



Erie Art Museum

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Please contact Erie Art Museum Board Member Gennifer Biggs at gennifer.biggs@gmail.com for additional details.

For Immediate Release

Erie Art Museum Celebrating Year of Milestones in 2017

Coming year brings celebrations of brick and mortar, cultural events and leadership anniversaries

Erie, PA—Nov. 10, 2016—The coming year will be full of celebrations and transitions as the Erie Art Museum honors nearly 50 years of inspired leadership by Director John Vanco—and his retirement. It will also mark the 25th anniversary of an Erie music and cultural cornerstone, the Erie Art Museum Blues & Jazz Festival, which Vanco will continue to lead.

The museum will be honoring Vanco’s anniversary simultaneously with his retirement. Vanco’s many contributions to the EAM and the community will be celebrated as part of the museum’s second annual ARTrageous event on Saturday, June 10.

The EAM Board of Directors began implementing a comprehensive succession plan following Vanco’s announced plan to retire in 2017 after nearly 50 years as the strategic and innovative leader of the EAM. Vanco has served as the EAM’s first and only director since 1968. When he started, attendance was counted in the hundreds. Now the Museum serves over 65,000 people annually with its exhibits, tours, outreach, and music programs.

The Museum’s collection has grown from 65 works of art to over 8,000 and the Museum’s footprint has increased by an order of magnitude, growing from the house on West 6th Street to its current, state-of-the-art facility with 13 galleries, cafe, performance space, and classrooms.

“The Erie Art Museum and the communities it serves have truly benefited from nearly a half-century of stable, thoughtful leadership,” says Stephen Porter, president of the Erie Art Museum Board of Directors.

Succession planning for the museum began nearly four years ago, culminating with the recent formation of a dedicated transition team led by board member James Parlin, and comprised of board members and community leaders. That team will share regular updates as they lead the selection process for a new director, with the board’s choice for the position starting mid-year 2017. In support of the transition, Vanco expects to remain involved with the museum through August of next year.

Other celebrations throughout 2017 include the 120th anniversary of founding of The Art Club of Erie, the forerunner to the EAM. The coming year also marks the 25th anniversary of one of the region's favorite cultural festivals, the Blues & Jazz Festival. Next year will also bring the announcement of a special funding campaign tied to both the transition efforts and future growth of the museum.

“Many nonprofit organizations are distracted by multiple leadership changes that impede a long-term strategic plan,” said Porter. “The Erie Art Museum has been fortunate to have made great strides because of John’s tenure, and we look forward to what the next phase of growth will bring.”

More information about ongoing celebrations of all these milestones will be shared with museum donors and members, as well as the general public, over the next few months.

About the Erie Art Museum

The Erie Art Museum anchors downtown Erie’s cultural and economic revitalization, occupying a group of restored mid-19th century commercial buildings and a modern, ‘Green,’ 10,500 square foot expansion. The newly expanded Museum marks the first LEED-certified building in the region, soon to be complete with a planted rooftop.

The Museum maintains an ambitious program of changing exhibitions annually, embracing a wide range of subjects, both historical and contemporary and including folk art, contemporary craft, multi-disciplinary installations, community-based work, as well as traditional media.

The Erie Art Museum also holds a collection of over 8,000 objects, which includes significant works in American ceramics, Tibetan painting, Indian bronzes, contemporary baskets, and a variety of other categories.

The Museum offers a wide range of education programs and artists’ services including interdisciplinary and interactive school tours and a wide variety of classes for the community. Performing arts are showcased in the 25-year-old Contemporary Music Series, which represents national and international performers of serious music with an emphasis on composer/performers, and a popular annual two-day Blues & Jazz Festival.

The Erie Art Museum, café, and gift shop is open Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sunday, 1-5 p.m. For additional visitor information, visit online at www.erieartmuseum.org or call 814-459-5477.

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