

museum **VIEWS**

*A quarterly newsletter for
small and mid-sized art museums*



Ramon Casas, *Joven Decadente*, (detail)
also known as the *Young Decadent*, 1899.
Museum of Montserrat, Barcelona

Sheltering at Home
Summer 2020

CHANGE

Change is in the air!
It ignites the imagination!

What will we become?

How will we be different?

How will the world be different?

The museums will open. The stores, the businesses, the offices, the schools, the barbers all will open. But will our hearts open?

Will we listen to the echoes of protests?

Will we heed them?

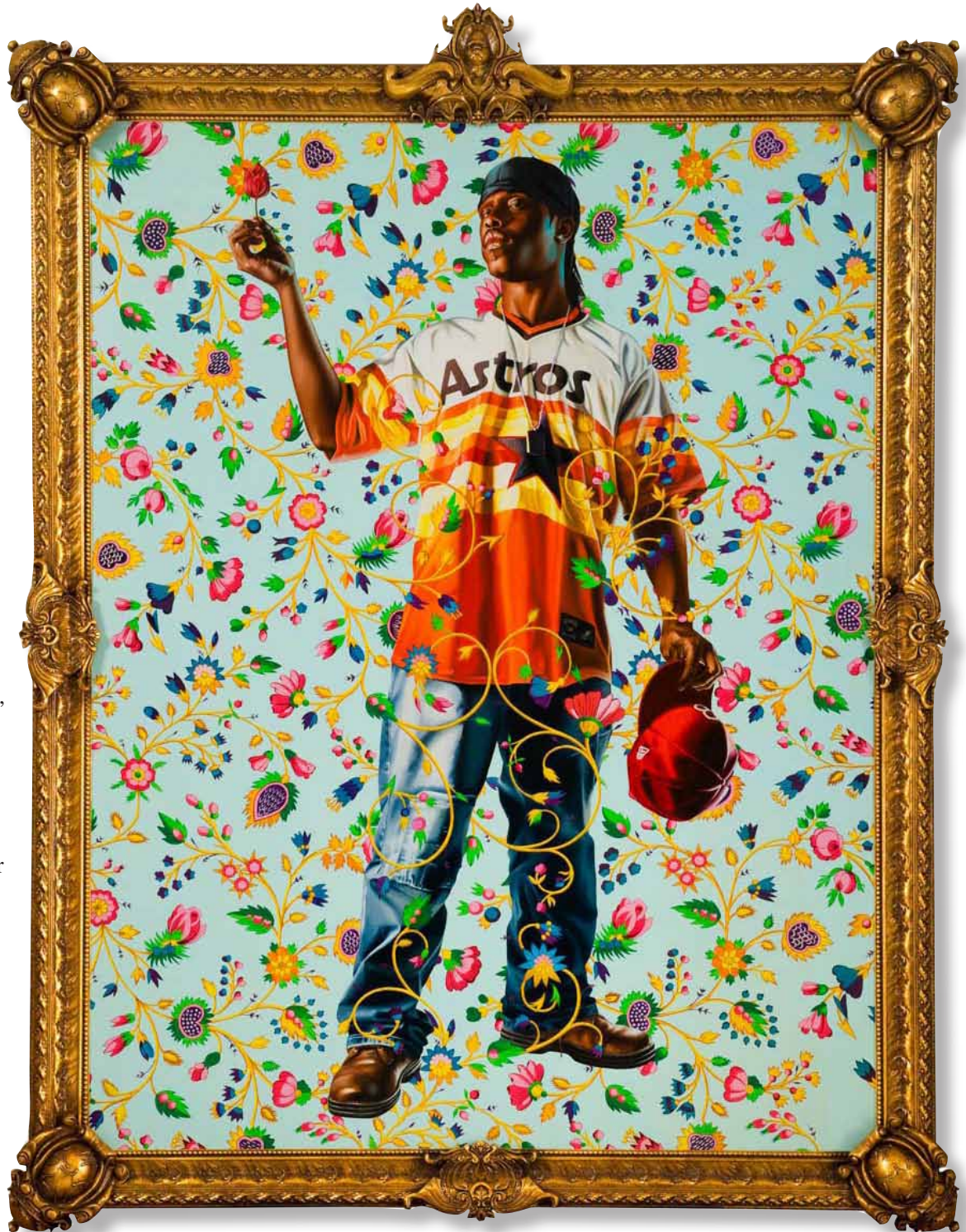
Museums are sites of learning and discovery, community engagement, transformation, and they hold the potential for a bright future. Artists who serve to nourish these institutions challenge us to see and understand the world around us; they magnify the differences and similarities that separate and bring us together; and they amplify the voices that call for change. Museums support these workers in the field and put their insights in plain view. At their best, our museums reflect and listen. They will remember the tragedies that happened today and yesterday, during all the sickness and during all the upheaval that injustice and malice brought. All of it can result in change—boards that reflect their communities, art that is made by a multi-racial assembly of artists, galleries that are filled with mixed crowds of visitors, staffs that are color blind, exhibitions that reflect the interests of the museum's own constituency.

Can our museums meet these challenges?

The versatility and creativity of museums, small, medium, and large, and their staffs are evident in every state and city

across the country during the 2020

coronavirus pandemic that closed down the United States and many countries in every corner of the world. Devotion, hard work, selflessness kept museums in the public consciousness. In every way possible, museums devised ways of staying relevant: videos, virtual exhibitions, blogs, classes, lectures, virtual tours, educational opportunities, art lessons, history lessons—no stone unturned in the search for new ways to present the art world to the public. □



Kehinde Wiley, *Philip the Fair*, 2006. Oil and enamel on canvas.
In "Portraits of Power," El Museo del Barrio, NY

**CHANGES
AHEAD**

Letters and Emails



Ramon Casas,
*Joven
Decadente*,
1899,
Museum of
Montserrat,
Barcelona
(Cover art)

From the Nasher Museum of Art

Art and artists give shape and meaning to the world we live in, and will help us to facilitate dialogue around difficult but necessary cultural and societal change. The Nasher will continue to provide space for this important work, acting as a forum for thoughtful, challenging engagement. Like many across the country, we have grieved for the many black lives brutally taken through racist violence. Over the past few weeks, huge gatherings for racial justice, here and around the world, have fueled a momentum for change and reason to hope for our collective future.

