults, galleries, educational and program facilities. Throughout this time, pop-up exhibitions and programming continued throughout the community at partner site locations, and staff members have worked tirelessly to prepare a spectacular array of exhibitions, programs, and events for the new Museum’s opening and beyond.

As a direct result of your generosity throughout fiscal year 2018-2019, the Museum served 259,032 participants, including 72,651 children, through on- and off-site educational programs and exhibitions. The Museum provided 498 high-impact arts education and engagement programs reaching 23,650 participants for as many contact hours. In addition to on- and off-site participation, the Museum audience stretches worldwide with online access. The Museum’s website had 62,654 visitors and 15,633 engaged Facebook users. The Museum also built its reach on Instagram with 7,455 interactions.

As of June 30, 2019, the Museum’s Collection, the only such resource in the region, numbers 5,226 objects—including paintings, works on paper (including photographs, prints, drawings, pastels, collages, and watercolors), sculptures, and craft objects in glass, ceramic, metal, wood, and fiber—and 4,905 architectural drawings. In 2018-2019, while construction was ongoing on the new Museum facilities, the Museum presented two exhibitions at its temporary (175 Biltmore Ave.) location, nine pop-up exhibitions throughout the community, as well as lending works of art to four other museums and art centers. Pop-up exhibitions and loans on view at numerous commercial and nonprofit locations impacted over 228,000 constituents in the Western North Carolina (WNC) region.

The core of the Museum’s educational programming for pre-K through 12th grade students are the special initiatives Literacy Through Art (LTA), More Than Math, and Tot Time and Early Childhood Outreach. LTA provides arts-based integrated, site-specific curriculum that fosters creativity and proficiency in arts, language arts, and communication skills. The Museum’s original More Than Math program integrates the visual arts into the 3rd-8th grade mathematics curriculum using works of art from the Museum’s Collection. Tot Time and early childhood education programs continued as weekly outreach programs to reach low-income families and build diverse audiences in WNC. Other ongoing education initiatives include school tours, art camps, after-school programming, and professional development for educators. Work is also near completion on interactive installations for the Wells Fargo Art PLAYce, a hands-on creative space for people of all ages.

In addition to the Museum’s educational programming for pre-school through 12th grade students, the Museum has an active schedule of adult programming. Adult educational programs include: Art Break talks led by staff, visiting artists and guest speakers. Up for Discussion series with artists, Discussion Bound monthly reading group, Film Screenings exploring multimedia storytelling. Art Travels guided art trips, and Performances that bring artworks in our Collection and special exhibitions to life through music, dance, and performance art. The Museum continued its popular internship program for students
interested in careers in the arts, offering internships in all Museum departments. As a contractor for the Kennedy Center’s Rosemary Kennedy Initiative, the Museum continued to offer internships for students with disabilities. We are also excited to be launching the initiative, Connections, after piloting the program On the Slope in 2018. Connections is a new arts-based program serving adults with mild to moderate memory loss and their care partners.

The Museum is currently installing two major exhibitions scheduled for the grand opening. Appalachia Now! An Interdisciplinary Survey of Contemporary Art in Southern Appalachia presents a survey of works by 50 emerging and established artists representing all media, including painting, sculpture, new media, dance and film. The exhibition’s full-color, 64-page catalogue has been produced and is available for purchase.

The other inaugural exhibition, Intersections in American Art, is the major re-installation and re-interpretation of the Museum’s Collection in the new, greatly expanded SECU Collection Hall. A national team of scholars and experts in the field worked with the Museum on the new interpretation and exhibition installation. Primary themes of Time and Place, Experiments in Material and Form, and Collaboration and Interdisciplinary Dialogue frame the interpretation of the Collection. A 304-page hardcover book, Introduction to the Collection, is in the final stages of development for publication this fall.

Four additional exhibitions celebrating recent gifts, major acquisitions, and significant loaned works are in the final phases of exhibition design, with installation completed or underway on large-scale works by artists Maya Lin, Wesley Clark, and Ken Fandell, among others. Sculpture installations are in final stages of preparations for the Museum’s Plaza and Rooftop Sculpture Terrace. We will also soon be releasing a third publication, Envisioning the Future, which highlights our design and construction journey.

We are thrilled to officially unveil the spectacular new Asheville Art Museum on November 14, 2019. We look forward to making a significant impact over the coming year through new and expanded education initiatives, thought-provoking exhibitions, and increased outreach to underserved constituents. Thank you again for being an integral partner in the Asheville Art Museum’s present and future vision. Because of your essential support, we can share the transformative power of art with our regional community and beyond.