“I’m quarantined in my bedroom for suspected COVID, and these daily doses of art make me feel connected to the museum, to our cultural heritage, and to the beauty that abounds amidst this grim pandemic. It’s helping me stay positive, determined, and connected to a higher purpose.”

Carlos, museum member, on the value of the museum’s communications with members during COVID-19 closures
When COVID-19 closed our doors in 2020, we had to use our digital platforms in new ways to connect our community with our collection virtually until they could return safely.

In 2020, 50% of website visits were to pages about objects in our collection, up 22% from 2019.

In fiscal year 2021, 67% of our tickets were booked online in advance, as opposed to 4% in fiscal year 2020.

Facing a New Challenge

Beyond taking existing programs online, we started new programs like Museum Mindfulness that brought the restorative energy of the museum to a virtual space. Longstanding community partners joined us to co-host monthly programs and bring different audiences together.

"I loved the collaboration between the Veteran’s Empowerment Center and the Museum Mindfulness virtual program in March 2021. The program offered a novel approach to touring art online that emphasized the Veterans’ perspective. Zeroing in on the sensory experience of placing oneself in a work of art left a lasting impactful impression and emotional connection."

Su Lin Hingley, Gulf War Veteran

Virtual programs presented to date in our first-ever year of online programming

186

72 Programs for museum members and supporters

59 Programs for families

45 Programs open to all

10 Programs for teachers

Some recurring programs served small audiences, like Art Museum Playdates for ages 4-7.

Other programs reached large groups. Our largest audience was 784 attendees for a lecture on Mary Cassatt and the Women’s Vote, closely followed by 633 attendees for a curatorial conversation on Horace Pippin.

Miss these programs? You can catch up on our YouTube channel.
Museum educators stepped up to support Philadelphia teachers as they pivoted to online learning.

“The Philadelphia Museum of Art educators have been essential partners in my efforts to bridge the arts and humanities with medicine. Through gallery workshops, virtual lectures, and online initiatives such as Rx/Museum, our extensive collaboration has cultivated a unique dialogue. It’s exciting to continue our work to normalize a culture of self-care and self-compassion in medicine.”

Dr. Lyndsay Hoy, Assistant Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology, Perelman School of Medicine

“These sessions never disappoint! I always come away with something I can use with my students. Please continue to keep us motivated—it truly helps!”

Sabra Shafi, Shawmont School, on museum online teacher development programs

“When the museum took their programs online this year, it actually allowed more classrooms and students at our school to participate. Having museum educators drop in virtually helps keep students engaged in online learning and offers them a new voice and perspective to help break up long days of looking at screens. I have to commend museum educators—they really stepped up to the challenge, and it makes a big difference.”

Marjorie Brummer, fifth-grade teacher, Masterman School

10K+ connections with students through virtual lessons in the 2020-2021 school year

10K+ connections with students through virtual lessons in the 2020-2021 school year

| 8,612 | K-12 students |
| 806   | Medical school students |
| 905   | Pre-K students |
| 179   | College students |
| 137   | Homeschool students |
We continued to collaborate with and highlight Philadelphia’s creative community.

The exhibition New Grit: Art & Philly Now inaugurates our new galleries of contemporary art with 25 artists with ties to Philadelphia, including special commissions from 5 local artists.

“We have images of people using the space of the museum to make protest. And we saw the museum as a backdrop to vigils and commemorations for people who were taken by police violence...I was thinking about how color and shapes could signify the body of the people and people power in the charge for justice. Not to think of it as negative, but as a positive.”

Odili Donald Odita on his commissioned mural Walls of Change, now installed at the museum

“It was such a pleasure to be able to go into museum storage and see some of these pieces. In doing this deep research and connecting with these objects and researching the potters, I felt freed from all of the academic notions I had about what pottery is supposed to be.”

Daniel Ricardo Terán on recreating seventeenth-century ceramics

75 local artisans are featured in our retail stores. Over 80% of the products in our new American Gallery store are produced in the Philadelphia area.

Based in South Philly, zero-waste certified women owned business Remark Glass sources beer and wine bottles from Philadelphia and recycles them. They collaborated with our curators to design historically accurate glassware based on bottles in our early American art collection.
In 2020, we saw how far we have to go to live up to our responsibilities as a civic institution in the twenty-first century. After establishing our Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access, we’ve adopted four commitments to guide that ongoing work. To be an art museum for all Philadelphians, we must:

1. Authentically engage and collaborate with our communities in the development of exhibitions, education programs, and other initiatives.

2. Cultivate a culture of belonging and inclusion whereby staff, management, volunteers, and trustees better reflect the diversity of Philadelphia and the global communities we serve.

3. Expand our collection to include more works by underrepresented artists, including but not limited to artists of color, women artists, those who identify as LGBTQIA+.

4. Increase the number of diverse companies with which we collaborate, including minority, women, LGBTQ, and disabled-owned businesses.

We look forward to sharing details of our progress on all four commitments in next year’s report.

Work is already underway on efforts including hosting public events led by local artists, leaders, and grassroots groups; building authentic relationships with Lenape communities to guide our initiatives and programming; and conducting anti-racism workshops for all museum staff and trustees.
Economic Impact

Our economic impact figures from the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 are lower than in previous years, as they show the beginnings of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the decrease in spending toward the end of our Core Project construction. As visitors return, we look forward to playing a central role in the recovery of our city’s arts and tourism sectors.

$1.7B
in economic impact over the last 5 years

$314M in economic impact in fiscal year 2020

- $124M impact from the museum’s organizational spending
- $92.2M impact from visitor spending outside the museum (restaurants, hotels, shopping, etc.)
- $97.8M impact from the museum’s capital spending (construction and other expenses)

- 522,000 visits to Philadelphia driven by the museum
- 192,800 visits to other local attractions
- 2.4K full-time equivalent jobs
- 51,000 hotel room nights
- 522,000 visits to Philadelphia driven by the museum

$17.7M
2020 tax revenue generated for city and commonwealth combined

Tax dollars fuel state and local budgets to support libraries, parks, transportation, healthcare, roads, and more.
From the Director

After a year of challenges that none of us anticipated, it is tempting to focus on getting “back to normal” as soon as possible. However, it would be unwise—and a missed opportunity—to pretend that recent events have not changed us, and our institution, for good.

In some arenas, we look forward to picking up where we left off; I hope we will continue to be an economic driver for our region, building on our $1.7 billion of economic impact in the past five years. Elsewhere, in areas as practical as our concluded renovations and as comprehensive as the ongoing work of our Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access, we know we have been, and must be, permanently transformed.

Thank you to all who have helped make both our survival and our evolution possible. We are grateful to share our journey with you.

With warm regards,

Timothy Rub
The George D. Widener Director
and Chief Executive Officer