Quarterly, a publication of the Erie Art Museum, 20 East 5th Street, Erie, PA 16507, is published four times a year in May, August, November and February.
Over the course of the past three months we’ve made a number of changes both internal and external geared toward building a healthy and sustainable Erie Art Museum. Externally, we changed our hours to increase access, launched a slew of new programs designed to make art more accessible and engaging, and even web-published our collection records. Internally, we’re digging into our collection like never before, implementing a number of best practices across the Museum, and constantly asking ourselves how can we be more relevant, impactful and efficient.

We’re incredibly pleased with the public’s response to our changes thus far. In just four months we’ve seen our membership base grow by 38%. Overall visitation is on the rise with 298 visits made in July, 533 in August, and 618 in September. * We added over two million dollars to our endowment and surpassed membership revenue goals by 87%, sales by 419%, rental income by 40% and individual giving by 24%.

In the new year we’ll be turning our attention to serving more local school children and teachers. Our goal is to have every 4th grade class in Erie County visiting the Museum at least once a year by 2020. Why 4th grade? Because 4th grade is when kids are learning critical literacy skills that can also be learned from looking at art. Not to mention, research shows that cultural consumption at an early age creates lifelong art lovers and what’s not to love about that.

While much has been done, there’s still plenty to do. As we wrap up 2018, I would like to thank the Museum’s unbelievably dedicated volunteers and staff, board of directors, donors, members and just about everyone else that has offered their support, ideas, time and resources to the Erie Art Museum. I wish you and yours a wonderful holiday season and I hope to see you at the Museum soon.

Onward,

Joshua R. Helmer
Director and Chief Executive Officer

* Data as of 10/25/2018
Why do museums have collections?
“There’s something innately human about gathering, sorting and displaying things. We collect objects to tell stories about ourselves. Museums are no different. They collect and preserve the absolute very best of our cultural heritage for future generations.”

Who gets to decide what to collect?
“Well, that’s usually the purview of the Museum’s Director, who works closely with curatorial staff to develop a collection plan. However, developing a collection plan is no easy task. Basically, you need to decide what the collecting parameters are going to be for your organization and then stick to them. In essence, it requires us to grapple with the big question: what should the Erie Art Museum collect and why?”

Where do you even start when developing a collection plan for a place like the EAM?
“Here at the Museum we’re working on two parallel tracks. First, we have our highlight objects. In total there are about 217 highlight objects in our collection that need to be conserved, preserved and researched. Then, we have a lot of stuff that does not belong in a museum due to quality, condition or likelihood of ever being on view. These types of objects, mostly reproductions and other mass-produced items, are being flagged for removal. So, we’re working from both ends. Taking care of the best while also weeding the collection of the things that obviously do not belong.”
What happens to the things that are deemed non-museum worthy?
“They get deaccessioned. This means they’ll be officially removed from the Museum’s collection—sold, returned to their makers or donors, given to another organization, etc. Deaccessioning is a common practice in the museum field. It’s so common in fact that the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) maintains a set of best practices that we’ll be adhering to as we work through our collection. For example, any and all funds raised from the sale of objects that do not fit the Museum’s mission or collection plan (e.g. a cast-iron banker’s table from the early 1900s) must be put toward future acquisitions. I am also pleased to share that we’ve reworked the composition of our Collections Committee to help with deaccessioning. For us, transparency is key. We want people to engage with the process and hopefully we’ll spark some pretty exciting conversations about what is art and who gets to decide?”

Why not just keep everything?
“First, we have limited space and resources to properly care for our collection. Overcrowding has become a real problem and many of our objects are subject to unsafe storage conditions. Second, the Museum is responsible for upholding the highest standards of excellence when it comes to collecting.”

Are other museums dealing with similar issues?
“Absolutely. Museums are constantly reevaluating their standards and collecting practices. For a small museum like ours we’re right where we should be. We’ve spent decades taking in as many objects as we could to build a critical mass and now we are ready to raise our standards and develop some long-term collecting strategies. We’re simply taking the next steps in professionalizing the EAM.”
What’s On

December/January/February

GALLERY NIGHT

DECEMBER 7 from 7 - 10 PM
It's like a pub crawl, but with art. Shop, eat, listen to music, and spend time with friends and family while visiting as many local galleries as you can. There’s no better way to get a feel for Erie’s arts scene. Be sure to check out our website for a list of participating galleries.

HANDS-ON

Hands-On is a monthly opportunity to handle some of the best objects in our collection. $10 for members and $15 for non-members plus the price of admission. Capacity is limited to 25 people per session.

ART TALK

WITH JOSH HELMER
Art Talk is a monthly lecture series dedicated to blowing your mind. Free for members and $5 for non-members plus the price of admission.

ART THAT SHOCKED THE WORLD
Dec. 28 from 6 - 7 pm
Great art has always shocked, shaken and sparked conversation. Join us as we discuss everything from the naked body to the use of urine as a medium.

