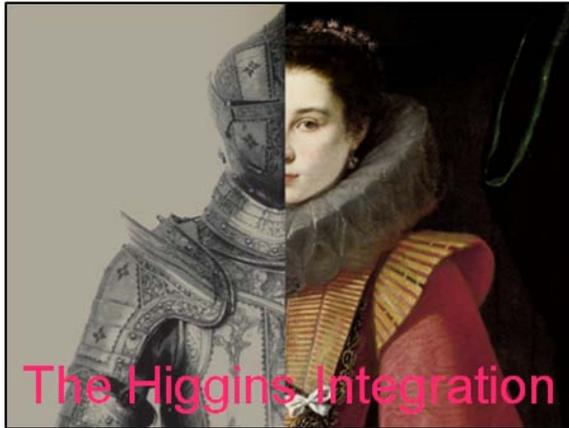




2013 was an outstanding year for the Worcester Art Museum— to say the least. It was a year of capacity building, with clear goals being met or exceeded. It was a year of game changers too; the Higgins integration, and the historic gift of Veronese’s Venus. It was also a year of momentum building and presenting the Worcester Art Museum as an up and coming force in the art world – as Judith Dobrzynski in her recent piece in the Wall Street Journal on us concludes: if the Worcester Art Museum isn’t “watched closely by other museums, it should be”.

But first things first: capacity building. While our capacity-building campaign is just beginning, the photo of the Kennedy to Kent State opening party demonstrates both how serious we take the task and how much fun can be had.

Of course, “capacity building” means nothing without context: what are we building, and why. In essence, our primary goal is to increase the number of visitors to 200,000 annually by 2020. This requires vibrant and diverse programs to attract people in the first place, substantial improvements to the infrastructure to provide a quality experience for this amount of visitors, and sustainable finances.



Of course, this year was in part defined by one of the largest capacity-building steps in the Museum's history: the integration of the Higgins Armory Collection. This possibility has been in the wings for many years, yet the vision for the integration only unfolded over the course of 2012 and concrete steps were made only this year. We are now moving forward at lightning speed, preparing for the closing of the Higgins at the end of December. Bittersweet as this change may be, we have two outcomes to celebrate, and many new chapters to write. First, that we were able to keep a treasure of national importance in Worcester. Second, the Worcester Art Museum will be transformed and galvanized in the process.

I want to thank the key players in an endeavor that required vision, faith, dedication and expertise:

- First of all, the presidents of both boards for their hard work, Jim Donnelly and Cliff Schorer.
- Second, our board and, notably, Catherine Colinviaux, whose expertise at every moment of the negotiation process was essential.
- Third, Suzanne Maas, interim director of the Higgins: Suzanne has been stalwart and gracious throughout this process, and I particularly benefited from her experience with institutional change.
- Finally, any thanks would be incomplete without crediting the staff of both institutions. Where our friends at the Higgins showed incredible dedication and professionalism while transitioning the institution that they love, my colleagues at WAM took on a differently complex task, that of an institutional integration, all while WAM is going through major – and time consuming - changes.



A major component of the integration is that of the collection. The Higgins Collection, in terms of quality and scope, is second in importance only to that of the Metropolitan Museum. It will add more than 2,000 diverse and historically significant objects to our current holdings of more than 35,000 works of art. Our inaugural exhibition, “Knights!” will open on March 29th 2014.

Our intention is to create permanent galleries of arms and armor, as well as using the Higgins artifacts to enrich our presentation of Antiquities, Asian and Islamic arts.

If you need a definition of a game-changing event for the Worcester Art Museum, the Higgins integration is definitely “it”.



Paolo Veronese (Italian, 1528-1588)
Venus Disarming Cupid, about 1555
Oil on canvas, 158.8 x 138.4 cm
Gift of Hester Diamond, 2013.50

This year, the Museum made not just one but two acquisitions that got national attention. The latter -- Hester Diamond's gift of "Venus Disarming Cupid" by Veronese. Our new Venus adds a luscious nude to an otherwise well-covered assembly of historical figures. She also shows that a midsized museum like ours in central Massachusetts can draw the attention of seasoned collectors from such places as New York City. Of course, it helps to have knowledgeable friends in the art world; this masterpiece came to us in honor of Rachel Kaminski, Hester's step-daughter, and member of our board since November of 2012.

