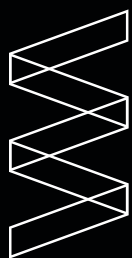




ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2020–2021



VIRGINIA
MUSEUM
OF
CONTEMPORARY
ART



Photo: Malik Emmanuel

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear friends and supporters of Virginia MOCA,

On July 1, 2020—the first day of the fiscal year of this Annual Report—quite frankly, I didn't know if the museum would survive the next 12 months. As some of you know, with no endowment and only three months of cash reserves on hand, the odds of making it through the pandemic were stacked against us. However, Board Chair Scott Duncan and I are writing these letters and reporting on the successes of the year, thanks to you—our dedicated community of supporters.

Not a day went by without something extraordinary happening—emails from concerned supporters alerting us to funding sources; help from Atlantic Union Bank in securing essential PPP loans; extensive financial analyses to understand mission-critical expense requirements; PNC and the City of Virginia Beach redirecting funds from a cancelled Boardwalk Art Show to underwrite free exhibition admission and support rebranding efforts to connect more deeply with our visitors; the community who trusted us and showed up in record numbers to safely consider the works on view; and the generosity of many individuals who wrote checks, sent lunches, and checked in regularly to make sure the staff was OK.

Coupled with the tenacity and commitment of the Virginia MOCA staff—all of whom took pay cuts and several of whom were furloughed for a significant portion of the year—the Museum made its way through the year and came out stronger. Indeed, we're stronger in many obvious ways, including new abilities to leverage technology to teach and connect, as well as new and refreshed relationships within our arts community. And, stronger in ways more subtle and profound—a new appreciation of the role Virginia MOCA plays in helping to strengthen our community by illuminating our shared humanity through the presentation of contemporary art that is both locally relevant as well as nationally resonant, and a confidence that our Strategic Plan is the North Star we hoped it would be.

As the new fiscal year dawns, I know this strength will carry us through what may come. Thank you for giving us this opportunity. We can't wait to see you.

Warmly,

Gary Ryan
Virginia MOCA, Executive Director



FROM THE CHAIR

As I write this, we are enjoying a happier summer than last year, although the Delta variant looms as a reminder that we are not free of the challenges of the pandemic. We are all still figuring out what the new normal will be, but it seems like we are moving forward together with cautious optimism and the sense that brighter—if different—days are ahead of us.

All of that is certainly true at Virginia MOCA, where much of our bright future is already evident.

The *Nourish* exhibition was an incredible success. Created partly in response to the pandemic, *Nourish* allowed Virginia MOCA to employ local working artists and also spark valuable community conversations on topics ranging from food justice and food deserts to sustainable farming and teaching elementary school students to garden.

Of course, we were not able to hold any large, in-person openings or other events, yet attendance at our exhibitions was at near record highs. People masked up, signed up online, and came to see the amazing art we had on display. I can't think of better evidence of our community's commitment to art and the Museum's track record of being a safe and welcoming place for all. Thank you to Sentara and PNC who underwrote admission for the fall and spring exhibitions, respectively so that community members could experience the creativity and collaboration within these walls at no charge.

The fact that we were unable to hold events in person forced us to embrace virtual programming. Using funds provided from CARES Act-related grants, we were able to purchase two virtual learning carts that allow educators to give live and interactive virtual tours from our galleries. Participants from every region of the country and even as far as Europe and Japan have joined us on Zoom for lively and informative

conversations with our gallerists, curators, and artists. We are also now able to provide tours to school-aged children throughout the country and Canada, in addition to our local school systems. Virtual programming is here to stay!

Remarkably, while rising to the challenge of the moment in all the ways described above, we were also able to implement a new Strategic Plan and are nearing the completion of a rebranding project, which includes a total makeover of our website. Please join me in thanking the incredible Virginia MOCA staff—we are here because of their tireless commitment and unmatched professionalism.

As we continue the journey to a post-pandemic new normal, Virginia MOCA is poised for even better things—strengthened, renewed, and ready to make an ever-greater difference in the cultural life of our region. On behalf of the entire Virginia MOCA Board of Trustees, thank you for your support—we would not be here without it. We look forward to continuing this amazing journey with you.

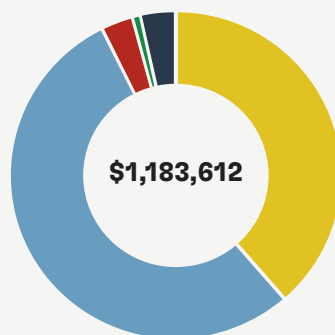
Scott Duncan
Virginia MOCA Board of Directors, Chair

FINANCIALS

ASSETS

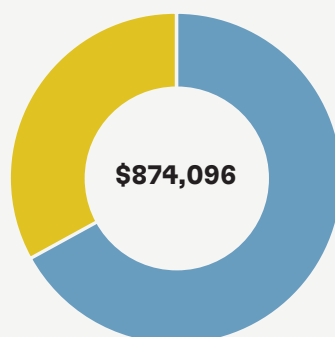
CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$457,704
Investments	\$640,916
Contributions receivable	\$33,255
Inventory	\$7,047
Prepaid expense	\$44,690
Total Current Assets	\$1,183,612



PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Leasehold Improvements	\$2,083,449
Equipment	\$564,173
	\$2,647,622
Less accumulated depreciation	\$1,773,526
Net Property and Equipment	\$874,096



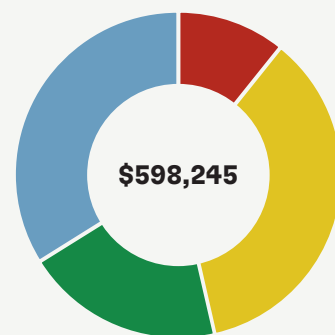
TOTAL ASSETS
\$2,057,708

TOTAL ASSETS **\$2,057,708**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts payable	\$64,442
Refundable advance – PPP loan	\$213,890
Accrued expenses	\$116,622
Deferred income, advance payments	\$203,291
Total Current Liabilities	\$598,245

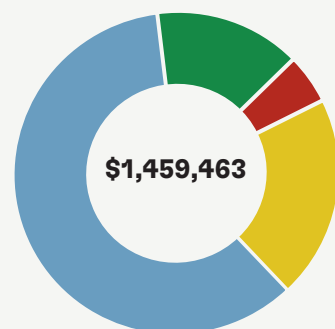


NET ASSETS

Without donor restrictions

Undesignated	\$298,132
Invested in property and equipment	\$874,096
Board designated operating reserve	\$214,588
	\$1,386,816

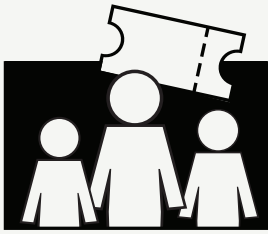
With donor restrictions	\$72,647
Total Net Assets	\$1,459,463



**TOTAL LIABILITIES
AND NET ASSETS**
\$2,057,708

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS **\$2,057,708**

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



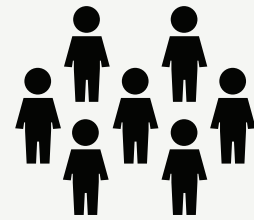
55,086

Total Attendees



4,876

New to File Households



12,858

Children Served



308%

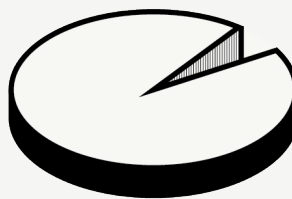
Attendance Increase

*included virtual



26,226,233

Media Impressions



49 of 52

States & Territories



1,358

Zip Codes Served



208

Artists on View

EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT



Photo by Lindsay Colette

At Virginia MOCA, we love creating access, building a deeper connection, and learning about art together. “We’re all about giving people opportunities to make personal connections and to ask, what do I bring to the table as a viewer that can help me relate to or understand this work of art?” says Curator of Education Truly Matthews. The pandemic presented some initial challenges in communicating with each other, but one unexpected benefit was the opportunity to reach even wider audiences—across the country and even the world. Because of the shift to virtual programming, we created videos from home, live-streamed events, and launched Virtual Virginia MOCA to share more in-depth information about exhibitions and hands-on activities to do at home. We started Instagram Live Chats for adults to interact with artists and Looking to Learn for families to join in a virtual story time and art project.

The education team was committed to staying connected to school-aged children and teachers and providing resources for learning. To engage students, we partnered with Streamable Learning—a national organization creating live, interactive, virtual field trips. This partnership allowed the Museum to communicate with hundreds of students throughout North America, including in Illinois, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, New York, North and South Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Texas. Students from as far as British Columbia and Ontario,

Canada joined in via the Streamable Learning app. To engage with teachers, we offered virtual professional development opportunities, allowing educators of all grade levels and subject areas to link up with contemporary art and artists.

Perhaps one of the richest opportunities to collaborate came with Virginia MOCA’s *Community Cookbook of Comfort*, which launched in spring 2021 as part of the *Nourish* exhibition. We invited local cooks, bakers, and makers—no matter their skill level—to share recipes of comfort to be part of a collaborative collection hosted on the Museum’s website. The recipes are meant to evoke a sense of time, place, and community—just one more way for the Museum to build connectivity with its community during a time it was most needed. The cookbook can still be seen on the website under the learning resources section.

Although the pandemic forced us to change the way we communicate, Matthews noted that the Museum and the education team never skipped a beat and never lost touch with the people we serve. “We worked really hard, we adapted existing content, we made new content,” she recounted. “As the pandemic winds down, we’ll be able to carry on some programming virtually because they’re still beneficial in reaching different audiences with their visibility.”

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: THE COHEN FAMILY

We're very proud of our educational programs that allow art lovers of all ages and abilities to further explore the concepts and ideas housed in the Museum. Viewing the work in our galleries can be great on its own. However, a fully immersive visit with our education team enriches the experience through critical thinking, hands-on opportunities, conversations with artists, and enhanced understanding of the processes and thought behind the art.

