CONTENTS

FROM THE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

CORNER OFFICE: LONNIE BUNCH

HIGHLIGHTS

  The Transformative Power of the Arts
  Responding to the Coronavirus
  Social Justice in the Arts
  Remembering Joan Loeb
  Express Yourself
  Celebrating 90 Years

EXHIBITIONS + SPONSORS

ACQUISITIONS

BY THE NUMBERS

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

GOVERNANCE

STAFF

MEMBERSHIP

PHILANTHROPY

AFFINITY GROUPS
FROM THE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

Usually, annual report messages from governance and leadership follow “looking back/looking ahead” schemes. But, this being 2020—like everything else—our message is different this year. What feels right is to offer a report from the middle of things—a perspective on the priorities of twenty-first-century museum practice; how we are continuing to rise to the challenges of a prolonged pandemic with equal measures of caution and creativity, and how, with courage and compassion, we are entering the conversation and engaging in action demanded by the social justice movements of this time.

In Spring 2020, with the many uncertainties of the pandemic unfolding around us, we set a goal of emerging from this better than we were before. We learned to look for the good in the bad, we began to recognize that what once felt like wants were now needs and reallocated resources to realize priority projects, and we have come to appreciate that the Chinese word for “crisis” is made up of the characters for “fear” and “opportunity.” As we work towards Spring 2021, we will continue to work from this mindset, with both grit and grace, as we leverage both the best of the virtual and actual worlds—offering safe choices online and onsite—for the greatest good and life learning of our beloved community.

A Radical Re-opening

What do these worlds look like? Our virtual world includes a new website that allows us to tell our stories and share our content in ways that are more relevant, compelling, and accessible. Our actual world now features an activated garden gate entrance and elevated security and hospitality that are blossoming into a dynamic visitor services practice.

Above: Current Board President Cathy Martin with Past Presidents Pete Knight and Leslie Sanders in the Caddell Sculpture Garden

Below: Museum Director Angie Dodson (center) with Jordan Haloran (left) and Ricky Hollon (right) of MAX Wealth Management at the opening of Charles Shannon.
Race, Unrest, and Museums

We believe that museums have a responsibility to leverage their best for the public’s best, that we have a social responsibility to the communities we seek to serve. This includes matters of racial inequity—so relevant to our city and region’s past and present, an issue where to be silent today, to be less than bold...is to be complicit. As the recently-departed, Alabama-bred congressman John Lewis said, and said again—we are all called to get into “good trouble, necessary trouble…”

We are not short on literature, resources, and examples of practice to help us determine what to do and what not to do in this realm. Our professional associations and invaluable, regular discussion groups with peers in each of our sub-disciplines keep us plied with and up to date on ideas and resources. Included in this Annual Report is a re-printed conversation between the New York Times and Lonnie Bunch, the Smithsonian Institution’s Secretary, on what it is coming to mean to be a twenty-first-century museum. We have found it to be a concise and powerful touchstone as we navigate both pandemic and race issues—as a staff, as a Board, and as a public-private enterprise.

Strategic Alignment

The good news for us is that the challenges brought forth by the pandemic and, especially, by the ongoing social justice movement rest well within the structure and priorities of our strategic plan. They also align with the comprehensive plan of our public-side partners at City Hall. The synchronicity of both the spirit and letter of the MMFA and Reed Administration plans seem to speak to their truth and place at the heart of our community’s present and future.

The cross-cutting themes that bind these touchstone documents and inform our thoughts and actions include: engagement—broadening representation/resonance/relevance, leveraging exhibitions, programs, strategic communications to drive participation; inclusivity—repositioning the museum to deepen its reflectivity of a 21st century Montgomery/River Region—internally, externally; and sustainability—of our art collections, finances, operations, and professional reputation.

In addition, we envision ourselves as key contributors to re-investing in our public schools and, most importantly, our students. In doing this work and strengthening the overall perceptions of the quality of life in Montgomery, we hope to help attract and hold businesses/industries/military and bring home the generations of Montgomerians who only see living in places like Atlanta, Birmingham, and Nashville as viable options for their families and career ambitions. Critical to this is using the City’s collective resources to their best advantage—partnering with Neighborhoods, Parks and Recreation, the Armory, and the Library to support arts-centric programs and engage networks, bringing the Museum deeper into the community and leveraging our institution as a vibrant contributor and asset to the City’s economic development and cultural tourism initiatives.

Angie Dodson
Director

Cathy Martin
Board President
SMITHSONIAN’S LEADER SAYS ‘MUSEUMS HAVE A SOCIAL JUSTICE ROLE TO PLAY’

Lonnie Bunch, who oversees a host of museums and libraries, says the role of cultural institutions is to make people “feel comfortable with nuance and complexity.”

By David Gelles

In 2005, Lonnie G. Bunch III became the founding director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. There was just one problem. The museum did not yet exist. There was no collection, no funding, no site and just one employee. Just over a decade later, the museum opened on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to rave reviews and huge crowds.

Last year, Mr. Bunch became the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, overseeing the museum he founded, along with a few dozen other museums and libraries, and even the National Zoo.

The coronavirus pandemic has shuttered those institutions for the time being, but Mr. Bunch has stayed busy. The Smithsonian is launching new digital tools intended to facilitate a dialogue about race, and Mr. Bunch is engaged in the debate about the removal of controversial statues and monuments.

This conversation, which was condensed and edited for clarity, was part of a series of live Corner Office calls to discuss the pandemic and the protests.

Where does the Smithsonian stand when it comes to reopening?

The reality is that this is not business as usual. One of the great strengths of museums is they bring people together who don’t know each other to look at an artifact or explore an exhibition. Well, all that gets called into question this year. We will have to do something like timed passes to control the number of people. Because the one thing we don’t want is crowds of people standing outside, waiting to get in. That’s a recipe for disaster. But we’re also going to think carefully about how we social distance within the museum. We are going to have cleaning protocols. We’re going to expect everybody to wear a mask.

