

June 25, 2014

To: Friends, supporters, and staff of the Worcester Art Museum

From: Matthias Waschek, Director

Re: The future of WAM's Library

The Higgins integration is transforming the Worcester Art Museum. Since the current library space was identified as the future home of our newly acquired collection of arms and armor, there have been many questions. The most important one can be answered with a resounding **“YES! We are committed to our library.”** Our collection of books has grown with our collection of art, and the latter cannot be cared for without the former.

That said, libraries are undergoing a massive transformation. This is mostly due to rapid advances in information technology and accompanying shifts in the expectations of potential and traditional users. Universities and public libraries have been at the forefront of adaptation. Frequently, new functions have been taken on, notably that of the library as a social space.

We have identified three groups of stakeholders in our library of the future: staff and docents, professors and students from local colleges, and the general public. All three audiences will be actively involved in discerning the next steps in our planning process. Moving forward, our new Director of Curatorial Affairs, Jon Seydl, will work with the academic community, whereas our Director of Audience Engagement, Adam Rozan, will engage with our public library system to learn how to attract broader audiences.

In preparation of our next steps, last year we hosted ReDesign, a community brainstorming event. As a result, we have started to experiment with two alternative mini-libraries in the (*remastered*) exhibition and in Salisbury Hall, inviting our visitors to extend their art exploration beyond the works on the gallery walls. I am also pleased to let you know that the Museum has recently applied for a National Leadership Grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services. As things move forward, we will keep you informed about our progress. In the meantime, I invite you to contact us with any questions about the Worcester Art Museum library.

This is a joint enterprise, and we will work with all our stakeholders to define WAM's library of the future.