Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Meeting of the Art and Collections Committee

Thursday, 15 March 2018, 9:00am

Theater Level Conference Room #1

**There were present:**

Ivan P. Jecklin, Chair

Tom Papa, Vice Chair

Karen C. Abramson

Cindy Conner

Cynthia Kerr Fralin

Janet Geldzahler

David Goode

Margaret N. Gottwald

Michele Petersen

Pamela Reynolds

Michael J. Schewel, Ex-officio

**Absent:**

Dr. Monroe E. Harris, Jr

Steven A. Markel

**Dr. Paul Monroe**

**Mary Gray Shockey**

**By Invitation:**

Alex Nyerges, Director

Stephen D. Bonadies

Dr. Lee Anne Chesterfield

Laura Keller

Cameron O’Brion

John Henry Rice

William A. Royall Jr.

Barry Shifman

Dr. Michael Taylor

Lee Viverette

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ivan Jecklin called the meeting to order at 9:05 am.

1. MINUTES APPROVAL

**Motion:** proposed by Ms. Abramson and seconded by Ms. Geldzahlerto approve the minutes of the December 14, 2017 Art and Collections Committee meeting as distributed. Motion approved.

1. VMFA POLICY ON ANCIENT ART ACQUISITIONS

Dr. Michael Taylor, VMFA’s Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Art & Education, reviewed the Museum’s policy on the acquisition of Ancient Art. He noted that the policy allows for flexibility but also establishes best practices. The museum is committed to the responsible acquisition of works of ancient art of the highest quality and historical importance. He explained that part of the Museum’s acquisition evaluation process includes thoroughly researching the ownership history of a work of ancient art prior to its acquisition, making a rigorous effort to obtain accurate written documentation with respect to its history, making an informed and transparent decision in accordance with the 2013 Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) guidelines on the Acquisition of Archaeological Material and Ancient Art, and promptly publishing acquisitions of works of ancient art in electronic form including images and provenance on VMFA’s website.

**Motion:** proposed by Mr. Goode and seconded by Ms. Fralin to recommend the policy on Ancient Art acquisitions for approval at the full board meeting.

1. SOUTH ASIAN ART COLLECTION PLAN

Dr. John Henry Rice, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Curator of South Asian and Islamic Art, presented his South Asian Art Collection Plan. Dr. Rice noted that the museum’s collection is of a world-class quality despite its smaller size. Providing background on the collection, he stated that the collection grew in the late 1960s following the success of the 1967 loan exhibition, *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection*. After the exhibition, the museum acquired, with funds anonymously provided by Paul Mellon, nearly 150 Indian and two dozen Himalayan works from that collection. A second wave of development coincided with the 30-year tenure of VMFA curator Joseph Dye who, between 1980 and 2009, more than doubled the size of the Indian holdings and expanded the Himalayan collection many times over. Since then, the collection has continued to grow especially in two distinct but interrelated collecting areas: the art of Greater India and the art of the Himalayas.

Regarding his collecting priorities, Dr. Rice noted that he plans to pursue masterpieces, deepen holdings of works on paper and textiles, develop the colonial and postcolonial holdings, explore cultural exchange, and extend the collection to the present. He presented examples of these as well for the committee members to see. Mr. William A. Royall, Jr. suggested that Dr. Rice focus more on contemporary South Asian Art, and Dr. Michael Taylor noted that Valerie Cassel Oliver, the Sydney and Frances Lewis Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, is working diligently on a global and international focus for collecting contemporary art. Dr. Rice noted that collecting contemporary will help to shed focus on the historical as well.

1. WHAT’S SO “SPECIAL” ABOUT SPECIAL COLLECTIONS?

Lee Viverette, Director of Library/Archives & Special Collections, gave a brief overview of Special Collections. She explained that the collections also include the archives, rare books, and additional materials that are more fragile and not suited to everyday circulation. Ms. Viverette also invited the committee to join her and her colleagues in the Margaret R. and Robert M. Freeman Library to view several rare books and works in person.

1. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:04am.

Recorded by: Laura Keller

Assistant to the Secretary, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Foundation