Should museums wait until events are squarely in the past to confront them? Or is there a need for institutions like your own to engage with these issues in something closer to real time?

Cultural institutions, regardless of the subject matter, have to be as much about today and tomorrow as they are about yesterday. And that really means that one of the jobs of cultural institutions is to collect today for tomorrow. We have people out collecting during the different protests. We have people around the country sending us the videos that they shoot on their cameras. But collecting isn’t enough. So we’ve created a major initiative that looks at race, community and our shared future. It’s an opportunity for the Smithsonian to say, “How do we help stimulate local conversations around race?”

Many people say that this moment feels different, that it feels like there’s the potential for real change. As a Black man yourself, who is not only a student of history, but a steward of history, does it feel different to you?

I am hopeful, but not always optimistic. I’m hopeful because I see how often African-Americans believed in an America that didn’t believe in them, how often they dreamed a world that wasn’t there yet, and then worked strategically with allies to make that happen. Who would have believed in 1820 that there would be no slavery? Who would’ve believed in 1920 that
there would be no legal segregation? And so in a way, the opportunity to believe that change is possible is part of what is embedded in African-American history. But on the other hand, we also recognize the limits of that change.

On the surface, this is a different moment. I am taken by the diversity of people that are in the streets. I’m taken by the number of people throughout Europe saying Black Lives Matter. I’m taken by the fact that some police chiefs and some police officers are recognizing that their institution has to change, because it has reflected a kind of systematic racism where the police are considered not the friends of a community, but an enemy of the community. So all of that suggests that this just may be a time of transformation.

What I worry about is that after the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act and the Fair Housing Act, we also saw a law-and-order backlash. We saw people turning their attention away from finding fairness and dealing with racial justice to trying to bring law and order to control what they thought was an out-of-control community. And that led to mass incarceration. That led to people turning their attention away from what was the major point of the day. So I do worry a little bit that this could turn into that as well.

In your memoir, you recalled when President Trump visited the National Museum of African-American History and Culture. And you shared this detail that the president didn’t want to see anything “difficult.” I feel like that story is emblematic of this broader tendency in American culture where many people, again, simply don’t want to confront the reality of some of the things that have happened in this country. How do we get people to engage with these difficult chapters in our history, especially when the legacy of some of these incidents is still very much with us today?

Americans in some ways want to romanticize history. They want selective history. As the great John Hope Franklin used to say, you need to use African-American history as a corrective, to help people understand the fullness, the complexity, the nuance of their history. I know that’s hard. I remember receiving a letter once that said, “Don’t you understand that America’s greatest strength is its ability to forget?” And there’s something powerful about that. But people are now thirsty to understand history. I hear people all the time saying, “I didn’t know about Juneteenth. Help me understand about the Tulsa riots.”

History often teaches us to embrace ambiguity, to understand there aren’t simple answers to complex questions, and Americans tend to like simple answers to complex questions. So the challenge is to use history to help the public feel comfortable with nuance and complexity.

This is of course playing out right now in real time with the nationwide debate around taking down some statues and monuments. How do you think about what is appropriate?

The notion of simply pulling down statues means that you’re not really bringing historical insight. What you really want to do is use the statues as teachable moments. Some of these need to go. But others need to be taken into a park, into a museum, into a warehouse, and interpreted for people, because they’re part of our history. What is crucially important about this is that removing statues is not about erasing history. Removing statues in many ways is about finding a more accurate history, a history that is more keeping with the best scholarship that we have out there. So for me, it is about making sure we don’t forget what those statues symbolize. It’s about pruning them, removing some, contextualizing others and recognizing that there is nothing wrong with a country recognizing that its identity is evolving over time. And as this identity evolves, so does what it remembers. So it does what it celebrates.

So much of our history isn’t memorialized in that way. How many statues around this country deal with women? How many statues deal with African-American women who have changed this country?

For years there was a view that museums were sort of temples, places where artifacts could be collected and preserved and perhaps interpreted in a scholarly way, and that was about it. That has changed over the years, and many now argue that museums are really places for public gathering, for dialogue and that it is appropriate for museums to really engage in the issues of the day and perhaps even take a point of view. Where do you fall on that?

I believe very strongly that museums have a social justice role to play, that museums have an opportunity to not become community centers,
but to be at the center of their community, to help the community grapple with the challenges they face, to use history, to use science, to use education, to give the public tools to grapple with this. Museums always take a point of view by what they choose to exhibit and what they decide not to exhibit.

I’m not expecting museums to engage in partisan politics. What I’m expecting museums to be is driven by scholarship and the community. I want museums to be a place that gives the public not just what it wants, but what it needs. And if that means that museums have to take a little more risk, if museums have to recognize that they’ve got to do a better job of explaining to government officials, funders, why they do the work they do, then so be it. I would rather the museum be a place that takes a little risk to make the country better than a place where history and science go to die.

Who becomes the arbiter of what is appropriate to display in a museum? How are they making those decisions about how to present history?

It’s crucially important to recognize that in museums, you need to have people who care about a variety of subjects in positions of influence, like curatorial positions. That means that it’s crucially important to have a diversity, not just of race or ethnicity, but of ideas, to be able to sort of make sure that cultural institution is grappling with interesting questions that help the public. But I want to be candid. Twenty years ago, I wrote an article about the lack of diversity at museums. Today there is more diversity than ever before, but it’s still lagging behind corporate America, for example, which I never thought I’d say. So the challenge is for museums to live up to what they say they are, which are places that should model and reflect the best of what they expect from other Americans.