You can see our Venus in her new home in our "[remastered]" exhibition, where she joins her contemporary, "Repentant Mary Magdalene" by El Greco, in a selection of more than 60 distinguished artworks by the next two generations of Dutch, Spanish, French and Italian artists.



Florentine, *Kneeling Figure*, about 1475
Polychromed and gilt terracotta, 88 x 40 cm
Gift of Linda and John Nelson, 2012.93

While time does not allow me to do justice to every single gift the Museum received over the past year, I do want to draw your attention to one other notable work: John and Linda Nelson's legacy gift. This kneeling young woman, probably Florentine from the 1470's, will be showcased soon. John was a Museum trustee from 1989 to 1999, and president of our board from 1996 to 1999. He passed away only in January 2013. Our gratitude goes to him and Linda.



Neolithic Jōmon Vessel
Middle Jōmon period (about 3500-2500 BCE),
central area of Kantō, Japan
Hand-coiled earthenware, 55 x 44 cm
Alexander H. Bullock Fund, 2013.29
Photo courtesy Mika Gallery, New York

Moving from gifts to purchases, I'd like to share with you the news about two spectacular additions to our collection of Asian art. The first, a Neolithic vessel from the central area of Kanto in Japan, is now the oldest work in our collection. This hand-coiled earthenware is from the middle Jomon period, about 3500 to 2500 BCE. Personally I can't wait to see it next to our other "younger" antiquities of Egyptian and Mesopotamian art.



The other, a superb Japanese screen from the first half of the 17th century. It was created for the refined taste of the aristocracy, to celebrate the new year: the hardy evergreen pines are emblematic of long life, dignity and power, whereas plum blossom, the first flower of the lunar calendar, represents the start of a new life cycle. This work will be on display in our Japanese galleries shortly.



These are also exciting times for our conservation team: we received a record number of conservation grants, totaling over half a million dollars. This includes funds to hire a paper conservator to care for our large collection of works on paper.

In addition, we were awarded a grant to restore our magnificent tapestry of the Last Judgment, which hung in the Renaissance Court before it was taken off view in the early 1990s for conservation reasons. We are determined to display this spectacular tapestry again in the galleries.



Rita Albertson, the head of our conservation team, recently accompanied the “Last Judgment” to the town of Mechelen in Belgium, home of the most sophisticated tapestry conservation company in the world.

The Royal Manufacturers De Wit,
Mechelen, Belgium



You may not be familiar with these two Hogarth portraits, of an elderly man and his trophy wife, from the Museum Collection. Specialists of British art consider these paintings to be far superior in quality to most other portraits by Hogarth in US collections and at par with the best that there is in the world. However, due to their deteriorating condition, these two paintings have not been on display since 2008. The grant we received for their restoration is highly competitive and awarded by an international panel of art specialists sponsored by the most prestigious annual art fair, TEFAF, in Maastricht in the Netherlands. Here, as in a lot of other cases, both Cliff Schorer and Rachel Kaminski were instrumental in the success of this project. Watch out for the Hogarth rehang in 2014.....

Jeppson
Idea Lab



I have neither time nor words to fully convey what the Jeppson family has done for this Museum. John, who passed away only 11 months ago, and Marianne have always been a force behind this institution, encouraging us to innovate and think outside the box. We therefore thought that the Jeppson Gallery, which previously hosted American Impressionists, would be the ideal home for our new IdeaLab. On the photo you see Marianne in the middle, her daughter, Ingrid on one side and her daughter-in-law and colleague of mine, Nancy Jeppson, on the other.

The Jeppson IdeaLab is a place where visitors can experience what happens ‘behind the scenes’ in our museum, the stories that cannot be told by traditional labels. Our team of curators and conservators spend a lot of time solving questions: Where does this work come from? How does it fit in the Museum? How will we care for it? Fascinating stories emerge, that conventional labels can only partially capture.