UN-CONFUSING CONFUSING ART (Replay)
Jan. 25 from 6 - 7 pm
Ever look at something in a museum and think to yourself “how is that art?” We all have. Join us for a lively discussion that promises to un-confuse even the most confusing art.

THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS
Feb. 22 from 6 - 7 pm
For hundreds of years artists used plants and flowers to communicate all kinds of messages. Join us as we root around their hidden meanings.

PICASSO, MATISSE AND DALI
Dec. 6 from 6 - 7 pm
When was the last time you held a Picasso?! Well, it’s time. And for all of you sick of holding Picassos we’ll have a Matisse and a few prints by Dali out as well.

STIEGLITZ PHOTOGRAPHS (PART I)
Jan. 11 from 6 - 7 pm
Stieglitz was one of the most influential photographers of all time and we just so happen to have over thirty of his photographs. Join us for part one of a three-part series dedicated to the work of Alfred Stieglitz.

COMIC BOOKS
Feb. 8 from 6 - 7 pm
Calling all nerds! Did you know we have a huge collection of original comic book illustrations? From Spidy to Batman we’ve got ‘em all. It’s time to nerdout.
ART CLASSES

YOUNG AT ART: PAINTING & COLLAGE with ERICA WHITTING
This class introduces kids to the art of painting and collage. Students will learn and practice a number of techniques through a variety of projects. Ages 10-14.
Class Meets 1/12, 1/19, 1/26, 2/2, 2/9, 2/16 from 10 am - 12 pm
$140 ($115 Members)
Materials included.

INTRO TO SPOON CARVING with MATT FANG
Learn the simple, sustainable craft of spoon carving from designer, maker, and outdoor enthusiast Matthew Retkowski. Perfect for anyone looking to adopt a craft. Ages 18 and older.
Class Meets: 2/1, 2/8, 2/15, 2/22 from 6 - 8 pm
$125 ($100 Members)
Materials included.

ASIAN WATERCOLOR with ESTHER HONG
This class will introduce you to the art of Asian watercolor painting. You’ll learn to paint traditional motifs such as bamboo, orchids, plum blossoms and chrysanthemums with traditional materials. Small class size allows for personalized instruction.
Class Meets: 1/10, 1/17, 1/24, 1/31, 2/7, 2/14, 2/21 from 4 – 6 pm
$125 ($100 Members)
Materials not included.

TO REGISTER: Go online: erieartmuseum.org, Call the Museum at 814-459-5477, or Stop by during Museum hours.

AFTER HOURS
THURSDAY & FRIDAY NIGHTS OPEN TILL 9 PM
The Museum has become quite the hang out spot on Thursday and Friday nights. Stop by after work or before dinner to grab a $2 beer, listen to music, make art or just hang. FREE parking after 5 pm.

STAFF CHAT
JAN. 17 & FEB. 28 from 6 - 7 PM
A lot’s happening at the Museum and we want to give you an opportunity to ask us about the changes being made. You bring the questions and we’ll bring the answers!

POP-UP WORKSHOPS
THURSDAY & FRIDAY NIGHTS
Don’t be surprised to find pop-up art making demonstrations in our galleries on Thursday and Friday nights. Spoon carving, figure drawing, weaving and more.
Second Sundays are perfect for spending time with your kids at the museum. Different art making activities every month and admission is Pay-What-You-Wish.

CELEBRATE AFRICA
Dec. 9 from 2 - 4 pm
Come celebrate the rich diversity of African cultures living in Erie. You and your kids can get henna tattoos, make your own corn husk dolls and even dress up in traditional African clothing.

SNOW DAY
Jan 13 from 2 - 4 pm
Be sure you and your kids dress warm because we’re hosting a snowman building competition in our sculpture garden. Don’t like the cold? No worries. Join us inside for hot chocolate and paper snowflake making.

SILHOUETTE SUNDAY
Feb. 10 from 2 - 4 pm
Work together with your kids to trace each other’s shadows, then go collage-crazy filling them in with your thoughts, feelings, hopes and dreams.

Sponsored by:

HOLIDAYS

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
Jan. 21 from 10 am - 5 pm

PRESIDENTS’ DAY
Feb. 18 from 10 am - 5 pm
Kids off from school and you’re looking for something to do. We got you! Art making, scavenger hunts, and more plus admission is Pay-What-You-Wish.

ANIME NIGHTS

We’ve all been asked, “Aren’t you too old to still be watching cartoons?” The response is almost always the same: “it’s not a cartoon, it’s anime.” If you’re a fan—great! If you’ve never seen it before then you’re in luck because we’ll be showing three Ghibli Studio classics:

PRINCESS MONONOKO
Jan. 19 from 3 - 5 pm

SPIRITED AWAY
Feb. 9 from 3 - 5 pm

HOWL’S MOVING CASTLE
Feb. 23 from 3 - 5 pm
Admission is Pay-What-You-Wish.