From the Speed Art Museum

We stand with our Black neighbors and colleagues in their justified anger, pain, and fear as we also reaffirm our commitment to serve this wounded world with art that helps us understand and rethink racism; with a place that offers a safe refuge for all; and with a collection and exhibition program that allows artists, including Black artists, to show us a way forward.

From museums across the country

Too many to record here, but all inspiring, encouraging, hopeful, understanding. And all describing future plans and exhibiting anticipation for the day when doors can be thrown open.

From a Friend

Dear Friend:

“For me, I am being constantly reminded of early 1991 when 31 friends died during the AIDS plague. I was afraid to pick up the phone. That year, I quarantined myself, distanced from anyone I loved and was afraid to lose. I worked long hours and avoided connection. It had consequences for the rest of my life and those around me. I wish I had done more documenting then, more acknowledgment of the moment.”

President and Chief Executive of the New-York Historical Society Dr. Louise Mirrer recalls the founders of the institution she heads, which was established on Manhattan’s Upper West Side in 1804. “Our founders had just lived through the turbulent years of the American Revolution. They recognized the need to preserve eye-witness evidence of their own historical moment.” So, in the spirit of its long-standing initiative to preserve pivotal moments in the history of the city, the N-YHS launched an open call for donations of objects, photographs, digital documents, personal protective equipment, and other ephemera that document the coronavirus pandemic. “If we do not collect and preserve right now,” said the N-YHS founders, “history will be nothing more than dust and speculation.”

From the NMAI

Kevin Gover (Pawnee), Director of the National Museum of the American Indian wrote to his constituents:

Dear Friends,

Let me begin with a statement made by the Secretary of the Smithsonian, Lonnie G. Bunch:

“Like many Americans, watching multiple incidents of deadly violence against black people unfold before our eyes has left us feeling demoralized and distraught, aghast and angry. Not only have we been forced to grapple with the impact of a global pandemic, we have been forced to confront the reality that, despite gains made in the past fifty years, we are still a nation riven by inequality and racial division. The state of our democracy feels fragile and precarious.

“Once again, we struggle to make sense of the senseless. Once again, we bear witness to our country’s troubled history of racial violence, from Freddie Gray and Eric Garner to Sandra Bland and Trayvon Martin. Once again, we try to cope as best as we can, whether suffering in silence, participating in protests, or engaging in conversations that evoke all of our emotions. Once again, we try to explain to our children that which cannot be explained. Once again, we pray for justice and we pray for peace. Once again....”

For months now, we have been dealing with Covid-19, a novel coronavirus that has changed our way of life. In this past week, we have been confronted dramatically once again with a much older sickness that, over time, has caused even greater pain, anguish, and death.

“Most of us have watched the killing of George Floyd on our screens. These are brutal images that lead us to question the very nature of humanity. We find ourselves filled with rage at the treatment of our fellow human being.... Racism is a disease that has infected humankind for a very long time, and when it seems finally to recede, it rallies and attacks again....”

“But we are not powerless. The existence of our museum is a blow to racism....”

“Defeating racism... will take millions, no, billions of small acts by people of good will, people who believe that humankind is redeemable....”

Engaging in dialogue: With the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience this museum is working to create a tool kit to help people facilitate new conversations with and among students about the power of images and words, the challenges of memory, and the relationship between personal and national values.

Talking about race: Our friends at the National Museum of African American History and Culture have created a website, Talking About Race, to provide tools and guidance for empowerment and conversation.

Standing against xenophobia: Our friends at the Asian Pacific American Center have compiled resources from across the Smithsonian addressing the xenophobia that plagues our society during times of national crisis.

From the Front Lines

Familia,

These past few days, we have once again born witness to the by-product of this country’s long-standing history of systemic racism in the form of relentless violence against members of the Black community. From the documented cases of Eric Garner and Sandra Bland to Trayvon Martin and Ahmaud Arbery, and now George Floyd, these deaths have left many of us demoralized, distraught, and angry.

More than fifty years ago, during the formation of El Museo del Barrio, African Americans, with the support of Latinx communities across the United States, were calling for the end of legalized racial discrimination, disenfranchisement, and racial segregation in the United States. This moment in history also witnessed the emergence of the Black Power movement and the Young Lords. Despite the seeming gains achieved, this nation continues to be ridden by inequality and racial division.

Today, we encourage everyone to stand for what is right in support of the Black community. Support takes many forms: engage in conversations with family and friends about the Black experience in the US and Afro-Latinx history; support organizations, artists, and activists that are combatting anti-blackness; and encourage policy makers to create sound policies that address not only policing, but also structural racism.

To our Black communities of artists, activists, colleagues, and friends: we see you, and we stand firmly with you.

In solidarity,

Patrick Charpenel, *Executive Director, El Museo del Barrio*

In Short...



Four-year-old Lizzy from Kew Gardens, Queens.
Everything is Going to be OK. New-York Historical Society.

A Different Project

...For a new and engaging way to maintain a growing relationship with the community: design or build a birdhouse at home.

The **Wellfleet Preservation Hall** (MA) holds an annual Birdhouse & Garden party. This year, the event takes place virtually: “blank” birdhouses are supplied by the Hall, and eager creators are encouraged to enhance them in their own creative way, to go beyond the blank template by adding objects found on beach hikes or strolls in the woods, recycled objects, leaves, flowers, or even by straying from the birdhouse concept and producing other individualized garden art.

“Take a picture of the finished creation,” says the project director, and either keep it, give it away as a gift, or return it to the Hall for display sometime in the future. Most important, “send images” of the process and the finished creation for a virtual showing.

Something for the Kids

Free Emergency Art Kits for kids sheltering in place have been a huge success. Available for contact-free pickup at the **Hockaday Museum of Art** (MT) the kits go to local families in need, local and neighboring schools, and other non-profit organizations.

Each kit includes a sketchbook, art-making instructions, Montana-themed coloring pages designed by local artists, miscellaneous surprise materials, and basic supplies like colored pencils, crayons, and glue—much of it donated to the museum by its neighbors. Time, materials, and support came from the business enterprises, the libraries, and artists that surround an appreciative museum.