(left)
Statue of a Woman
 Canosan
 Terracotta with white slip
 3rd century BCE
 Private Collection

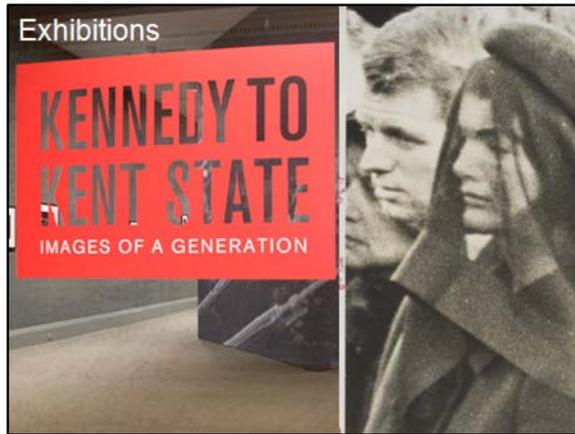
(center)
Statue of a Woman
 Canosan
 Terracotta with white slip
 3rd century BCE
 Museum purchase, 1927.45

(right)
Statue of a Woman
 Canosan
 Terracotta with white slip
 3rd century BCE
 Stoddard Acquisition Fund, 2008.50

Our first Jeppson IdeaLab project opened in June and focused on “Orantes”:
 mourning figures placed in tombs that date back to the third century BCE. These
 figures were excavated in the Southern Italian town of Canosa. Fewer than 50 of
 them exist in the world, and the Worcester Art Museum is the proud custodian of two,
 and host of one other.

The Museum purchased two Orantes in 1927 with the purpose of displaying them
 together. However, one of the figures arrived shattered in hundreds of pieces. This
 broken figure languished in a storage box in the basement until its recent
 rediscovery. The other, intact figure was sold in the 1940s. It travelled widely,
 including a stint in Tasmania, and only recently found its way back to us with the help
 of Sothebys, from where the Museum repurchased it. A third Orante figure is on long-
 term loan to the museum from an anonymous collector.

Paula Artal-Isbrand, our objects conservator, oversaw the painstaking conservation
 work on all three figures and this IdeaLab project. She worked with our audience
 engagement team and exhibition designers on a presentation that includes a video
 and iPads, with the help of students of Worcester State University. Over time, we
 hope to engage students from all 13 colleges in Worcester County in Jeppson
 IdeaLab projects.



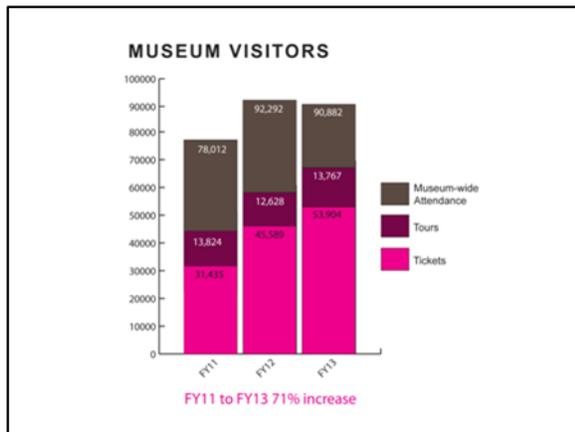
Elliot Erwitt, American, born in France, 1928
Jacqueline and Robert F. Kennedy at the Funeral of John F. Kennedy
 November 25, 1963, gelatin silver print
 Gift of Howard G. Davis, III A.K.A. David Davis, 2011.139

Now, 50 years after the assassination of President Kennedy, the full import of the seismic change of that era, can truly be appreciated. The image speaks for itself: taken from the major exhibition of last year, “Kennedy to Kent State: Images of a Generation”. The show was a deeply moving experience, not only because of the iconic character of the individual works, but also due to the resulting programs and discussions. The installation also attests to the talents of the curatorial team, David Acton and Nancy Burns, as well as that of our exhibition designer, Patrick Brown and his team.

This exhibition is also one of many examples of where our Corporators have made a real difference in the life and collections of the Museum. The incredible gift by David Davis of over 100 photographs could not have happened without the encouragement of his friend, James Hogan. I would also like to thank our Business Partners for their support of this exhibition.



Another highlight is the 10th installation of the “Wall at WAM”, overseen by our Curator of Contemporary Art, Susan Stoops. Susan worked with Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison, two distinguished artists who have strong Worcester connections; Robert is a former art faculty member at the College of the Holy Cross. Their fascinating response to the Worcester Hunt Mosaic was based on many conversations with Susan, and also no doubt on their exposure to our Museum during their years in Worcester.



It is common wisdom that museum visitation is driven by exhibitions. However, quality and number alone aren't enough. Exhibitions need to be determined as much as possible with targeted audiences in mind. To successfully reach these audiences, they have to benefit from robust marketing and equally robust programming. This requires institutional alignment and strategic allocations of resources. When you look at our numbers for 2011, 2012 and 2013, you can see a clear trend and increase over time – which hopefully means that we are on the right track.

