As 2019 comes to a close we have much to be thankful for here at the Erie Art Museum. We’ve nearly eliminated the Museum’s $1,800,000 debt, added millions to our endowment and are seeing more people engage with the Museum than ever before. We’re making big strides in becoming a truly healthy and sustainable organization, and I am pleased to say that we’re just getting started. This fall we added another $325,000 to our endowment, which now totals $2,937,000, welcomed our 2,000th member and are currently in talks with the Philadelphia Museum of Art to bring five more world renowned works of art to Erie as part of the Art Bridges + Terra Foundation Initiative.

If you haven’t been to the Museum in a while then now’s the time. Thanks to the Museum’s participation in the Art Bridges + Terra Foundation Initiative, we have work on view by Chuck Close and Felix Gonzalez-Torres. Brett Kern’s ceramics continue to blow people’s minds. The Northwestern Pennsylvania Artists Association’s (NPAA) Biennial is up until February 1st. Plus, we have all kinds of fun and surprising things going on at the Museum including Drag Bingo, Art History Jeopardy, N64 Mario Kart Tournament, some pretty risqué Art Talks, Bob Ross Paint Nights, a five week long art history course and more.

Finally, seeing as how the end of the year giving season is upon us, we want to make supporting the Museum as easy as possible. We want to make giving accessible. Therefore, this year we’re asking our members and friends to sign up to contribute $10 a month to the Museum. That’s only $2.50 a week and it’ll automatically cover the cost of your membership year over year. You’ll never have to worry about renewing or being asked to make a donation again. Our goal is to get 500 people to contribute $10 a month. Check out the Give page of our website to sign up.

As always, I want to thank the Museum’s unbelievably dedicated staff and volunteers, 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 look forward to seeing you at the Museum soon and wish you and yours a wonderful holiday season.

Onward,

Joshua R. Helmer
Director and Chief Executive Officer
What is deaccessioning and why is the EAM doing it?
Deaccessioning is a common practice in the museum world. When a museum deaccessions an object, that object is then officially removed from the museum’s collection (i.e. moved to archives, gifted to another cultural organization or sold at auction). Objects can be deaccessioned for a number of reasons including poor quality or condition, low likelihood of ever being on view, etc. The entire process is really about evaluating your collection. Here at the EAM, we’re looking to raise our collecting standards and a big part of that has to do with weeding the collection.

How are objects chosen to be deaccessioned?
As we work on cataloging the Museum’s collection of over 8,000 objects, we encounter things that fall into one or more of the following categories: non-art; poor quality; mass-produced/reproduction; damaged/deteriorated; archival materials; and unlikely to be displayed. Such objects are then put aside and researched. Then in October, the Museum’s Collection Committee meets to review each object in person and vote on recommending it to the full board of directors to be officially deaccessioned. Once every proposed object has been reviewed and voted on by the members of the Collection Committee, those that received a unanimous vote are brought to the Museum’s full board of directors for final approval.

Good Time Clock made by George Rhoads. Originally on view at the West Erie Plaza, the clock is in need of significant restoration and repair.
How many objects are being reviewed by the Collection Committee for deaccession this year?

There are roughly 600 objects being reviewed by the Collection Committee for deaccession this year. The majority of which fall into the category of non-art (506 objects), followed by unlikely to be displayed (45 objects), archival materials (39 objects), poor quality (32 objects), mass-produced (14 objects) and damaged (12 objects).

What happens to the objects once they are approved by the board for deaccessioning?

Once the board approves objects to be deaccessioned, images of those objects are posted on the Collection section of the Museum’s website no later than December 1st. Similar to last year, we’ll be working with Ploss Auction House in Corry, PA. Approved deaccessions will be included in their New Year’s Day auction and all proceeds put directly into the Museum’s Collection Acquisition Endowment Fund at the Erie Community Foundation for the sole purpose of purchasing future works.

How does this round of deaccessioning tie into the Museum’s collection development plan?