NEH Offers Emergency Relief

New National Endowment for the Humanities grant guidelines as of April were designed to distribute CARES Act funding to cultural nonprofits affected by the coronavirus pandemic. NEH Cares Cultural Organizations provides grants of up to \$300,000 to sustain humanities organizations and preserve jobs in the cultural sector.

As education programs, exhibitions, and other events have been canceled, museums and historic sites have reported losses of \$1 billion a month. The relief grants provided funds to support a range of humanities activities through December 31, 2020. The application deadline was May 11, 2020.

Getty Munificence Aids CA Arts + Artists

The **J. Paul Getty Trust** (CA) announced the creation of a \$10 million fund to provide economic relief to small and mid-size non-profit museums and other visual arts organizations in Los Angeles County that have been affected by the coronavirus crisis.

The fund will be administered by the California Community Foundation, an arm of the Getty Trust, which oversees the distribution of more than 1,700 funds for the arts, health, education, housing, and immigration in the Los Angeles area. Grants to museums and other art organizations are planned to range from \$25,000 to \$200,000.

In addition, the California Community Foundation’s annual fellowships for visual artists, established through an endowment from the Getty, are repurposed this year to provide emergency aid to artists. Currently, the yearly fellowships total around \$400,000.

Museum Invests

In the throes of the lockdown during the height of the coronavirus pandemic, Director of the **Pérez Art Museum Miami** Franklin Sirmans jumped in to find an answer to the hardships of artists and galleries located in his museum’s own backyard.

The pandemic devastated the arts community. According to one survey, 64 percent of artists became unemployed; 81 percent had no plan to recover financially. Some galleries shuttered their doors permanently. In 2020, artists will lose \$50.6 billion.

The role of museums not only as cultural repositories, but also as social forums, employers, and engines of forward momentum in their own communities became more essential. So, in its wisdom, the Pérez Art Museum Miami is making a new investment in its local arts community by purchasing works of art from Miami’s galleries. The objects, totaling \$145,000, will join the museum’s permanent collection in a move that will bolster the local arts economy and enrich a communal resource for years to come. Rooted in disparate cultural histories, they encapsulate the diversity of the community.

Are You Searching...

...For new and engaging ways to maintain a hard-worked-for relationship with your audiences? Turn to automated virtual technology, say the tech experts. You don’t need much. With only a projector, display, video technology, and a limited number of technical staff you can bridge the gap between the actual museum and your online visitors.

Immerse them in exhibitions by streaming content to popular sources such as YouTube and social channels. An exhibition that utilizes projection and displays can remain available as a video stream for as long as you choose.

Expand behind-the-scenes awareness by probing deeper into the preparation and meanings of each exhibit, by highlighting the artists and/or the technologies that makes them come to life.

Use panel discussions and Q&A sessions with artists who can expand on each object on display. Simple explanations of the technology used educates and entertains the audience, while the discussions can be streamed live and recorded for listening and viewing later.

Continued on next page

President of the Getty Foundation Joan Weinstein predicted that most of the institutional grants would go to organizations with operating budgets under \$10 million, and that the administrators would scrutinize the impact of each candidate on the community in which it is located.

Artists Design Billboards

Some 1,800 digital billboards across New York City, including the massive screens in Times Square and locations through all five boroughs, display messages of public safety, hope, and gratitude for essential workers—all conceived and executed by artists as their answer to the Covid-19 pandemic. Each of the digital kiosks and billboards was donated for use in the campaign, which brought the public program Times Square Arts and the NYC museum Poster House together as collaborators.

“Along with the artists in this campaign, we’re hoping to send a resounding message throughout the city and across the globe—thanking our essential workers who risk their lives to keep New Yorkers safe, as well as signaling that we as a city, and as a country, will stand resilient and hopeful as we recover from this unprecedented crisis,” says Jean Cooney, director of Times Square Arts.

First Aid to First Responders

In the beginning... museums, artists, and design studios rallied to create and donate protective materials to healthcare workers. Many, hoping to devise their own protective supplies faced challenges: their products did not conform with clinical standards—they were unable to secure the N95 filter fabric that is required to make “medical grade” masks. A Philadelphia-based design studio BDDW reported that it could provide some 2,000-3,000 masks to medical professionals in New York and Philadelphia at the start of a continuing project, and they received a flurry of positive responses from individuals and institutions: “Great! Let us help!” But the medical grade could not be reached. The use of the products “depends on a medical center’s level of desperation,” said Executive Director of the **Fabric Workshop and Museum (PA)**.

So began the art world’s involvement in bringing badly needed aid to the medical world. Museums across continents mined their ideas and talents and 3-D printer capabilities to come up with solutions—they manufactured and/or rifled through storage facilities for medical-grade gloves, booties, masks, Tyvek suits, and other protective materials typically used by conservators and art handlers. And they delivered their aid where it was most needed—to the hospitals and professionals busy saving lives.

Continued on next page



Government Helps

The National Endowment for the Humanities received \$75 million in supplemental funding, in addition to NEH'S FY20 appropriation of \$165.25 million, to assist cultural institutions affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The funds, designated to reach "large and small cultural organizations, educators, curators, scholars, filmmakers, and other humanists," were part of the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act economic stabilization plan appropriated by Congress and signed into law in late March 2020.

While they have anchored the domestic creative economy, museums and historic sites have reported losses of \$1 billion a month through cancellations of educational programs, exhibitions, festivals, and other events. Thus, about 40 percent of the appropriation goes to 56 state and jurisdictional humanities councils to support local cultural nonprofits. Through this regranting of federal funds, councils reach an estimated annual audience of 137 million people around the world.

NEH Chairman Jon Parrish Peede commented: "To the extent that healing is to come during and after this pandemic, it will be through humanities fields...through the act of documenting, preserving, sharing, and reflecting, that our communities will move toward a greater sense of wholeness."

Billboard Art Goes Digital

There's a place where you can see artwork on a large LED billboard. It's in Times Square in New York—on the corner of 41st Street and 7th Ave. But you can also see the billboard images at home, online at Zaz Corner Billboard, where a digitally activated screen with a rotating series of images and videos that individually morph brings the art to life—people, places, and designs by artists from countries around the world underscore the universal community of art.

Headlines from England

Brooklyn Academy of Music expects \$7.4 million shortfall due to Coronavirus shutdown.

