As I step into my new role as Chair of Bennington Museum’s Board of Trustees, I am delighted to share with you what I find to be exciting news about fiscal year 2019. This past year was full of new initiatives, compelling opportunities, and unexpected challenges for Bennington Museum. We met them all with the unwavering support of our donors, members and volunteers. Thank you. Closing out the year in such a good position, the board, staff, and I are poised to move forward to another great year for the Museum. I hope you will share our enthusiasm.

In fiscal year 2019, Bennington Museum

... installed and presented 15 changing exhibitions ranging from the magnificent work found in Color|Gesture: Early Works by Emily Mason to exploring the 60s in Vermont (Fields of Change: 1960s Vermont.) These were in addition to changes to our permanent galleries.

... sparked the curiosity of over 2,800 children who came to the Museum to explore our art and history. For many this was a first…but hopefully not their last, visit.

... initiated a national search for a new Executive Director. In the meantime, the board moved ahead by announcing co-acting directors, Alexina Jones (Operations) and Deana Mallory (Programs.)

... welcomed 20,026 visitors representing every state in America and 32 countries. Using the Economic Prosperity Calculators developed by Americans for the Arts, it is estimated that Bennington Museum attendee’s off-site spending associated with their visit to the Museum amounts to $1.04 million in Bennington County alone.

... increased its membership base by 10% and the associated revenue by 30%. What does this mean? Many are joining at a higher level and enjoying the benefits offered at those levels.

... introduced a new membership category – Monument Society. Members at this new level enjoy unique access to the Museum, as well as special events and parties. But most importantly, they are making a commitment to be a leader in creating and sustaining Bennington’s cultural community through their involvement with the Museum.

... ended fiscal year 2019 with a balanced budget. This is the third year that the Museum has achieved our goal which enables us to continue to present quality exhibitions, events, and programming. Further, the Museum increased the level of support received, and welcomed new faces through our doors.

... initiated programs that spark conversations, as we work to break through the ‘dominant narrative’ and perception of the elitist and otherwise problematic history of museums. (Page 3.)

... partnered with 17 different non-profit organizations, and hosted over 53 events in the Paresky Wing.

... received gifts for the Museum’s collection from 36 donors.

So, how do YOU fit in to all of this?
I ask that you not sit on the sidelines. Get involved. Whether you choose to provide your input, donate your time, join the Monument Society, or contribute to our Annual Fund, your support makes a difference, and lets us know that we are on the right track. Thank you for your commitment to the Museum and your investment in this community. We hope to see you soon!

Consie West — Chair, Board of Trustees
We’ve been thinking a lot about representation lately. What does it mean to be a museum of, for, and about the Bennington region? Whose stories haven’t we been telling? How do we do better?

Museums everywhere are grappling with questions like these. We have a long tradition of presenting the world from one point of view and are now being pushed to break through the “dominant narrative,” to own up to the problematic history of museums, and to dismantle it. At Bennington Museum, visitors demand of us, “Where are the indigenous artifacts? How are you addressing the roles of women? Why do you use outdated language like ‘Indians’ on your labels? How do you interpret the Lincoln statue out front?”

Last year, a Vermont state representative resigned after receiving racially motivated threats. The Vermont Arts Council responded with a resolution condemning hate crimes and encouraging cultural institutions throughout the state to sign onto a statement promoting inclusion, respect, and change in their communities. Bennington Museum joined 30 other Vermont organizations in doing so, and began working towards the goal of making Bennington Museum a more welcoming and forward-thinking institution in line with our changing times.

In the spring, we conducted research and generated a community engagement report, full of suggestions about how to reimagine our collection and exhibits in order to be more representative of more people. In June we took a first step and hosted a story slam as part of Bennington’s Pride event. People in the LGBTQ+ community shared coming-out stories before participating in the parade, which stepped off outside our doors.

At the same time, we were planning our current major exhibition, Fields of Change: 1960s Vermont. We grappled with whether a 1961 photograph of members of the NorShaft Lions Club in blackface should be included as a component focused on the Civil Rights Movement. Ultimately, we decided the image belonged in the show, but wanted to be sensitive to its potential to offend or traumatize viewers, and didn’t want to glorify it in any way. We put it in a binder, giving visitors the choice to view it or not. Recognizing its potency, we also provided cards for visitors to comment on its inclusion. As I write this, we have received close to 100 well thought out responses.

We continue to take steps. We will host a Community Day on September 28, focused on the Vermont Reads book for 2019, March: Book One. This graphic novel examines the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, as the author John Lewis came of age and became a leader. Channeling the themes of this book, the Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity will present their program, Vermont Vision for a Multicultural Future, on building inclusive and equitable communities. Earlier in the day, we will host a reception and panel discussion for Visible in Vermont: Our Stories, Our Voices, an exhibition consisting of photographs of Vermonters of color, sharing the subtle and not-so-subtle acts of racism they experience.