- In 2011, the exhibition program was rich but not sufficiently supported by marketing – visitation was low.
- In 2012, we increased the marketing budget, which helped drive visitation to Ron Rosenstock's wonderful exhibition of photographs. We also benefited from publicity around the opening of the Salisbury doors and the free summer.
- In 2013, "Kennedy to Kent State" and the repeat free summer, thanks to Lisa Kirby Gibbs and the Kirby Foundation, drove the increase, as well as initiatives such as Free Fun Friday, organized in conjunction with the Highland Street Foundation.

As you can see on this slide, in the past three years, this Museum was able to grow visitation to the galleries by more than 70%. To maintain this trend, we need to focus on two core capacities: curatorial and audience engagement.

Curators are responsible for every piece of art in their department, and for developing and participating in a dynamic, ambitious exhibition schedule. They are critical in engaging collectors and supporters of the museum. Typically, museums of our size have at least six curators in key collection areas. We only have three at this point in time. Fortunately, things are changing.

Just last month, our international search for a Director of Curatorial Affairs and Curator of European Art concluded successfully. We announced the appointment of Jon Seydl, currently curator of European Art at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Jon has all that it takes to lead the curatorial team to the next level, with major exhibitions under his belt, as well as exposure to the inner workings of institutions such as his current museum, the Getty and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Jon will start at the beginning of January 2014 and we are very excited.

We were able to conduct this search thanks to the encouraging progress of a special endowment for the position set up in Jim Welu's honor. Members of our community stepped forward with important gifts, notably Jean McDonough and the Crowley family, as well as our past board presidents, under the leadership of Cliff Schorer. We hope to fully fund this position by growing the endowment in Jim's name over time.

Also, at the beginning of this calendar year, the Mellon Foundation agreed to provide half a million dollars towards the Curator of American Art. Jon will make it a priority to fill that position as soon as possible.

Finally, a third curatorial position will be created with the Higgins integration. The covenants with the Higgins and the funding from the Higgins will guarantee and support a Curator of Arms and Armor, who will also be able to oversee our currently undervalued collection of European Medieval Art.

In sum, within FY 2013, funds were secured to double WAMs curatorial positions from three to six. This is true capacity building, of which I am both tremendously proud and excited.

While curatorial capacity and expertise is one essential component of a better and more attractive museum, it alone is not sufficient to drive visitation to our lofty goals. This leads me to our Audience Engagement Division.



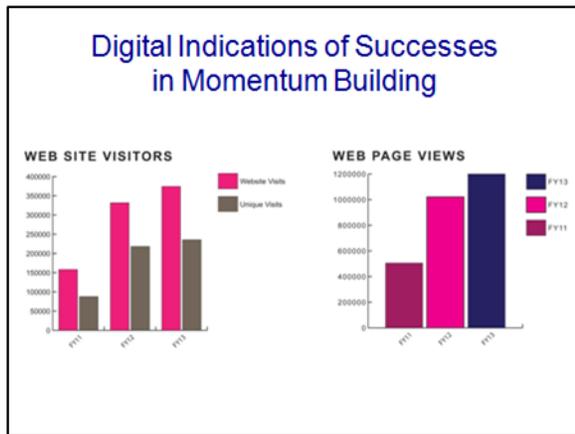
Audience Engagement

Make no mistake: Audience Engagement isn't a mere rebranding of traditional museum education. Where the latter is focused on teaching, we are looking at an experience that goes far beyond the art historical tale, without excluding it. This is a more holistic approach, comparable with customer service in the for-profit world. To attract visitors and motivate them to come back, we have to listen to them, rather than just make them listen to us. To that end, the Audience Engagement Division encompasses visitor services, marketing, communication, design, and, in WAM's specific case, education and studio art classes, as well as the library. In addition, we are rethinking the traditional model of museum education.

Adam Rozan, whose appointment I announced at the last corporator meeting, started in his position in February of this year. He and his team have been actively figuring out how the different museum functions I mentioned can be meaningfully welded together. By "meaningful", we want each visitor to have an "engaged" thus successful experience before, during and after each visit.