Announcing it will cancel programming through June, the oldest interdisciplinary arts center in the U.S. must layoff and furlough staff.

Coalition of U.S. arts organizations launch ongoing relief fund for artists affected by coronavirus

Los Angeles councilman plans to create emergency grants for artists

Funding from development fees would be used to help artists and non-profits

With \$20 million in funding already, Artist Relief will offer individual \$5,000 unrestricted grants through September

Seven U.S arts organizations are banding together to launch the first national relief fund for artists affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

In response to coronavirus, Magazzino Italian Art Foundation commissions eight Italian artists to produce new work

The New York based foundation says there is an "absolute need to support artists" as the Covid-19 pandemic shutter exhibitions around the world.

Artsy donates 10% of proceeds from new series of "collections" to the World Health Organization's coronavirus response fund

The Give Back series features works by artists whose shows were canceled or postponed due to Covid-19.



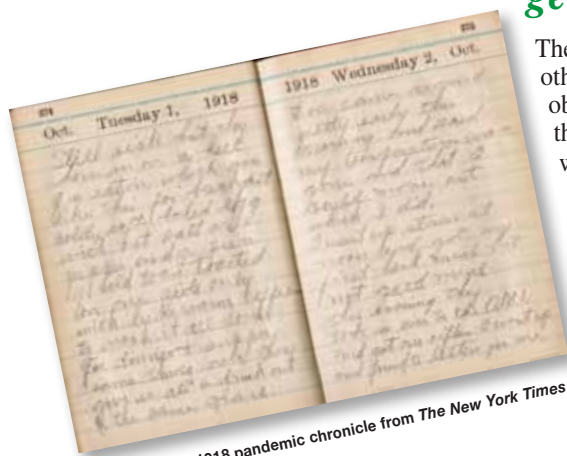
Two men jam out on the guitar and flute on a balcony in the San Salvario neighborhood of Turin, Italy, on March 13, 2020.

Inspired by Italy's spontaneous singing, museums commission artists to make "balcony art" during coronavirus crisis

Fourteen artists have been asked by the L'Internationale museum group to participate in the project, which supports artists with "quick, modest commissions."

Museums are chronicling the coronavirus pandemic for future generations

The New-York Historical Society and others are soliciting donations of objects and ephemera to document the "unprecedented times in which we are now living." □



1918 pandemic chronicle from The New York Times

Eggspressionist Art? A Show for Chickens



Visitors at the "Exhibition for Chickens," Kent, England

[In this turbulent world at this troubled time, Louisa Buck found a point of light, and described it with her very British humor (humour). Her reporting in The Art Newspaper follows in its entirety, unedited.]

May 12, 2020

With museums still under lockdown and people hardly leaving home, opening up contemporary art to new audiences is an impossibility. And never mind trying to organise site-specific projects—that's also off the agenda for now. But with his Exhibition for Chickens, an open submission show for artists to create works for the appreciation of his feathered friends, the filmmaker Jared Schiller has managed to achieve both of the above. Some 50 artists including Richard Wentworth, Goshka Macuga, Amalia Pica and George Shaw—as well as many lesser known contributors from as far afield as New Jersey and Seattle, along with Schiller's family and near neighbours—have contributed pieces for what is probably the world's first exhibition for chickens. The show opened last weekend and runs until today.

"I've been absolutely staggered by how many people submitted works: students, hobbyists, and the crème de la crème of contemporary art," says Schiller, who put out an open call on Instagram on 22 April to submit works digitally, that could then be printed. A few pieces have been assembled in situ under the artist's instruction, including Amalia Pica's enthusiastically received *Eat My Words*, an intervention that involved writing on grains of bird seed.

It's a curatorial debut for Schiller, who is best known for making films about contemporary art with artists, museums, and galleries throughout the UK and internationally. He has been confined to his home in the village of Woodchurch in Kent, southeast England, with his wife Rebecca and two young children, as well as some 20 chickens, three geese, two goats, and assorted chicks and goslings. With all his work on hold and after a few weeks of shuttered inactivity, the idea to create a show of works of art simply for the benefit of his poultry population began to take shape.

"Even before lockdown I was weighed down by the world and worried about the economy and the environment and everything felt incredibly serious and stressful," he confided to *The Art Newspaper*. "But as lockdown continued it made me think I wanted to reconnect with people, and I thought I'd do something that no one else is doing and so there would be no pressure because it can't be compared to anything else. People could either do it if they wanted or ignore it if they didn't."

And it seems that many have, ahem, flocked to take part and the Schiller family livestock are now sharing their existence with a plethora of works in all media. Inside one of the nesting boxes, Goshka Macuga's uncanny film of a gently snoring egg is playing on one of Schiller's old iPhones. Among a multitude of works hung salon-style on the wire fence of the chicken run are prints of two new works by George Shaw, one of which is

Continued on next page

A Show for Chickens *continued*

of a blackbird's nest with eggs, as well as a series of signs by the Bristol-based artist Savage, making such statements as "Standing here, thinking of anything but art" and, "You wonder if people even like you." Green Perspex sculptures by Jyll Bradley glint at the hen house entrances, and along another fence enclosing the coop are three new photographs by Richard Wentworth of found objects and elements of human intervention encountered on farmland near where he is under lockdown. Other standout works include a film of dancer-choreographer Michaela Cisarikova out in woods performing her very particular rendition of *Do the Funky Chicken*; a Warholian rendition of Oxo chicken stock cubes by Schiller's father-in-law; and a hybrid *Chickysaurus* painted by Schiller's son Arthur. There's also a rather insensitive print of foxes by Lynn Clemmer from Lexington, Kentucky.

So far, the response from the show's intended audience has been mixed. In what Schiller calls the "broody coop viewing room," mother hen Frisbee and her newly hatched chicks seem fairly indifferent to the Seattle-based Lyn Baum's image of chickens playing scrabble. But out in the main enclosure one assembled work filled with bird seed and entitled *Girl's night out in Peckham* proved to be rather too interactive and was rapidly shredded to pieces. "The chickens have definitely noticed there's something new here," Schiller says. And several pieces show signs of interaction by the livestock: in one particular instance of over participation, one of Bradley's Perspex works had to be retrieved from the mouth of Amber the goat.