Because education is essential to our mission and connection to the community, we'd like to extend a special thank you to the Cohen Family who has championed these programs and their expansion. Arleen Cohen, an artist herself who's been connected to the organization since the '70s, believes in this mission and has been heavily involved in the Boardwalk Art Show throughout the years and taught art classes at the Museum. "None of it would be possible without my mother," says Arleen's son Benjamin, who has served as a trustee for the Museum. "She's the one that has pushed forward our family's involvement with the arts."

When Arleen's husband (Benjamin's father) passed away, the Cohens established a memorial fund focused on education, which had always been important to their family. Today, their contributions support scholarships so that 33 children coming from families with financial constraints can attend the same art camps and studio classes as their peers. Additionally in the last year their funding has supported virtual field trips for 2,217 local public school students, which included several Title 1 schools.



Photo courtesy of the Cohen Family

The Cohens have expanded their focus to another group of individuals who might have barriers to connecting with the arts: the special needs community. Benjamin remembers the day his son came home from school with a paper turkey he'd created by tracing his hand. While most parents or guardians have been the recipients of a hand-traced turkey, this moment stood out to Benjamin. He knew other students his son's age were going on field trips to art museums and strengthening their knowledge and appreciation for art by viewing and creating. But for his son who has special needs, the hand-traced turkey was the extent of his art education.

With a belief that all children should have equal access to art, the Cohens funded educational programs at Virginia MOCA to provide art classes and field trips to individuals with special needs. Gallery teachers communicate with schools to understand the kids' individual needs and structure the programs in a way that resonates. "It's about getting kids in front of museum professionals who have specialized training and can better relate to them, give them a better insight into art," Benjamin explained.

Thank you to the Cohen Family for helping to eliminate barriers that would prevent children in our community from experiencing the vibrant art and educational programming housed at Virginia MOCA. It's part of their mission and ours to ensure that not just some—but all—families in our region have ready access to relevant, contemporary art.

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\$5,000 AND ABOVE

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Sweetwater Cuisine
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Traditions Catering
Three Ships Coffee
Twist Martini & Associates
Virginia Media
Yummy Goodness
WHRO



Nourish Installation Video Still by Jeremy Bates

NOURISH SPOTLIGHT

During a time in the pandemic when connection was most needed, when conversations around food access were justifiably heightened, and when local artists were craving the sense of community derived from in-person events, our *Nourish* exhibit focused on bringing people together and bringing local issues to the forefront. From Feb. 5–June 6, 2021, *Nourish* featured newly created artworks by 12 artists who were paired with area food culture experts to collaborate and create at the intersection of food and art.

The exhibit followed three themes: food literacy, food justice, and food as connector. Each Virginia-based artist was immersed in the world of an expert—farmers, food security advocates, chefs, foragers, pediatric and school nutritionists, oystermen, and beekeepers—to create a piece of art following one of the three themes. The results were profound. Documentary Photographer Angela Douglas Ramsey was paired with Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Katie Abbott to explore relationships with foods and body image in both positive and challenging aspects. Artist Betsy DiJulio partnered with Farmer and Restaurateur Kevin Jamison to illustrate the differences between organic, polyculture farming and industrial agriculture—and the environmental effects of the latter. Painter Clayton Singleton collaborated with the St. Paul’s Community Development Corporation to create a painting depicting the challenges of simply accessing groceries for individuals living in a food desert.



Sam Hundley, *Queen Bee*, 2020. Mixed media assemblage. Courtesy of the artist.



NOURISH SPOTLIGHT

To gain a better understanding of the issues surrounding food insecurity in our community, Virginia MOCA staff volunteered time at Virginia Beach's Eastern Shore Chapel Food Pantry on Fridays. Before the pandemic, Eastern Shore Chapel Food Pantry would serve approximately 150 families a week. With loss of income, the need became much greater, and soon more than 400 families were coming to the Pantry in a single day.

“Volunteering at the Food Pantry at Eastern Shore Chapel brought all the *Nourish* research and conversations with artists to life for me,”

said Virginia MOCA Deputy Director Alison Byrne. “I saw firsthand that hunger affects people from all walks of life. Our most vulnerable neighbors need access to healthy and nourishing food, and each week an incredible group of concerned and committed community members volunteer their time to distribute food with compassion and respect to all who need their services. Our team was proud to join that group to provide food assistance and demonstrate our commitment to our community.” Virginia MOCA also partnered with the Foodbank to provide information and graphics related to the root causes of food insecurity, which was displayed in the Museum's ARTlab.

Along with bringing to light some of the issues related to food in our region through art, the exhibit sparked community conversations, which were held virtually. These conversations allowed audiences to connect with artists in a meaningful way, ask candid questions, and explore deeper some of the themes presented in the artworks.

The success of *Nourish* surpassed anything we could have imagined. We welcomed over 300 visitors a week, up 29% from previous exhibitions. Museum hours had to be expanded to accommodate the number of visitors, with timed tickets allowing 10 per half hour. Most surprisingly, although *Nourish* featured local artists focused on local issues, it attracted visitors from 45 states. This goes to show that yes, food and art bring people together. But, it's the richer conversations—the listening, caring, and supporting each other, our community, our land, and ultimately our futures—that nourishes us all.



Nourish Installation Photo by Echard Wheeler