Above: Photograph of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC by Clark Van Der Beken.
The MMFA welcomed over 235 participants to the Museum in November 2019 to not only celebrate Alabama’s bicentennial of statehood but also embark upon an exciting, collaborative journey throughout the history of Alabama art. This collaboration began early on, including when Joey Brackner, Alabama State Council on the Arts (ASCA), coined the title of this three-day symposium, Bearing Witness: Art of Alabama, and MMFA interim director Dr. Ed Bridges lent his truly encyclopedic knowledge of the state that informed all aspects of the event. The symposium featured a compilation of contemporary, scholarly voices who presented on the vast social and economic changes that Alabama artists have observed and recorded over the past two centuries. Most of all, the convening was elevated by collegiality through presentations from artists, art historians, activists, and other professionals from all around the state and the country.

How does one cover the breadth of Alabama art and history in just a few days? The presentations began with a survey of portraits of early territorial inhabitants and ended with a discussion of the new National Memorial to Peace and Justice and the relationship between art and social justice. We learned about artists, both professionally-trained and self-taught; some you would expect, such as Anne Goldthwaite, Bill Traylor, and John Kelly Fitzpatrick as well as about the creations of those whose names we may never know. We also explored current and relevant topics such as the art of the Civil Rights movement, women in art, and the representation of industry in our state.

In addition to the presentations, gallery talks, and panel discussions, we celebrated the three significant bicentennial exhibitions of Alabama art on view at the Museum from 2016 to 2019. The first two were Sewn Together: Two Centuries of Alabama Quilts, a partnership between the Alabama Department of Archives and History, and Uncommon Territory: Contemporary Art in Alabama, which highlighted art of the here and now from artists working around the state. The last exhibition, From Southern Shores to Northern Vales: Alabama Landscapes, 1819–1969, was on view during the symposium and included outside loans as well as works from the collection depicting images of natural themes from across the State. It invited visitors to examine our relationship to the land through images of agriculture and leisure, travel and home.

The formal celebration of statehood may have ended, but the art of Alabama remains ours to explore—whether walking through the galleries, contemplating in our sculpture garden, or creating in our classrooms. We are so fortunate to hold many works by noteworthy Alabama artists—both established and up-and-coming—who continue to not only forge Alabama’s identity as a State through their work but also define the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts’ role, past, present, and future. May we gather again soon to exchange ideas with our colleagues from around the state and across the nation with Alabama at heart.
Top Left: Presentation by Dr. Richard J. Powell, Duke University
Top Right: Presentation by Margaret Lynne Ausfeld, MMFA
Middle Right: Presentation by Dr. Michael Panhorst, Guest Curator
Bottom Right: Presentation by Chester Higgins, artist
Bottom Left: Installation of the 2019 exhibition *From Southern Shores to Northern Vales: Alabama Landscapes, 1819–1969*
Opposite: Art in Alabama Today panel discussion between Stan Hackney, Mobile Museum of Art; Dr. Jennifer Jankauskas, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts; Essie Pettway, Gee's Bend; and Peter Prinz, Space One Eleven; moderated by Amy Williamson Jenkins, ASCA, at the 2019 symposium *Bearing Witness: Art of Alabama*
Support for this program was provided by the Alabama Humanities Foundation and the Alabama State Council on the Arts. *Bearing Witness* was presented in partnership with the Birmingham Museum of Art, Expose Art (Montgomery), Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art at Auburn University, Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery, Mobile Museum of Art, and Space One Eleven (Birmingham).
During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with health and safety guidelines restricting indoor experiences and limiting traditional social activities, the MMFA rose to meet a unique challenge of creating new avenues for our community to connect with and through art. The result: moving art and exhibitions outdoors and developing virtual programs to encourage safe, remote engagement, both allowing participants to engage at the level of their comfort while enjoying art, reflecting on its messages, and even creating original work.

One such project is Art Walk, an open-air exhibition that is positioned outside the entrance of the Museum and wraps around Newell Lake, encouraging visitors to stay socially-distanced outdoors while engaging with art. The first exhibition in this fresh format, *Voices of Change*, responds to the ongoing call for social change and features ten of the 100 portraits by photographer Yousuf Karsh held in the MMFA’s permanent collection. The installation features portraits of individuals who have made an impact on our world through their leadership, ideals, words, and actions: Muhammad Ali; Marian Anderson; Joan Baez; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Nelson Mandela; Jessye Norman; Paul Robeson; Albert Schweitzer; Archbishop Desmond Tutu; and Elie Weisel.

These portraits, although taken many years ago, feel pertinent to this moment in time. Each individual whose likeness was captured in Karsh’s photographs contributed to finding justice, humanity, and democracy in our world. While profound as images alone, the portraits are also complemented by reflections from MMFA staff and volunteers, as well as an audio tour narrated by Montgomery artist and advocate Bill Ford. Detailing how each of Karsh’s subjects and their advocacy for justice impacted his own life, Ford’s commentary elevates the installation with a personal perspective while encouraging everyone engaging with the Art Walk to continue in the footsteps of these cultural icons and enact change in our own lives.

In addition to this new take on presenting art, the Museum ventured into realms of programming untouched before the pandemic, reinventing established, in-person offerings into virtual ones and developing new programs to better meet our community’s needs. Various live-streaming platforms and recording methods were utilized to safely reach and connect with audiences.

Successful programming during this era of socially-distanced interaction engages a variety of demographics, broadening our reach across the local community and beyond. Two of these programs, Creative Conversations and Artists+Activism, take traditional gallery talks and panels into the 21st century through Facebook Live, featuring a variety of artworks—some exhibited at the MMFA and created by nationally renowned artists, others existing in private collections and made by local artists with social causes in mind. Safer At Home Summer Camp is a collection of pre-recorded video lessons led by regional art educators, helping parents nurture
children’s self-expression while quarantined. Local Artists Live offers behind-the-scenes views of Montgomery artists’ works and studios, and Backyard Botanical Art is a virtual variation of Botanical Art Workshop (traditionally an in-person adult studio class held in the Caddell Sculpture Garden); both programs bring creativity directly into viewers’ homes during live-streams on Instagram.