First steps in this direction include:

- Streamline operations
- Translate and test engagement practices from other institutions for future museum-wide use.
- Strengthen partnerships with the local colleges, as set forth in our vision statement, and lay the groundwork for WAM to become a shared university art museum- off manuscript: Worcester State, Holy Cross, WPI, and Clark University, some of our Institutional Members.
- Build momentum via strategic initiatives and marketing.



Numbers are not the sole indicator of an institution’s vibrancy, yet they talk a powerful language about trends. As previously stated, we grew our foot traffic to the galleries by 70% from FY 2011 to FY 2013. The increase in the digital world is even more upward looking – we are talking about next to or more than 100% growth over the past two fiscal years.

- Our email marketing and communications list – visitors who receive emails about our activities – has doubled since 2011: from 10,000 to 21,115.
- Website visits have grown from over 158,000 in 2011 to over 374,000 in 2013: more than double.
- For social media, the same trends over the same time period. Facebook followers have doubled and we will soon reach 10,000 fans, and we are nearing 4,000 followers on Twitter.

This growth is helped by our quest to position ourselves as an innovator and leader not just locally, but regionally and nationally. Activities play an important role, as does our increasing capacity to talk about them. Gifts, like Hester Diamond’s Veronese, help us, especially when accompanied by a good communication strategy. The Worcester Art Museum is becoming a center of dialogue that people from many places, near and far, engage with; and as we continue to grow and expand, so too will our online presence.



Last year, I talked about our collaboration with architect Kulapat Yantrasast and his firm “WHY architecture”. This year, we have continued to work on a master plan for the entire campus – yet, our focus on the start-up project changed. Instead of revitalizing our Lancaster entrance, we decided to build on the momentum of the Salisbury door campaign to construct an access bridge to that entrance; not just our most beautiful, but also most visible.

The idea of a universal access bridge is part of the new WAM. As you know, we christened our magazine “Access”; another sign that our Audience Engagement team, as well as our curatorial division, is focusing on making the art that is in the stewardship of this museum more accessible. But we need to go beyond just branding and concepts if we are to remain true to this notion; none of it means much if the Museum building and collections are not physically easily accessible to all. I’m not just talking about visitors with disabilities, who currently have to use the back entrance, but also families with strollers, the elderly, in sum anyone who would prefer to get into the Museum without steps.

Over the course of discussions about questions of physical access to the building, our thinking evolved. We came to understand and embrace the difference between “universal” – for everyone – over “separate” access, that access needs to be well designed instead of simply meeting legal requirements, and a platform for further initiatives than a ceiling of compliance.

Our project is cutting edge. It is a groundbreaking prototype.

Development

- Board Giving increased by 7%
- Membership Giving increased by 16%
- Annual Fund Giving increased by 24%
- Sponsorships increased by 132%
- Grant Awards increased by 214%

I'm afraid more success is on the menu when we look at progress made in financial support of the Museum this last year. Here again, I start with the Higgins Collection. Shortly before going public with the announcement of the integration of arms and armor into the Worcester Art Museum, Suzanne Maas – the interim director of the Higgins – and I organized, along with our respective board presidents, a meeting with the leaders of our local foundations, in which we elaborated our integration plans. These foundations enthusiastically embraced our plans and agreed to jumpstart the fundraising goal of \$12 million to pay not just for the integration, but also the exhibition “Knights!”, upgrades to our facilities to accommodate increased foot traffic, the permanent gallery, as well as a transfer of programs.

It is with gratitude that I can report to you today that these foundations, as well as a regional foundation, allowed us to reach close to \$6 million in less than 7 months. This gives us all confidence that we are making strides in the right direction.



In my last annual report, I presented a vision statement, which had been endorsed by the board. Now, I am proud to report that we have initiated our first of many strategic plans to reach the ambitious goals, as set forth in that document. Flowing from our recent organizational analysis, which was conducted by David Jordan and his team, our principal goals for 2014 through the end of FY15 (August 31, 2015), are to strengthen our foundations for the future by improving the internal culture and ensuring WAM's vibrancy for the future.

These inward looking goals will prepare us for the next strategic plan when we expect to address more directly our vision of broad and diverse relevance in Worcester and beyond, including goals of (1) enhancing the diversity and number of visitors; and (2) reviewing the Museum's brand among existing stakeholders and exploring paths to "rebrand" WAM to align with its forward thinking vision.

Your participation will be crucial in this endeavor. We need your input in committees, your support as ambassadors and your contributions as members and benefactors.