FASHION FOR UNITY

The Museum, in partnership with the Urban Erie Community Development Corporation (UECDC), is hosting a fashion show and weekend long African marketplace to celebrate the rich diversity of African cultures living in Erie.

Marketplace Open: Dec. 7 from 7 - 10 pm, Dec. 8 from 4 - 8 pm, Dec. 9 from 2 - 5 pm
Fashion Show: Dec. 8 from 6 - 7 pm
**ARTIST TAKEOVER: ROMAN GLASS**  
*Sept. 21, 2018 – Aug. 2019*  
Local printmaker Roman Glass transforms one of our largest galleries into an immersive street environment that will completely change the way you look at Erie.

**Sponsored by:**

![Sponsors logos]

**Healing HeARTS**  
*Nov. 8, 2018 – Feb. 17, 2019*  
Helping families deal with loss, the Highmark Caring Place uses art to heal the heart. Therefore, it’s our pleasure to exhibit art made by local families at the Caring Place to raise awareness of the spectacular work they do.

**EVERYTHING BUT THE SHELVES**  
*Starts Nov. 5*  
With all the work to be done cataloging and evaluating our collection we’ve decided to put it all on view. That’s right. All of it. The good, the bad and the ugly. Thousands of pictures hung salon style throughout the building.

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**FILM PREMIER**

**JAN. 24 from 7 - 8 PM**  
Join us for the premier of “Mini Wiconi,” an animated short by Edinboro professor Michael Genz about the Dakota Access Pipeline. Q & A to follow.

**COLLECTION CORNER**

**FEB. 1 from 6 - 7 PM**  
Join us as we discuss the process of cataloguing, hanging and evaluating our entire collection.
Dear Mr. Helmer,

By this means let me express my deepest gratitude for the willingness and interest of the Erie Art Museum to deliver three objects of prehispanic origin in order to repatriate them back to Mexico. Please let me inform that we have already made the necessary arrangements to secure the repatriation of the objects in the upcoming days, which will be sheltered by the National Institute of Anthropology and History of Mexico.

This action should not only be considered as part of protocols established by cooperation agreements between Mexico and the US for the recovery of archaeological assets, but it certainly represents a kind gesture of friendship, understanding and joint collaboration that should always prevail between our nations and societies.

I really hope that we can continue collaborating in many other interesting projects in the near future.

Sincerely, Alicia Kerber Palma, Consul of Mexico

How long have you been at the Museum?

“I've worked with the Museum for the past three years as co-owner of ErieMultimedia. We helped the Museum rework its website a few years ago. Then, I began project managing ARTrageous in 2017 and was officially hired as the Director of Marketing in July 2018.”

Did you ever see yourself working in an Art Museum?

“No. That's not unusual for me. I never imagined I'd work at any of the places I've worked; Port Erie Plastics, WJET/FOX66, Hamot, and ErieMultimedia. I know it's cliché, but I absolutely believe everything happens for a reason and right now, I am meant to be here. I don't know anything about art. Literally nothing. But the Museum is ready to reinvent itself and I find that incredibly exciting. I mean we are looking at everything we do and asking why, for who and to what end. Being a part of this tEAM (EAM=Erie Art Museum, get it?) is a lot of fun.”

What's the most difficult part of your job?

“I'd say getting people to see that the Museum is a place for them. Let's face it, museums carry a stigma of elitism and privilege, and that is exactly what we are looking to breakdown. Everything we've done up to this point is about opening the Museum to more people and then putting those people in contact with art in new and exciting ways. We are broadening the definition of what a museum is and does; Roman Glass’ artist takeover, the interpretation and presentation of our collection, Josh’s Art Talks, the Hands-On series, pop-up workshops and even happy hour. We are really working to make museum going relevant to as many people as possible. The good news is it's working.”

What are you looking forward to the most at the Museum?

“There is an exciting energy here. It’s a place for everyone; kids, families, couples, singles, college students, adults - everyone belongs at the Erie Art Museum. To be honest, I can't wait to see what this place looks like a year from now.”

UPDATE:

Pre-Columbian human remains returned to Mexico.

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Sincerely, Alicia Kerber Palma, Consul of Mexico”
MUSEUM HOURS
THURSDAYS: 11:00 am – 9:00 pm
FRIDAYS: 11:00 am – 9:00 pm
SATURDAYS: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
SUNDAYS: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Closed: Monday – Wednesday

The Erie Art Museum receives general support from Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority and is a partner of Erie Arts and Culture.

On the cover:

Gallery Night Photos by JM Sutton

FOR US, ART IS JUST THE START.

This year we are looking to:
• Start asking the big questions like ‘What is art?’ and ‘Who is it for?’
• Start connecting more school children and teachers with the Museum.
• Start making the Museum a place for everyone.
• Start building a sustainable Museum for the future.
• Start inspiring more people to invest in art.

WE’RE READY TO START. ARE YOU? Every bit helps.
Donate online at erieartmuseum.org/annual-fund/