This unprecedented time of isolation has seen the MMFA strive not only to keep all audiences interested in art but also, more importantly, to keep people connected through art. It is our genuine hope that these new approaches to exhibiting and programming helped Montgomerians feel our passion for and interest in the community as we continue to grow and move forward together.


Top Right: Photograph of the 2020 installation of the exhibition in Blount Cultural Park

Middle Right: Creative Conversations: Whimsy in the Garden with Jamey Grimes hosted by MMFA Curator Dr. Jennifer Jankauskas.

Bottom Right: Safer at Home Summer Camp lesson Warm/Cool Patterned Handprint Watercolor Resist led by Danellen DeHuff

The senseless and tragic murders of George Floyd, Ahmed Aubrey, Breonna Taylor, and other innocent African Americans that occurred in 2020 left our nation reeling. People took to the streets to demand justice and to voice opinions; they also looked to organizations to begin genuine institutional changes. Communities urged establishments to go beyond their solidarity statements, because a statement without transformative action is the same as complicity.

The MMFA staff were—and still are—very aware of the changes taking place within our social climate, both locally and nationally. We continue to survey the wider museum field to understand what role we might play as we believe in Lonnie Bunch’s sentiment that “…museums have a social justice role to play, that museums have an opportunity to…be at the center of their community, to help the community grapple with the challenges they face...to be a place that gives the public not just what it wants, but what it needs. And if that means that museums have to take a little more risk...then so be it” (for the complete quote, see pages 4–7).

Based on our survey, the Museum decided two things: silence was not an option and action was necessary. But what did that mean and what would that look like? The immediate response was to prepare and disseminate a solidarity statement to ensure our community members that we stand with them. Yet, we knew that this action alone was not enough. We formed a team of staff members to contemplate the best course of action, utilizing our collection and our partnerships across the city to formulate a thoughtful way to move forward.

We embarked upon this social justice journey in June, and through September we offered several virtual programs that embraced our collective diversity, shed light on the struggles that many of our fellow community members face, and explored how art can help us heal as a community and as a nation. These offerings included Artists+Activism, Creative Conversations, Art of the Civil Rights Movement in Montgomery, Art+Letters, and Local Artists Live. MMFA staff worked cross-departmentally to create an outdoor exhibition revealed in October of 2020, *Voices of Change* (see pages 10–11). All of these programs touched on societal issues through the lens of artists and helped frame (or reframe) the question that burns in everyone’s mind: how can we move forward together?

In addition to public-facing programs, we began working on internal initiatives to bring about systemic changes to the organization. Staff engaged in webinars, shared resources, and held discussions pertaining to social justice issues and the arts. Conversations were born as a result, revolving around the shortcomings and potential of the MMFA, and through these conversations it became undoubtedly clear that we, as an institution and as individuals, need to grow and evolve to better serve our community.

*Above: Photograph of the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March mural by Madison Faile and Sunny Paulk, Photograph by DiAnna Paulk*
Therefore, the MMFA leadership formulated a DEAI (Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion) team consisting of members from senior management and staff to strategically address issues within our Museum. A grant that focuses on DEAI work has been submitted to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to fund large scale changes. In the meantime, the upcoming year will focus heavily upon the DEAI team working together to push forward initiatives that will help the institution become a welcoming and inclusive place. The MMFA staff remains steadfast in this work, and we are committed to the equitable treatment of all.
A great art museum is the result of the work of many hands over multiple centuries. Europe’s great public art collections are a byproduct of royal and aristocratic patronage of artists and craftsmen, while America’s are the happy result of public-spirited, democratic ideals of service for the common good. Many of the finest art museums in the United States were born of the dedication and investment of philanthropists. From large metropolises to smaller cities, private donations of art and funds sowed seeds that eventually blossomed into great art collecting institutions.

The MMFA is an example of this distinctly-American cultural phenomenon. Beginning with the leadership of women such as the Museum’s first President, May Houghton, and donations from artists like Wetumpka’s John Kelly Fitzpatrick, the Museum first flourished because of a passion for public service and education. Houghton and Fitzpatrick were the first of many donors of resources and art, a long roster that denotes extraordinary, philanthropic generosity; on that roster, the name Joan Byck Loeb holds a very special place.

Traditionally art museum supporters assume one, at most two, specific duties, but Joan Loeb embraced many roles in her more than 20 years as a Museum trustee and donor. Joan was devoted to the gamut: gathering funds or other resources for projects, supporting the educational mission, and focusing attention on identifying objects to enhance the permanent collection. While she and her husband, James
L. Loeb, were active in multiple not-for-profit cultural organizations in Montgomery (including Old Alabama Town/Landmarks Foundation and the Alabama Shakespeare Festival) Joan’s personal, special passion was for art and what we can learn from the arts of the past. She relished her role as a volunteer educator just as much as she delighted in collections building: first through the Museum’s outstanding assemblage of more than 100 examples of First Period Worcester English porcelain of the 18th century and later as a supporter of outstanding acquisitions of 20th-century Studio Art Glass. These collections are composed of high quality pieces, an attribute assuring the perpetual educational use and appreciation of such distinctive objects.

Joan’s ability to work with the Museum’s curators to seek out and acquire these pieces was fueled by her endless curiosity with regard to the works themselves, the techniques used to make them, and the artists who created them. She was a compulsive learner for all her life. Her service as a member of both the Acquisitions Committee and the Decorative Arts Sub-committee and as a founder of the MMFA’s Collectors Society was enhanced by her willingness to acquire knowledge through scholarship; by exploring the art market, private collections, and dealers’ holdings; and then bringing that knowledge to bear when objects were considered for acquisition and later when they played roles in educational programming. She was more than a collector and donor—she was a partner who desired to make the MMFA’s collection the best, most practical asset possible.