Much like our first major round of deaccessioning last year, this year we’re continuing to weed the collection of things that really do not belong in an art museum. In March, the New York Times published an article titled “Clean House to Survive? Museums Confront Their Crowed Basements.” The article addresses the challenges faced by museums when it comes to collecting and overcrowding. Like many museums across the U.S., we have limited space and resources to properly care for our collection. Therefore, we need to be extremely selective when it comes to what we collect. Going forward the Museum will only be taking in objects of the highest quality and artistic merit.

Mai Shanley Miss USA 1984. Accessioned as a part of the first Mail Art program put on by the EAM. This program invited people from across the country to send in a postcard or letter to be exhibited at the museum. All postcards were individually accessioned into the museum’s collection in the 80s.
What’s On

December/January/February

GALLERY NIGHT

Dec. 6 from 7 – 10 pm
The Erie Art Museum is the place to be on Gallery Night. We’ll have work by Chuck Close, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Brett Kern, Chuck Johnson, Ashley Pastore and Bill Brady. Also, it’s the opening of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Artists Association (NPAA) juried Biennial. Plus, we’ll have the entire 20-piece Gem City Jazz Band here. $2 beers, live music, art making and more. $3 cover charge for non-members and FREE for members.

Sponsored by:

ART CLASS

PORTrait PHOTOGRAPHY
with Erica Whiting
This class will introduce you to the basics of portrait photography such as camera controls, aperture, shutter speed and composition.
Class Meets: 1/11, 1/18 and 1/25 from 11 am – 1 pm
$125 ($100 Members)
A digital camera with settings beyond automatic is required.

ON VIEW

EVERYTHING BUT THE SHELVES
Through July 31, 2020
With all the work to be done cataloging and evaluating our collection we 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.
Sponsored by:
Dr. Richard & Janine Dreyfus

BINGO NIGHTS

Dec. 20 & Feb. 21 from 7 – 9 pm
Dec. 19, Jan. 3, and Feb. 13 from 6 – 7 pm
What’s better than an evening full of happy little trees, wig wearing and $2 beers? Not a damn thing. Therefore, we’ll be showing classic episodes of *The Joy of Painting* once a month. Paints, brushes and wigs provided. $5 plus the price of admission for non-members and FREE for members. Register online.

Dec 26 & Feb. 7 from 6 – 7 pm
Ever look at a famous work of art and think “I could do that”? Well here’s your chance. The challenge? Can you counterfeit a famous work of art from our collection? We’ll provide the materials and even have an artist on hand to help you make your fake. $15 for non-members and $10 for members. Register online.

Dec. 27 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 medium. $5 for non-members plus the price of admission and FREE for members.

ASHLEY PASTORE: EVERYDAY MONUMENTAL
Through March 1, 2020
Ashley Pastore transforms lottery tickets, old newspapers and even the dust she collects while cleaning houses into monuments of nostalgia. The artist’s goal? To get us to think about time, specifically the ordinary moments and rituals that fill our daily lives.
Sponsored by:
OPEN-MIC POETRY

Jan. 10 & Feb. 13 from 6 – 7 pm
Why not? We’ve got a microphone. Stop by to read or listen. It’s a great way to meet other writers in the area, workshop your newest poem and get a sense of the local writing scene.

ART CRITIQUE

Jan. 3 & Feb. 7 from 6 – 8 pm
Working on a new piece? Want feedback? Bring it to one of our monthly critiques. Get together with other local and regional artists to share and discuss your work. It’s a great way to meet fellow artists and strengthen the artist community in Erie. Professional and amateur artists welcome.

MLK DAY PRE-MARCH

Jan. 20 starting at 10 am
This year the EAM is partnering with the MLK Center to host the Martin Luther King Jr. Day pre-march ceremonies at the Erie Art Museum. Sponsored by:

N64 TOURNAMENT

Jan. 24 from 6 – 8 pm
That’s right millennials! The EAM is hosting its first ever N64 Mario Kart Tournament. If video games are an artform (and they certainly are), then Mario Kart is a bonafide masterpiece. We’ll have games going on all over the building. $10 buy-in. Single elimination. Cash prizes for those who finish in the top three.