But perhaps it is all a matter of perception. Accompanying the exhibition are a number of Instagram interviews and live feeds in which many of the participating artists talk about the rationale behind their supposedly avian-appropriate works. Schiller's children also offer a memorable tour of the wheres and whyfores of

their own exhibition highlights. A reciprocal insight into a bird's eye view is also offered in an illuminating interview between Schiller and the ornithologist Graham Martin from University of Birmingham's School of Bio-sciences. According to Prof Martin, unlike humans with their frontally placed eyes, the side-placed bird's-eye view results in a very different ambient experience. This all-encompassing vision means it is much harder for a chicken than a human to remove a work of art from its sight—to chicken out, as it were. As Professor Martin says: "If I go up to a work of art and think it's rubbish, I can walk away. But a chicken has to walk a long way before it doesn't see something. The world flows all around and even above it." Therefore, it is perhaps for the best that the chickens won't be exposed to this all-immersive introduction to the world of art for much longer.

We, however, have the option to go on enjoying the various incarnations of this most particular show in the accompanying films, tours, interviews and footage of works that remain up on Schiller's Instagram as well as being viewable on his Exhibition for Chickens website. □



LOSSES AND RECOVERIES

"As Covid-19 lockdowns continue to paralyze public life worldwide, museums are racking up income losses that could drastically curtail their operations for years to come—and wipe out some altogether," said the president of the International Council of Museums (Icom)—a grim warning to the cultural institutions around the world of complete collapse without help from governments and private supporters. In the end, she said, "we will need museums when this is over—even more than we ever have."

Data gathered from some 800 European, North American, and Asian institutions predict reduced programming, job losses, even closures. The institutions that depend more on earned income from admissions, shops, cafés, venue hire, and other commercial activities are more at risk than those who depend on emergency funds and support schemes

A plague of fiscal shortfalls in most American museums is causing huge numbers of lay-offs and furloughs (a major drain on museum budgets), reduced salaries, endowment income funneled into emergency funds to support salaries, reduced executive pay, unmitigated high building and collections maintenance; postponements or cancellations of the big annual galas that produce millions toward the financial health of large and small institutions. Many museums have guaranteed salaries only until a certain date. And some find it difficult to predict any future at all for their institutions.

Rescue?

The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) declares museums to be a \$50 billion "economic engine" contributing to the U.S. economy annually. Congress, says the AAM, should contribute at least \$4 billion in emergency aid to non-profit museums. In March, a federal stimulus bill was signed into law allocating just \$75 million to the National Endowment for the Arts, 60 percent to support direct \$50,000 grants to cultural non-profits. In another bill \$345 billion was allocated for forgivable payroll protection loans for small business including non-profits, but the money ran out in less than two weeks. Soon after the Congress passed a bill allocating \$320,000 billion to replenish the program. As of this writing in May, a \$3 trillion package proposed by the House of Representatives is on its way to Congress, but as Senate reports emerge, is "dead on arrival."

Strategies

Possible (some probable) changes are on the horizon: Curators relying more on permanent collections for exhibitions thus reducing costs of transporting and insuring loans. Scaled-back acquisition. Rigorous pursuits of digital audiences—young audiences attracted to virtual display need to be turned profitable through donors or contribution campaigns. Blockbuster exhibitions with their attendant crowds abandoned for some time. Installation design changes that avoid crowding and visitors congregating. Costly capital projects questioned, put off, or abandoned. □

DID LOCKDOWN AND ISOLATION IMPACT THE ART OF VINCENT VAN GOGH?

[A blog by Martin Bailey as reported in *The Art Newspaper*]

Isolation, he told his sister Will, is “sometimes as hard to bear as exile.” But, he said it was necessary “if we want to work.”

Starting in May 1889 after mutilating his ear, Vincent Van Gogh lived for 53 weeks in the asylum of Saint-Paul-de-Mausole. While there, he had little contact with everyday life and none with the art world. Did this isolation hinder or help his work?

Life in the walled asylum, in a former monastery on the outskirts of the small town of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, stood in stark contrast to Vincent’s time in Paris, where he had lived from 1886 to ‘88 with his brother Theo. Paris was then the art capital of the world and home of the avant-garde, many of whose works were on display in Theo’s art gallery. Vincent mixed with Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, Pissarro, Signac, and Seurat, as well as Gauguin, who would become his companion in the Yellow House in Arles. It was in Paris that Van Gogh moved away from the dark colors of his earlier Dutch paintings and responded to the sparkling brushwork of the Impressionists.

In Saint-Paul-de-Mausole, Van Gogh was completely cut off from the art world. For a year he saw virtually no pictures. The only one he mentioned in his letters was a portrait of the abbot’s elderly mother and he may also have contemplated an unremarkable depiction of the Conversion of St Paul in the monastic chapel.

A recently discovered register of the patients of Saint-Paul-de-Mausole reveals that there were only 18 male residents when Van Gogh arrived. He described these men as his “companions in misfortune.” Most were seriously disturbed and none had any interest in art. Living in this small community, Van Gogh spent most of his waking hours in his two favorite places: the former monk’s cell that he was allocated to use as his studio and the walled garden where he could work outdoors amid nature. When in relatively good health, Van Gogh was also allowed

outside the gate for a few hours to paint in the immediate vicinity of the asylum. He drew inspiration from the quintessential landscape of Provence—the olive groves at the foot of Les Alpilles.

Vincent was soon desperate to escape, even though this very isolation was a mixed blessing in terms of his artistic development. It cut him off from his avant-garde circle in Paris, which had been a deep source of inspiration at a key moment when he was seeking a new means of expressing himself through paint. But it also brought

benefits. With few other distractions, he was able to channel his energy into work, at least while he was in reasonable health. There was no drinking in cafés or fortnightly visits to the brothel. Meals were served to the residents, so he had few domestic worries (he was a notoriously bad cook). Confined most of the time to the asylum and its garden, he studied nature with great intensity.

Now, in his studio and his garden, Van Gogh had time on his hands. And he knew exactly what he wanted to do—to paint. He completed 150 pictures in the year—one every two days, excluding the periods when he was suffering mental crises.

Cut off from the latest art in Paris, Van Gogh followed his own path. Within the asylum’s walls he developed his art according to his own highly personal and idiosyncratic lights. He was able to make bold artistic decisions, free of the influences of his peers or of market considerations.