No challenge was too daunting nor task too insignificant for Joan to address it with dedication and zeal. She enthusiastically helped wherever and whenever she was asked. She shared her vision and knowledge at every level of the organization. She encouraged innovation and promoted a balanced but determined perspective that the Museum could aspire to be a “crown jewel” of cultural organizations for the citizens of Montgomery. Her example of open-hearted and open-minded sharing, with any and all who visited the MMFA, is her own distinctive philanthropic legacy, which will be treasured by the institution for as long as the Museum serves the communities of Montgomery and the River Region.

*Top Left:* Erastus Salisbury Field (American, 1805–1900), Portrait of Augusta Mason Doten, 1833–1834, oil on canvas, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 1986.5.2

*Top Right:* Erastus Salisbury Field (American, 1805–1900), Portrait of Bartlett Doten, 1833–1834, oil on canvas, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 1986.5.1
Beginning in 2017, the Museum teamed up with the Montgomery Therapeutic and Recreation Center (MTRC), a City of Montgomery organization that serves individuals with physical, cognitive, and behavioral challenges, to build certain skills by learning about and engaging with art. Participants would register for the class through MTRC, visit the Museum, then create original works of art inspired by art seen in the galleries. Occasionally, Museum exhibitions of student art featured some of these works, but it was evident there was potential for something greater. After three years of evolving the partnership and strengthening the experience for its participants, the parameters of the class expanded to include a full exhibition dedicated to MTRC student art in the Museum’s ArtWorks Gallery.

By expanding the program, students had a unique opportunity: to not only create works inspired by specific art at the Museum but also see their original art displayed at the MMFA as a cohesive exhibition. In Gallery Art Class Exhibition, on view through January 2021, their artworks hang alongside photographs of the students working in class at MTRC and observing art in the galleries at the Museum. These images show the students engaging with art in a variety of ways while demonstrating the complexity of the full process. To help them prepare, William Lawson, Creative Arts Coordinator for MTRC, came to the Museum with the students, where they toured galleries, held discussions about works of art, and took notes about what they saw in order to prepare for making their own creations.

Lawson reflected on how the Gallery Arts Class continues to benefit the participating students: “The benefits of this partnership can’t truly be measured. The opportunity to visit the Museum, develop relationships with the staff and docents, and explore artwork in person are experiences that help our participants learn and grow as artists and individuals. Not only the confidence and pride that show in the work in this program but in the things they make on their own have been amazing to see.”

Even though this year’s class series was cut short due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the students finished an amazing selection of pieces that show their passions for learning about art as well as their skills and knowledge to create something new and deeply personal. The Museum education staff and docents involved in this project were greatly impacted by working with these students, so much so that everyone was excited to continue the partnership. Docent Frank Gitschier was particularly impressed with their style of teaching: “It was both hands off and instructive at the same time; teach but let each individual artist express herself or himself as they wished. So in addition to keeping their supplies close by [the students], I felt our job, then, was to encourage them as they expressed themselves through art.” Both the MMFA and MTRC look forward to continuing to nourish such growth through this partnership that brings crucial arts enrichment to an often-underserved population in our community.
“The opportunity to visit the Museum, develop relationships with the staff and docents, and explore artwork in person are experiences that help our participants learn and grow as artists and individuals. Not only the confidence and pride that show in the work in this program but in the things they make on their own have been amazing to see.”

William Lawson
Creative Arts Coordinator, MTRC
In the midst of all else, 2020 marked the Museum’s 90th year as an institution. Rather than sorting out a way to celebrate this milestone mid-pandemic, we found ourselves contemplating our Centennial in 2030, when there will most certainly be a celebration to end all others! Aside from all the jubilation, however, we wonder: If we continue to plan our work and work our plan, who will we be at 100? Audaciously, we envision the following.

Widely regarded across the River Region as a trusted cultural center, Museum visitation continues to grow year after year, getting ever-nearer to the 250,000/year mark. Our exhibitions continue to pack ‘em in, as do our large-scale annual events. Participants who first find their way to the Museum because of an exhibition or event now return regularly to participate in our ongoing programs for youth and adults, and visitors of all ages continue to flock to our recently-reinvigorated ArtWorks—its interactive spaces, studios, and galleries. Entire grade levels from public school systems around the Region experience a museum visit that connects to and enhances core curricula. Travelers visiting Montgomery as part of their Civil Rights pilgrimages include the Museum as a must-see destination in their itineraries.

Together, the local community as a whole contributes to the Museum’s full value from our unique upbringings and individual perspectives. We are black and brown and white. While some of us have grown-up as museum-goers, others are just learning how to museum. Regardless, we are all home here at the MMFA. Some of us make art while some of us do not, yet we all value the
Some of us make art while some of us do not, yet we all value the intellectual and spiritual lift we get from being with art and with others who love it as we do...This place is ours.

intellectual and spiritual lift we get from being with art and with others who love it as we do. We are philanthropic donors, members, frequent program participants, and first-time visitors. We are a mix of folks who give to and get much from the Museum. This place is ours.

Behind the scenes, we are a creative collective who work from a sense of plenty and against the backdrop of best practice. We are generous, curious, and intellectually playful. We, too, represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Some staff bring energy and expertise to the MMFA from other museums, and others leverage their experience here to land their next great thing in another cultural setting. At forty-something, the building and grounds are well-maintained and mature. With plenty of room in the new art storage areas and plenty of endowment funds to fuel acquisitions and exhibitions, we are able to develop exhibitions for the museum and for travel, and arrange for others’ big and bold showcases of art to come here for our community’s enrichment, education, and pleasure. Financially, the City continues to recognize the Museum’s import and contributions to the community and citizenry and sustains its investment in us. The Association’s coffers continue to grow as well, adding value to the funding we receive from our public partners and other stalwart supporters at the local, state, and federal levels.