ON VIEW

BRETT KERN: THE LOST WORLD
Through Aug. 16, 2020
The tagline of Jurassic Park: The Lost World reads “Something has Survived”, and this is undeniably true for Brett Kern. What survived? Brett’s infatuation with the pop culture of the 80s and 90s. A master of clay, Brett’s sculptures are fun, smart and nothing short of exceptional. Sponsored by:

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ART HIST. JEOPARDY

Dec. 12 & Feb. 20 from 6 – 7 pm
A fun way to spend an evening with friends at the Erie Art Museum. What is Art History Jeopardy? That is correct.

HANDS-ON

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

BEST OF
Jan. 10 from 6 pm – 7 pm
Picasso, Matisse, Whistler, Warhol, Lichtenstein and more. We’re putting out the best of the Museum’s collection for you to get your hands on.

ART TALK

DRAG BINGO

Jan. 17 from 7 – 10 pm
It’s bingo, but with a hell of a lot more pizzazz! Between games enjoy performances by Erie’s favorite queen Rebecca Mae and others. Cash bar, prizes and more. $30 for non-members and $15 for members. Entrance fee covers your first six cards. Additional cards $3 each. Register online. Sponsored by:

SEX IN ART
Feb. 14 from 6 – 7 pm
Nothing better than some good ol’ fashion art history to get you in the mood for Valentine's Day. So, let’s talk about sex. You may want to leave the kids at home for this one. $5 for non-members plus the price of admission and FREE for members.
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.

ON VIEW

BILL BRADY
Through Aug. 1, 2020
It doesn’t take much to enjoy the work of local artist Bill Brady. Playful, beautiful and touchable. Bill’s sculptures are easily some of the most beloved things at the Museum.

Sponsored by:

ART CLASS

LIGHTROOM EDITING FOR BEGINNERS
with Erica Whiting
In this class you’ll learn how to use Lightroom. Specifically, how to organize your photos, import + export, adjust color, exposure and other tools to correct and enhance your photographs. Register online.

Class Meets: 2/6/, 2/13 and 2/20
from 5 – 7 pm
$125 ($100 Members)
A laptop with Adobe Lightroom software is required for this course.

SECOND SUNDAYS

Second Sundays are perfect for spending time with your kids or grandkids at the Museum. Different art making activities every month plus admission is Pay-What-You-Wish.

SNOW GLOBE MAKING
Dec. 8 from 2 – 4 pm
Looking to shake it up a little with the kids before the holidays? Then you’re in luck because we’re making snow globes.

MOBILE MAKING
Jan. 12 from 2 – 4 pm
Hangout with us and make mobiles out of pipe cleaners and other fun materials. Plus, we’ll see how big we can make a collective mobile.

TOTEM FIGURES
Feb. 9 from 2 – 4 pm
We’ll be using boxes, old toys and junk drawer items to make totems. Plus, we’ll need your help to make a few giant ones.

Sponsored by:

OPEN LATE

THURSDAY & FRIDAY NIGHTS
Open till 9 pm
Stop by after work or before dinner to grab a $2 beer, listen to live music, make art or just hang. FREE parking after 5 pm.
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. Register online.
Class Meets: 1/9, 1/16, 1/30, 2/6 and 2/13 from 4 – 6 pm
$125 ($100 Members)
Materials not included.

January 1st at 12 pm
The Museum will send objects approved for deaccession to Ploss Auction House in Corry, PA for their New Year’s Day Antique Extravaganza auction. To learn more about the deaccessioning process see pages 2-3 of this issue.

Interested in art history? Want to learn more? Well then, we’ve got just the thing for you—a five-week art history course taught by our Director. Register online.
Class Meets: 1/2, 1/9, 1/16, 1/23 and 1/30 from 6 – 8 pm
$200 ($150 members)

CHUCK JOHNSON
Through June 1, 2020
Chuck Johnson’s sculptures are like visual poetry. Featuring stacks of endangered animals, medieval churches and gas-powered machines, Chuck’s sculptures express his growing concern for the state of the modern world.
Sponsored by:
Felix Gonzalez-Torres

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

Gonzalez-Torres, “Untitled” (L.A.), 1991 is jointly owned by Art Bridges and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

“Without the public these works are nothing… I ask the public to help me, to take responsibility, to become part of my work, to join in.”