Out of this lockdown and isolation some 130 years ago came the Van Gogh that we now know—soaring cypress trees, olive groves, flowers and wheat fields, searching self portraits. But the work took its toll: “To sacrifice one’s freedom, to stand outside society and to have only one’s work, without distraction... it’s beginning to weigh too heavily upon me here.” □



Vincent Van Gogh, *Window at the Studio*, 1889. The Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

Through Your Window

Continued separation and isolation has resulted in a restricted view of the world around us. Yet, that restriction enables us to look more closely at the very things we have overlooked in the past—the pictures on our walls, the unwanted curls in our fast-growing hair, the buds slowly bursting on the tree outside our window, the migrating birds nesting there. It is the panorama caught in the four-sided frame of our windows, a layered and ever-changing composition—the real world.

So now, with our inability to wander slowly through a museum, carefully examining paintings inch by inch, we must find art where it has been ignored. The art we see through our windows is always there for us, showing us the real life aesthetic of our world.

For centuries, artists have found inspiration in the views from (or of) windows. Here are a few examples from the permanent collection at the Rose Art Museum (MA), from oil painting to black and white photography, as well as some home-grown examples by talented amateurs. □



Arthur Rothstein, *Gee's Bend, Alabama*, 1937. Gelatin silver print



John Graham, *Interior*, c. 1939-1940. Oil on canvas



Right: Beth Mart, *Snow in May*, 2020. Iphone shot from a window in NYC

Below: Beth Mart, *Moon over Manhattan*, 2020. Iphone shot from the same window



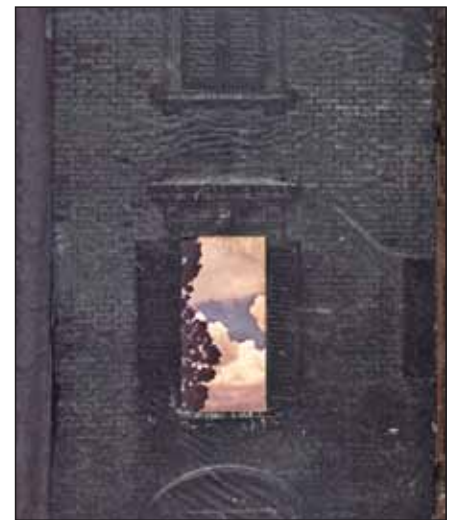
Through Your Window *continued*



Left: Rosette Arons, *My LI world*, 2020.
Iphone shot through a window on Long Island, NY



Above: Zoe Leonard, *Untitled*,
1998/ 2011. Gelatin silver print



Joseph Cornell, *Untitled*
[*Facade with open window*].
Magazine photo and paper on fiberboard panel



Alen MacWeeney, *Flies in the Window*,
Castletown House, Ireland, 1972.
Gelatin silver print



Ilse Bing, *Rooftops, rue de Varenne*, 1935. Gelatin silver print on Agfa paper



Anthony van Dyck. *St. Rosalia Interceding for the City of Palermo*. 1629. Oil on canvas. Museum of Fine Art, Puerto Rico

Staying Inside: Art in a time of Plague

Danielle Carrabino, Smith College Museum of Art curator of painting and sculpture, talks about the role of art in the time of plagues throughout the centuries. She writes, "Although I never thought I would experience a similarly devastating pandemic in

my own lifetime, I am fascinated to find that many of the responses to the plague are not unlike those to coronavirus today."

(May 13, 2020)

...As an art historian, I have dedicated my research to Italian art and culture from the 15th to 17th centuries, which intersects directly with the Bubonic plague or Black Death. Beginning in 1348, the plague ravaged Europe for several centuries, long before the concept of a vaccine was even imagined. Like coronavirus, the plague was invisible and therefore difficult to contain.... Despite devastating losses, the plague did eventually pass and curves were flattened.... Italy, along with the rest of the world, will overcome this challenge as it has so many times before.

...Many of the responses to the plague [through history] are not unlike those to coronavirus today. During times of plague, artists created some of the most powerful works of art. In addition to works of literature, music, and other artistic forms, deeply moving paintings and sculptures inspired a renewal of faith....

...[One is] an exhibition catalog from 2005 titled *Hope and Healing: Painting in Italy in a Time of Plague, 1500-1800* (Clark University, College of the Holy Cross, and Worcester Art Museum).... In particular, an article on the 1624 plague in Palermo and artist Anthony van Dyck's visit and subsequent quarantine there.... While in Palermo, van Dyck painted several images of Saint Rosalie, the saint who is credited with curing the city of plague. [Palermo still honors Saint Rosalie as its patron saint.] Van Dyck created a document of the moment. In it, crowded with saints and other holy figures, the angel in the foreground holds his nose from the stench of rotting bodies. The artist, surrounded by death, recounts the reality of its inescapable smell—a first-hand account that provides a visceral insight into what it felt like to be in Palermo at that time.

Another work related to the plague from the SCMA's own collection is the polychrome wood figure of Saint Roch, created in 15th-century Germany.... This sculpture, which at first appears whimsical with its bright colors and playful pose, suddenly becomes more sobering when his identity is revealed. With one hand, he pulls up his tunic to reveal a large boil on his leg, the mark of the plague, to which he points with his other hand. As one of the patron saints of the plague, Roch

was a figure to whom people could pray.... He offered comfort during a time of hopelessness.

...Illness has had a significant impact in many parts of the world throughout time. The United States has had its own history of devastating diseases, such as tuberculosis, polio, the 1918 flu, and the AIDS pandemic, among countless others....

[When] we return to our lives, art will preserve the memory of this moment, even when we try to forget. As it has done for many centuries, it will remind generations to come of this period of uncertainty and despair, and perhaps even provide hope during hopeless times in the future. □

Building? Renovating?

Lessons for constructing and/or renovating a museum can be learned by asking and finding the answers to—questions. Renovations reveal what works well with a building and what doesn't. How will the museum director, curators, conservators, and other staff use the building? Answering questions like this and the following are essential for the owner, users, program manager, architect, contractor, and specialty contractors to articulate a complete vision of new, improved spaces as well as a brand new facility.