With the Museum’s house in order, we—in collaboration with our friends over at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival—are looking ahead and towards a new master plan for Blount Cultural Park. A cluster of artists’ studios dotting the landscape? A communal residence for visiting artists and actors? Only time will tell…
EXHIBITIONS + SPONSORS

CHANGING EXHIBITIONS

CAL BREED: SIGNS OF LIFT
October 26, 2019 through February 2, 2020
Support for this exhibition was provided by the James W. Wilson, Jr., and Wynona W. Wilson Family Foundation with additional support provided by sponsor Laura and Barrie Harmon and co-sponsors Dawn and Adam Schloss.

THE GOLDEN HOUR: REMBRANDT’S ETCHINGS AND SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
February 13 through March 15, 2020
This exhibition was sponsored by Joan Loeb with additional support provided by sponsors Winifred and Charles Stakely and co-sponsors Laura and Michael Luckett.

FROM SOUTHERN SHORES TO NORTHERN VALES: ALABAMA LANDSCAPES, 1819–1969
November 9, 2019, through January 26, 2020
This exhibition was made possible in part by a grant from the Alabama State Council on the Arts in celebration of the bicentennial of the state of Alabama. Additional support was provided by River Bank and Trust. This exhibition was part of the Alabama Bicentennial Commission signature event.

PIECES AND PATTERNS: QUILTS OF WEST ALABAMA
February 13 through March 15, 2020
This exhibition was sponsored by the Alabama State Council on the Arts. Additional support was provided by co-sponsor Dr. and Mrs. Robert M. Combs.

POWER, BEAUTY, AND WISDOM: WOMEN IN AFRICAN ART FROM THE MEHTA COLLECTION
November 9, 2019, through January 26, 2020
Organized by the Oglethorpe University Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia.
Support for this exhibition was provided by the Alabama State Council on the Arts with additional support provided by co-sponsor Helen A. Till.

PERSONAL TO POLITICAL: CELEBRATING THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN ARTISTS OF PAULSON FONTAINE PRESS
May 22 through July 26, 2020
Organized by Carrie Lederer, Curator of Exhibitions, Bedford Gallery, Lesher Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, CA.
This exhibition is sponsored by the Alabama State Council on the Arts with additional support provided by co-sponsor Renasant Bank.

CHARLES SHANNON
November 14, 2019 through January 5, 2020
Support for this exhibition was provided by Max Wealth Management.

ACCOMPANYING CATALOGUE
Personal to Political: Celebrating the African-American Artists of Paulson Fontaine Press
UBUHLE WOMEN:
BEADWORK AND THE ART OF INDEPENDENCE
August 8 through October 18, 2020

Developed by the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum, Washington, DC in cooperation with Curators Bev Gibson, Ubuhle Beads and James Green, and is organized for tour by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC.

This exhibition was sponsored by Laura and Barrie Harmon with additional support provided by co-sponsors Linda and Sanders Benkwith.

All exhibitions organized by the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts unless otherwise noted.

Top: Photograph of the 2020 installation of the exhibition Ubuhle Women: Beadwork at the Art of Independence at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

Middle: Photograph of the 2019 installation of the exhibition Power, Beauty, and Wisdom: Women in African Art from the Mehta Collection at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

Bottom: Photograph of the 2019 installation of the exhibition Cal Breed: Signs of Lift at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

Opposite Page: Photograph of the 2020 installation of the exhibition Personal to Political: Celebrating the African American Artists of Paulson Fontaine Press
PERMANENT COLLECTION EXHIBITIONS

AUTHORITY FIGURES: TRADITIONAL AFRICAN SCULPTURE
FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE MMFA
September 26 through December 6, 2020

HANS GROHS: LAND’S EDGE
January 11 through March 15, 2020

WILL HENRY STEVENS
February 13 through March 15, 2020

SECRET WORLDS
August 11 through September 20, 2020

NEW GARDEN TEMPORARY INSTALLATIONS

ROUGH ‘N TUMBLE
Patrick Dougherty (American, born 1945), Rough 'n Tumble,
2020, cherry laurel, ligustrum, and sweet gum gathered from the
Montgomery area
March 2020 through early 2022
This installation was sponsored by Laura and Barrie
Harmon and John Caddell with additional support by
cosponsors Warren Averett, Bargainer Davis Williams
Architects Associated, and Valley Bank and additional
in-kind support by Warren Barrow. We appreciate the aid
of multiple City of Montgomery Departments including
Maintenance, Lagoon Park Trails, and Urban Forestry for all
of their efforts in bringing this project to fruition.

TARAXACUM
Jamey Grimes (American, born 1976), Taraxacum, 2020, aluminum,
Lent by the artist
May 2020 through March 2022
This installation is sponsored by Dr. and Mrs. Barry L.
Wilson with additional support provided by sponsors
PowerSouth and ServisFirst Bank and co-sponsors Gage
and Mark LeQuire.

RECLINING NOCTURNE 3
Karen LaMonte (American, born 1967), Reclining Nocturne 3, 2016,
rusted iron, Loan courtesy of Karen LaMonte
June 2020 through June 2022
Exhibitions of student artwork in the ArtWorks Gallery are made possible by Regions Bank.

**LIFE IN PICTURES**  
September 28 through November 15, 2019  
Inspired by the exhibition *History, Labor, Life: The Prints of Jacob Lawrence.*

**LOCAL LANDSCAPES**  
November 22, 2019 through January 17, 2020  
Inspired by the exhibition *From Southern Shores to Northern Vales: Alabama Landscapes, 1819–1969.*

**YOU COUNT: STUDENT RESPONSE TO THE 2020 CENSUS**  
January 17 through June 14, 2020

All exhibitions organized by the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts unless otherwise noted. All permanent collection based exhibitions were supported in part by a grant from the Alabama State Council on the Arts.

