

12.4.14 Docent Forum, Part 1: Museum Topics

Agenda:

- Karleen Gardner, Director of Learning and Innovation
- Kristin Prestegaard, Chief Engagement Officer, Audience Engagement (Marketing/PR)
- Open Forum, facilitated by Mary Bowman and Jane Mackenzie, DEC representatives

Karleen Gardner: Role of Docents at the MIA

- **Background:** An Oct 30, 2014 article in the Washington Post stated that Hirshhorn Museum in Washington DC is ending its docent program and telling volunteers that they are not needed. Docents were replaced by interns and college students. This article was emailed among some docents with obvious concern.
- Karleen stated that the **our docents are very needed, valued and appreciated**. Our tour numbers speak to **the fact that people want to take docent tours** at the MIA.
- A new **docent class will be starting in Fall 2015** (more information below on this.)
- A new **Collection in Focus group on Contemporary World Art will begin training this winter**. This group will have 20 current CIF guides and 20 new guides.
- **Are current docents welcome to attend the Contemporary art lectures?** Key lectures will be repeated for AA guides and docents!
- How do you see the **docent program changing?**

- **Focus on new engagement strategies.** VTS will remain as an important skill, but the new docents will also be trained to “empower the visitor” with techniques from the **Artful Thinking workshop**.
- **NOTE: This session is available** on YouTube:

Artful Thinking (morning session)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3iT_XFId8w

- Under consideration is **flipping some of the classes**: having some online lectures at home and some “museum time” looking, thinking and discussing objects.
- Another emphasis: how different cultural backgrounds add new perspectives to art.
- In summary the future focus for docents is on 21st century learning skills and global citizenship.
- No dramatic changes are planned for the established docent program.
- Currently there are about 160 active docents/40 planned for the new class.

Debbi's additional comments

- Docent Forum video will be made available. Check with Brooke DeWaard for access.
- **Changes in the docent selection process.**
 - Prospective docents will apply online. Debbi sent out the “location” of the online application so docents may invite friends to apply.
 - As was done for the class of 2009, applicants must attend one informational session. Tentatively, 5 sessions are planned for Tuesday AMs and Saturday afternoons. Those unable to attend will have a make-up session.
 - There may be well over 100 applicants. Michael Bennes (Volunteer Coordinator)

will be helping Debbi with the application process. Goal is to have about 40 docents in the new class.

Kristin Prestegaard: Unfolding of the Birthday Year

- The 100-year anniversary will have events at the MIA and in the larger community.
- Jan. 1, 2015/The Big Weekend will include a surprise art installation, decorated cake contest inspired by our artworks, “pop-up” performance by the Twin Cities Gay Men’s Chorus, New Year’s Day Brunch, and “Surprise” Tours.
- There will be an offsite media campaign: on artsmia.org, billboards in the Twin Cities, social sharing on Twitter, etc. (similar to sending postcards on the website).
- **There will be a CORE event and a SURPRISE event each month. DOCENTS ARE NEEDED FOR POP-UP ART EVENTS IN THE TWIN CITIES IN MAY AND JUNE!!!**

January (1/7 is actual birthday).

CORE: **Masterpiece 1: “big name” artwork** from another museum will be on display in the Cargill Gallery. Masterpieces will appear in Jan, May, and Sept.

SURPRISE: **“Glam Doll Donuts” (bakery on Nicollet) shared with visitors.**

February

CORE: **Habsburgs Exhibition**

SURPRISE: **Flash Mob Frozen Art: the creation of an ice sculpture so large it can be seen from Google Earth.** Note: “Flash Mob” is a group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place & perform an unusual act for a brief time. Organized via telecommunications, social media, or viral emails.

March

CORE: Not enough seating in the galleries? Sit in style during March when **Room and Board will provide furniture to the galleries.**

SURPRISE: 100 musicians from the **Univ of MN Marching Band** will perform!

April

CORE: **Art in Bloom** will take center stage

SURPRISE: **100 Years of Wishing:** photos of 100 people ages 1 to 100 blowing out the candles on their birthday cakes.

May

CORE: **Masterpiece 2: “big name” artwork** from another museum will be on display in the Cargill Gallery.

SURPRISE: **Pop-up art reproductions around the Twin Cities** (extends into June). ***** **DOCENTS STATIONED AT WORKS OF ART** *****

June

CORE: **Mark Mothersbaugh: Myopia** Exhibition sponsored by US Bank

SURPRISE: **Pop-up Art work and art-wrapped water towers** will appear around the Twin Cities, possibly in St. Cloud, Duluth and Rochester.

July

CORE: **Leonardo da Vinci’s Leicester Codex & the Power of Observation**

SURPRISE: **Bike Night Surprise!**

August

CORE: **Big Public Birthday Party**

SURPRISE: “Paint by number” art cars. Park Events. Family-friendly bands.

Eat Street vendors. Children's Theater Events.

September

CORE: **Masterpiece 3: “big name” artwork** from another museum will be on display in the Cargill Gallery.

SURPRISE: **Crop Artist Stan Herd** will “grow” a giant art work near the airport and it will be seen by the people arriving and departing in planes.

October

CORE: **Eugène Delacroix and Modernity.** This is an MIA and London National Gallery Exhibit. There will be a “Founding Family” reunion.

SURPRISE: On the front steps of the MIA there will be **100 pumpkins** designed and carved by artists.

November

CORE: **Art of Wonder** – poems and drawings inspired by MIA works

SURPRISE: **Vending machines will dispense small artist-designed objects**

December

CORE: **Gifts from donors** will be announced

SURPRISE: **100 Favorite Things:** non-curatorial staff can chose their favorite art, write about it and have it posted in the museum.

See all the birthday news at artsmia.org/100.

- **“Surprise Visitors” will appear on Tours.** Five well-known celebrities will pop-up on MIA tours. If you know a “celebrity” who might be willing to “pop-up” on a tour, please ask them and then contact Kristin Prestegaard (kprestegaard@artsmia.org)
- **Post Your Story on the MIA Website.** There will be a Birthday Year section to record your personal stories. These will live on the website as a historical record. Go to artsmia.org/100 and post under “Share Your MIA Memory”.
- **Collection Highlights.** Curators have selected 24 highlights from the MIA collection. A little later in the year they will be put together in a brochure for our visitors. **Docents should try to include a few of these selected objects on their “Highlights” tours during the year.**
- **January 1-4 Birthday Tours. “Birthday Suit” Tours.** This will be a “Nudes” tour and may have some age limits.
- **“1915 Legacy Tour.”** January tour of the month includes objects acquired in MIA's first 10 years. Merritt Nequette has researched and created a list of “Legacy” artworks.

Docent Suggestion: Documentarian filmmaker **Frederick Wiseman’s 3-hour “National Gallery”** was reviewed in Variety. Relevant for docents because it “studies paintings and bears witness to staff meetings, curatorial discussions and gallery talks.”

NOTE: the film is currently in limited distribution. We will look into getting a copy when it is affordable/available on DVD.