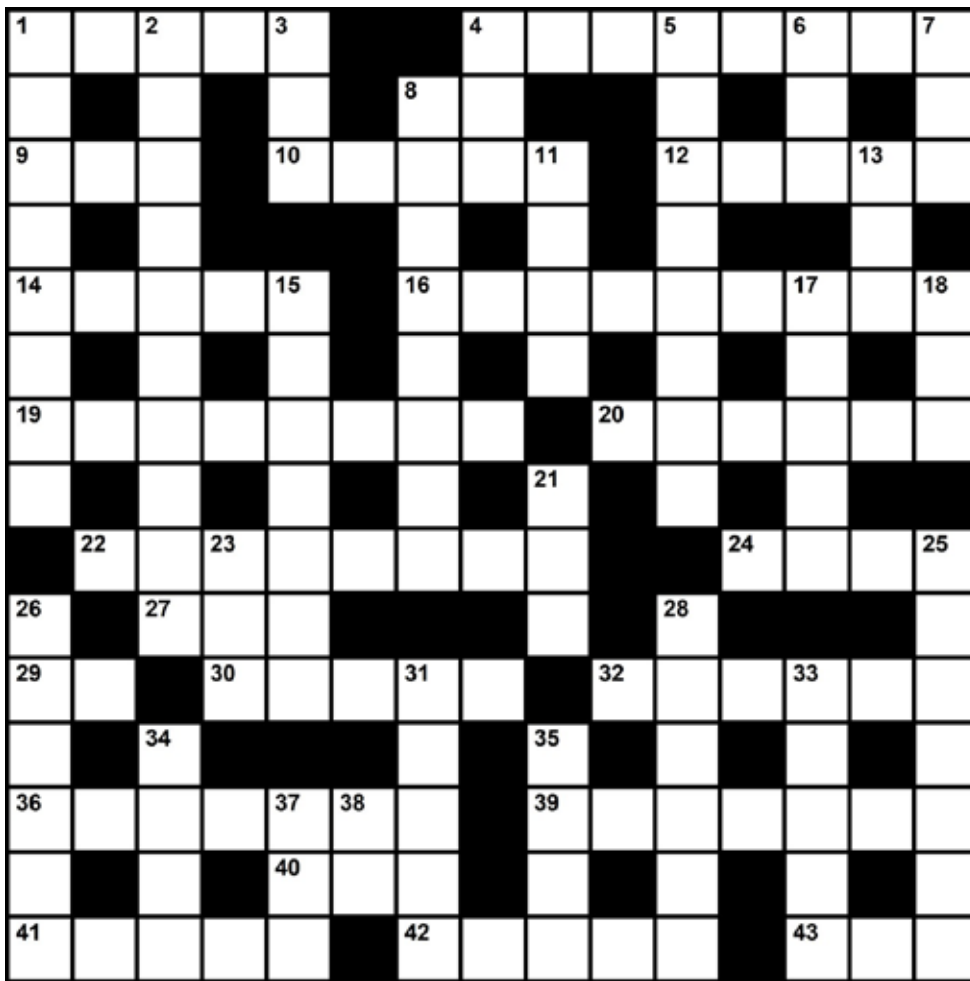
- How will the space be utilized to achieve both functionality and form?
- What will be the required temperature and humidity controls for collection preservation while the art and artifacts are on public display?
- How often will the galleries change for special exhibitions and what kind of flexibility is desired? Should modular walls be considered for certain areas? What level of flexibility is needed for the lighting system? How will future gallery layouts affect the need for power and data?
- How and where will art and artifacts be stored? Will cold storage be required?
- How will the art and artifacts be protected in case of emergency?
- Which construction materials are the most appropriate for protecting the art and artifacts? How should those materials be handled to create a safe environment for the art and artifacts?
- How does the selection of finishes tie into daily housekeeping and cleaning products approved to be used near art and artifacts?
- What security measures will be enforced?
- What accessibility needs should be considered for mechanical and other systems, and what will ease the maintenance of those systems while limiting interference to the art and artifacts?

[The questions above were posed by Leonard Anderson, a project manager with SpawGlass, a Texas-based commercial and civil contractor. □



Unknown artist, *Saint Roch*. Polychrome wood carving, c. 15th century. Smith College Museum of Art, MA

CROSSWORD by Myles Mellor (solution on next page)



ACROSS

1. *Twilight Confidences* by Cecilia ____
4. Italian contemporary artist whose work was featured in the film, *Great Expectations*
8. Expression of surprise or understanding
9. American painter and printmaker who painted *Black and Red*, first name
10. English actor who stars as Luther, ____ Elba
12. Painter of *The Frame*
14. Extreme
16. Relating to state of 1984
19. Figures in Da Vinci's *Last Supper*
20. Husband of the artist who performed *Cut Piece*
22. African American artist known for large-scale paintings and sculptures depicting African American life, Kerry ____
24. Sketched
27. Posed as a model
29. State that was the home of Fred Kabotie, Hopi artist, abbr.
30. Russian mood landscape painter, ____ Levitan
32. Former Black Panther and Art Professor, whose art work is on display at the Crocker Art Museum, Akinsanya ____
36. American photographer of female nudes in natural landscapes, Anne ____
39. Type of museum tours offered during the COVID 19 pandemic
40. Figure in Titian's *Fall of Man*
41. Renaissance engraver
42. Cheerful, weather-wise
43. A question of technique

DOWN

1. African American painter whose untitled piece recently sold for \$110.5 million, Jean Michel ____
2. African-American expressionist painter, 2 words
3. Roman 12
4. Letter from Greece
5. John Singer Sargent's model
6. "No way"
7. Prefix with friendly
8. Botanical gardens
11. Scatters (seed)
13. American muralist and illustrator, Tom ____
15. Sculptors and painters
17. Word before circle or peace
18. Sister Nelli, a Renaissance painter, was one
21. Take to the skies
23. Aishwarya of Bollywood
25. American landscape painter, best known for marine subjects, ____ Homer
26. Painted sketchily
28. Artist friend of Max Ernst, 2 words
31. Minimalist and abstract expressionist, ____ Martin
33. Painter's tool
34. Christian of fashion
35. Smooth
37. Sea, for Monet
38. Audio visual (abbr.)