**Top Left:** Tara Samant (5th Grader at The Montgomery Academy), *Lend a Hand – You Have to Complete the Census*, Instructor: Bee Lee Tullos

**Top Right:** Taniyah Flynn (11th Grader at Success Unlimited Academy), *Everyone Counts*, Instructor: Barbara Grimes

**Bottom Right:** William Corbitt (12th Grader at Stanhope Elmore High School), *Our Flag*, Instructor: Mindy Buckley

**Bottom Left:** Jahari Foster (12th Grader at Park Crossing High School), *Your Voice Counts*, Instructor: Brandi Carroway

**Opposite Page:** Photograph of the 2020 installation of Patrick Dougherty’s Rough ‘n Tumble at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
REINSTALLATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BLOUNT COLLECTION

In 1988, the Museum opened in Blount Cultural Park with a new collection of American paintings under its new roof. This group of forty-one paintings, given by Blount, Inc., instantly elevated the Museum’s holdings, making its American painting collection one of the finest in the Southeast. For the next 30+ years, the Blount Collection works were rarely removed from their assigned places in the galleries.

In 2018, staff identified a refresh of the interpretation of the permanent collection as a priority within the strategic plan. Over the summer of 2019, a team of curators and educators eked out time in their busy schedules to develop a “voice” for new permanent collection labels, beginning with the Blount paintings. With an agreed-upon approach in place, the challenge then became: when and how to develop and install these new visitor-centered “chats” in the midst of all else always going on at the Museum.

Enter the 2020 pandemic. With the Museum’s galleries closed to the public for seven months, staff seized the opportunity to repaint the galleries, reorganize the installation of the works, and—alas—reinvigorate those labels. Today’s visitors experience Blount Collection galleries replete with new, visually striking groupings of works and labels crafted with visitor resonance and relevance in mind.

And, this is only the beginning. In the months and years to come, visitors will come to enjoy similarly reimagined permanent collection galleries throughout the Museum. We are delighted to realize this strategic priority as it better positions us to welcome into the Museum a wider range of River Region residents and visitors and to further-strengthen our renown as a vibrant cultural resource in the Southeastern region and well beyond.

Above: Winton “Red” Blount and his wife, Carolyn, from the MMFA photography archives
Left: Photograph of the 2020 reinstallation of the Blount Collection at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
ACQUISITIONS

**Baga Peoples**  
(African, Guinea)  
*Mask (D’mba)*, 20th century  
Wood, raffia, and brass tacks  
Gift of Dileep and Martha Mehta in honor of Director Emeritus Mark M. Johnson, 2019.10

**Thomas Chambers**  
(American, born England, 1808–1866/1869)  
*View of Niagara Falls with Table Rock*, about 1880  
Oil on canvas  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.1

**Raoul Dufy**  
(French, 1877–1953)  
*Baigneuse*, about 1930  
Etching and aquatint on paper  
Gift of John Scott in memory of his wife, Elizabeth Hill Scott, 2019.7

**Jamey Grimes**  
(American, born 1976)  
*Roil*, 2017  
Corrugated plastic  
Gift of the artist, 2019.9

**Carole Harris**  
(American, born 1943)  
*Way Out West*, 1991  
Cotton and cotton/polyester blend  
Bequest of Kempf Hogan in memory of his parents, Helen Kempf Hogan and Romain Hogan, 2020.5.1

**Ammi Phillips**  
(American, 1788–1865)  
*Portrait of Mr. Abram Burton*, about 1830–1835  
Oil on canvas  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.2

**Ammi Phillips**  
(American, 1788–1865)  
*Portrait of Mrs. Abram Burton*, about 1830–1835  
Oil on canvas  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.3

**Juanita Rogers**  
(American, 1934–1985)  
*Untitled (Duck)*, about 1980  
Unfired earthenware with applied pigment  
Gift of Penny Weaver, 2019.8

**Mamie Saxton**  
(American, dates unknown)  
*Rocky Road to Kansas*, 1991  
Cotton and cotton/polyester blend  
Bequest of Kempf Hogan in memory of his parents, Helen Kempf Hogan and Romain Hogan, 2020.5.2

**Dread Scott**  
(American, born 1965)  
*A Man Was Lynched by Police Yesterday*, 2017  
Screen print on canvas  
Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Association Purchase, 2020.3

**Paul Scott**  
(English, born 1953)  
*Selma*, 2019  
From the series, *Scott’s Cumbrian Blue(s), New American Scenery*  
In-glaze screen print (decal) on salvaged Syracuse China with pearlware glaze  
Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Association Purchase, 2020.4

**George Segal**  
(American, 1924–2000)  
*Chance Meeting*, 1989  
Bronze figures, cast aluminum pole, and aluminum signs  
Gift in memory of Samuel Leopold Schloss by the Samuel L. Schloss Family Foundation with additional funds provided by the Sara Lee Corporate Art Collection by exchange, 2020.1.1-4 a-e  
© 2021 The George and Helen Segal Foundation/Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY

**Worcester Porcelain Factory**  
(English, established 1751)  
*Chestnut Basket*, about 1765–1770  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.4

**Dish**, about 1760–1770  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.5

**Dish**, about 1770  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.6

**Fluted Gillyflower Dish**, about 1770–1775  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.7

**Plate**, about 1768–1770  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.8

**Plate**, about 1770  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.9

**Saucer**, date unknown  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.10

**Sucrier and Cover**, about 1765  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.11 ab

**Sucrier and Cover**, about 1765  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.12 ab

**Teapot and Cover**, about 1760  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.13 ab

**Teapot and Cover**, about 1760  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.14 ab

**Teabowl**, about 1762–1765  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.14.1

**Saucer**, about 1762–1765  
Porcelain  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Lucien Loeb, 2020.2.14.2
BY THE NUMBERS