- Felix Gonzalez-Torres

Felix Gonzalez-Torres (November 26, 1957 – January 9, 1996) is a groundbreaking American artist famous for the simplicity and impact of his installations. Gonzalez-Torres used everyday objects, such as candy, to make incredibly open-ended works of art. In the case of “Untitled” (L.A.), the audience may choose to take candy, thereby altering the work. Gonzalez-Torres believed that permanence was most attainable through the possibility for change, and believed in people’s ability to decide how to respond, adapt, interpret and engage with his art.

As well as the audience playing a significant role, each museum that has been lent the right to exhibit the work is also lent the right to make certain decisions, including what configuration the work is displayed in, at what quantity and how the work is regenerated and cared for over the course of the exhibition – as the work is equally about the possibility for decay and dissemination as it is about regeneration and immortality.

This work may also challenge your idea of art. While the work is intended to address many issues, it raises questions about value. For instance, how do we perceive the difference in value of a pile of candy that is not deemed art, versus one that is? “Untitled” (L.A.) will be on view at the Museum until August 1st 2020.
Chuck Close (born July 5, 1940) is an American artist living with prosopagnosia (a.k.a. face blindness). In the late 60s he began painting massive portraits that helped him better recognize and remember faces. By using photographs and a grid, Close was able to map and reproduce every detail of his subject’s face with photolike accuracy. Then in the 70s, he shifted away from this approach and started making pixel like portraits that give us insight into what Close sees when looking at a face. From a distance, the faces in these paintings are visible, but become completely unrecognizable up close.

Paul [Fig. 1] is on loan from the Philadelphia Museum of Art as part of the Art Bridges + Terra Foundation Initiative, a groundbreaking partnership model geared toward increasing public access to great works of American art. We selected Paul to pair with a woven self-portrait [Fig. 2] made by the artist from our own collection. What makes the pairing interesting is that Close tries to replicate what he does in paint with thread. Paul will be on view at the Museum until March 1st, 2020.

This is one in a series of American art exhibitions created through a multi-year, multi-institutional partnership formed by the Philadelphia Museum of Art as part of the Art Bridges + Terra Foundation Initiative.
How long have you been at the Museum and what do you do?
I've been at the Museum now for almost two years. In 2018, I was hired part-time as the Museum’s Registrar, and then later brought on as a full-time member of the tEAM. As Registrar, I take care of the EAM’s collection. That means making sure each object is accounted for and cataloged as well as properly housed.

Did you ever see yourself working in an art museum?
Yes and no. Working in a museum in general has always been the goal. I majored in history as an undergrad, and chose to pursue an M.A. in museum studies to keep my options open.

What's the most difficult part of your job?
Currently, the most difficult part of my job is trying to get a handle on the Museum’s collection of over 8,500 objects. Inventorying, cataloging and even just finding space to safely store everything has proven a real challenge.

What are you looking forward to the most at the Museum?
There’s been a major shift in how we care for our collection. What does that mean for the EAM? It means we’re applying best practices and professionalizing our approach to managing the collection. There’s just a real investment being made in the collection right now—more so than ever before. Whether new storage racks or the creation of a specifically designated endowment for future acquisitions, the organizational support is there and that’s exciting.

What’s your vision for the future of collection management at the EAM?
Collections management will be organized, professional and efficient. It will be planned from start to finish, beginning with what we collect and why. Objects will be stored efficiently and safely, with all relevant documentation easily accessible. We’ll adhere to Getty Standards when cataloguing objects in our database and all information will be easily searchable.
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

Inside Cover: Artwork by Carissa Brandt & Torie Pesta

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.

Erie Art Museum
20 East 5th Street • Erie PA 16507
erieartmuseum.org

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