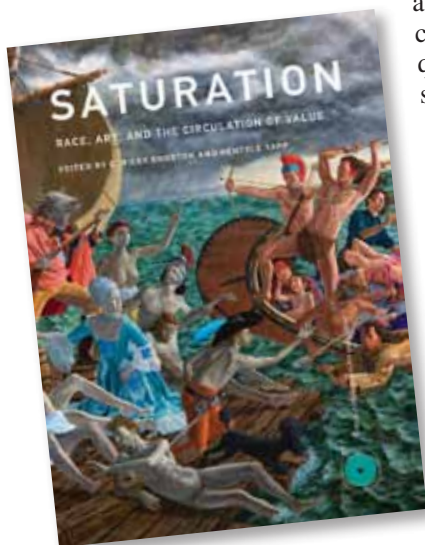


Doctor Schnabel [Dr Beak], pub. by Paul Fürst, c. 1656. Color copper engraving of a plague doctor in 17th-century Rome

BOOK

Thanks to the **New Museum** (NY) and **MIT Press** (MA) *Saturation: Race, Art, and the Circulation of Value*, edited by C. Riley Snorton and Hentyle Yapp appeared in June of this year. It is the fourth installment in the New Museum's Critical Anthologies in Art and Culture series. *Saturation* follows *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* (2017); *Public Servants: Art and the Crisis of the Common Good* (2016); and *Mass Effect: Art and the Internet in the Twenty-First Century* (2015).

Controversies involving race and the art world are often discussed in terms of diversity and representation. "Saturation" offers another approach, taking into account not only questions of racial representation but also issues of structural change. In essays, conversations, discussions,



and artist portfolios, contributors confront questions at the intersection of art, race, and representation in new ways using saturation as an organizing concept, suggesting that current paradigms cannot encompass the complex realities of race. □

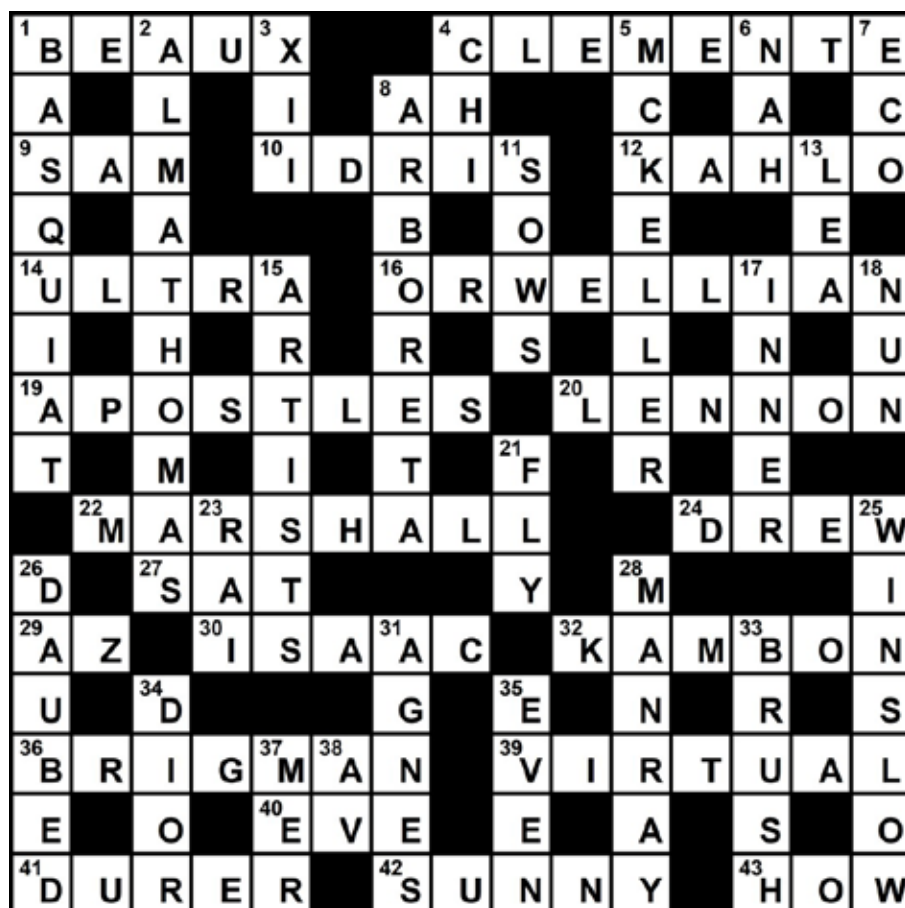
Virtual Museum Mile Festival Celebrates the Arts

For the first time since 1978, when the Museum Mile Festival was first introduced to New Yorkers, the 2020 festival occurred virtually, bringing the citizens of New York City together, increasing public awareness of member institutions, and promoting public support of the arts—the same goals as the event that took place annually on Fifth Avenue between 82nd Street and 110th Street.

Eight New York City museums joined together to create the first ever day-long virtual Museum Mile Festival on Tuesday, June 9, 2020, from 9 am to 9 pm. Throughout the day, each museum hosted live and pre-recorded programs, virtual exhibition tours, live musical performances, and activities for families streamed across their respective websites and social media platforms. For the first time, culture enthusiasts from around the world were able to join New Yorkers in their walk up and down Fifth Avenue.

The eight collaborating institutions were The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Neue Galerie New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum; The Jewish Museum; Museum of the City of New York; El Museo del Barrio; and The Africa Center. Three of them, the Museum of the City of New York, El Museo del Barrio, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, are members of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG), a diverse coalition of 34 nonprofit museums, performing arts centers, historical societies, zoos, and botanical gardens in New York that share a private-public partnership with the city and reside within city-owned property. Visitors were able to follow festival events on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. □

CROSSWORD SOLUTION



museum VIEWS

Editor: Lila Sherman
Publisher: Museum Views, Ltd.
 2 Peter Cooper Road, New York, NY 10010
Phone: 212.677.3415
Email: lsher116@aol.com
On the web: www.museumviews.org

museum VIEWS is supported by grants from the **Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation** and **Bloomberg Philanthropies**.

museum VIEWS is published 4 times a year: Winter (Jan. 1), Spring (April 1), Summer (July 1), and Fall (October 1). Deadlines for listings and artwork are Nov. 15, Feb. 15, May 15, and Aug 15.