VISITORS
Total visitor attendance 48,469
Visitors to ArtWorks 18,604
Annual events attendance¹ 3,164

Highest daily attendance:
Saturday, November 16, 2019 (Artist Market) 1,629

Highest non-event attendance:
Thursday, October 17, 2019 488

PERSONNEL
City of Montgomery staff 33
MMFA Association staff 7
Docents
   Returning docents 44
   New docents 5
Volunteers 92
Interns 7
Volunteer and docent hours 3,054
Conference attendance by staff 13
Conference presentations by staff 12

COMMUNICATIONS
Total online sessions 58,881
Unique online visitors 43,306
Social network followers² 12,014
Total email subscriber base 2,705

CURATORIAL
Works in the collection 4,194
Works conserved 3
Works part of outgoing loans/exhibitions 6
Works part of in-house exhibitions 153

Changing exhibitions 6
Collection based exhibitions 6
ArtWorks Gallery exhibitions 3
New acquisitions from funds 3
New acquisitions from bequests/donations 21
Total collections website sessions 3,808
Total collections website users 2,461

DEVELOPMENT
Membership
Members 658
   New members 81
Members-only events 5

Facility Rentals
Corporate events 5
Private events held indoors 14
Private events held in the Caddell Sculpture Garden 2
Wilson Auditorium performances 19

¹ Autumn Artfest, Groovin’ in the Garden, Artist Market, and Winter Wonderfest
² Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter
### EDUCATION

#### Tours
- Montgomery Public School (MPS) students\(^3\) 4,861
- Other Montgomery students\(^4\) 475
- Non-local students 203
- Adult group participants 160

#### Student + Teacher Programming
- Learning Through Art (LTA) students\(^*\) 215
- AP Art History students 10
- Average AP exam score (out of 5) 4.25
- Muses teen council members 10
- Teacher workshops attendance 72

#### ArtWorks Gallery
- Student works exhibited 222
- Schools represented 17
- Opening receptions attendance 321

#### Programming
- Paid studio class attendance (all ages) 518
- Youth and family program attendance 2,197
- Teen program attendance 192
- Adult program attendance 1,823
- Offsite attendance\(^5\) 606

#### Livecast Program Attendance
- Girl Scouts virtual attendance 187
- Adult* virtual attendance 1,842

#### Audio Tours
- Individual stops listened to 1,109
- Unique listeners 490
- Most popular stop: Adam Bodine, What You Say 68

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\(\text{* This program took place offsite at Wares Ferry Road Elementary School.}\)

Right: Adam Bodine (American, born 1986), What You Say, 2012, steel and cast iron, Lent by the artist

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\(\text{1 The MMFA provides tours to all MPS kindergarten and 5th grade students system-wide. This number also includes tours for all other MPS students.}\)

\(\text{2 Includes homeschool and private school students.}\)
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

(For the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020)

FY 2020 REVENUE + SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City/County of Montgomery</td>
<td>$ 3,370,295</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Earned Income</td>
<td>$ 651,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>$ 482,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Dues</td>
<td>$ 264,014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal, State, and Local Grants</td>
<td>$ 321,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum Store</td>
<td>$ 76,359</td>
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Total Operating Revenue: $ 5,166,089

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Expense Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and Benefits</td>
<td>$ 2,831,919</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>$ 646,307</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Maintenance and Utilities</td>
<td>$ 634,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials, Equipment, and Supplies</td>
<td>$ 46,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum Store</td>
<td>$ 59,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development, Marketing, and Facility Rentals</td>
<td>$ 277,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>$ 402,745</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Operating Expenses: $ 4,899,150
Thank You
The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, a department of the city of Montgomery, is supported by funds from the City/County of Montgomery; the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Association; federal, state, and local grantors; membership fees; and private donations. Programs are made possible, in part, by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Note
Numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar or percentage point. A final audited report of the year’s financial statistics may be obtained upon request from the Museum’s Accounting Department.
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Sarah Elizabeth Kelly
Associate Registrar
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Collections Information Specialist
Brad Echols
Preparator/Designer
Christen Napp
Assistant Preparator
Alice Carter
Librarian

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Dwayne Lacy
Evelyn Pettis
Rickie Posey
Wilma Robinson
Kevin Wallace

*Partial fiscal year

Above: Photograph of the 2020 installation of Jamey Grimes’s work Taraxacum (2020) at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
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Above: Photographs of performances of students from Alabama Dance Theatre during Move with Me at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts.
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Above: Photograph of the 2020 installation of the exhibition Pieces and Patterns: Quilts of West Alabama at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
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Left: Photograph of one of the performances during the 2020 Expressive Evening at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
Top Right: Photograph at the Pumpkin Art table during the 2019 Autumn Artfest at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
Bottom Right: Photograph of Art Talk at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
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Top: Montgomery Mayor Steven Reed addresses the crowd at the Move Montgomery event held in the Caddell Sculpture Garden
Bottom: Move Montgomery attendees stretch before heading out into Blount Cultural Park for exercise
Opposite: Photograph of Artful Yoga in the Caddell Sculpture Garden at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
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Above: Photograph of Baby and Me in the studio and ArtWorks at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

Bottom Right: Education Assistant Brandy Morrison, wearing a Roy Lichtenstein inspired mask, poses with a Museum visitor, wearing a mask featuring a printout of his face, at the Sculpture Garden gatehouse

Bottom Left: Curator of Education Alice Novak leads A.P. Art History students in a remote classroom session
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Opposite: Photograph of the 2019 Collectors Society trip to  
the Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama
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