Bennington Museum has a long way to go before it truly becomes a place that represents all of Bennington’s faces. We intend to continue the conversations; we have a mandate to continue to take action; we insist on being at the forefront of a better Vermont, where difficult objects and legacies can become teaching tools, and where everyone’s story is valued. We look forward to taking that journey with you.

Deana R. Mallory — Acting Director of Programs
August 31 - October 14
1863 Dear Jane Quilt
Become inspired by the quilt that brings visitors to the Museum from around the world. The 1863 Jane Stickle Quilt is comprised of 169 five-inch blocks, each in a different pattern, containing a remarkable total of 5,602 pieces surrounded by a unique scalloped border.

September 21 through December 30
Asa Cheffetz: Vermont Wood Engravings
Asa Cheffetz’s engraved wood blocks served as printing plates and from these came beautiful prints, many of them installed in Asa Cheffetz: Vermont Wood Engravings. He produced most of his highly detailed wood engravings in the 1930s and 40s. Inspired by the Vermont countryside, his landscapes portray his strong affection for the land and his simple yet detailed blend of the hills, sky and water.

September 14 through December 30
Visible in Vermont: Our Stories, Our Voices
This multi-generational photo and story exhibition highlights the experiences of people of color living and going to school in Vermont. The project is a medium for people of color to tell their own stories and convey the impact of racism on their lives. This exhibition is presented by The Root Social Justice Center and supported by the Vermont Humanities Council.

Closing November 3
Fields of Change: 1960s Vermont
Explore a complex time that in many ways has come to define Vermont as we know it today – socially, culturally, politically – from a shift in state politics to education reform to civil rights and anti-war protests. From the exploration of Color Fields to the influx of back-to-the-landers, this 60s exhibition also explores the impact on the relationship between traditional Vermonters and the progressive new arrivals.

November 29 through December 30
A Snowy Evening – The Festival Exhibition
This year’s Festival exhibition asks regional artists to respond to the words of Robert Frost, the world-renowned poet and author of the iconic “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.” An exhibition coming in June 2020 is titled Robert Frost, “At Present in Vermont.” It will examine Frost’s life and work in the context of the landscape and culture of Bennington County from 1920 to 1940. Items in the Festival Exhibition are available in a closed-bid auction that closes December 22.

New in the Military Gallery
Located in the Soane Gallery at Bennington Museum is the original bronze cannon that was captured by American forces in the Battle of Bennington. While the cannon is amazing to look at, local woodworker Charles Dewey, a descendant of the Dewey family who fought at the Battle of Bennington in 1777, thought it would be great to provide visitors the opportunity to get up close with an historically accurate reproduction of both the cannon and the carriage. The carriage uses oak wood and is painted the same dark gray used by the British army. The cannon on the carriage is a replica made of pine. The tires and hub bands are steel, but the black straps and hardware are replicated in wood, painted to look like metal. While you cannot touch the majority of what you see in the Museum, you may get close and touch this cannon and carriage.
Why run around for holiday shopping when one stop at Bennington Museum can pleasantly surprise everyone on your list? During Museum Store Sale Days, great discounts are offered: 25% Museum Members, 15% off Not-Yet-Members.

Sale days: Community Day, September 28; Thanksgiving Weekend, November 29, 30 and December 1; and the Festival Family Day – December 7.

Are you looking for unique one-of-a-kind regional artisan products? Bennington Museum Store has ornaments, jewelry, pottery, wood products, and hand-blown glass items.

There is a complete line of Grandma Moses and Will Moses merchandise including puzzles, notecards, magnets, prints (framed and unframed), and more. For the history buff on your list there is a wide variety of books on Vermont History including the full series of Bennington Museum’s publication, the Walloomsack Review. If you’re looking for a gift for a more active person, try Guidebooks for Vermont with information on hiking and snowshoeing trails, and general travel. And for the children, the store offers a wide assortment of historical toys, coloring books, games, and more.

Can’t decide what to buy? There is nothing like a membership for an individual or family. Give them gifts that they can enjoy throughout the year. Free admission and yearlong discounts.

Stop in and visit the Museum Store. Open 7 days a week through October, 10 am to 5 pm. Shop in person or visit us online for a smaller yet unique selection of the gifts we offer.

Jasen Frederickson – Museum Store Manager

Archival Sources
Now Available Online

Two of Bennington Museum’s richest archival sources are now available online. The typescripts of the Harwood Diaries have been digitized thanks to a generous donor who had used the resources in her own research and believed they should be more widely available. The Harwood Diaries, penned between 1805 and 1837 provide rich details of rural life in Vermont. They have recently been used to research 19th century psychiatric care, early female education, and the Continental storehouse. Explore these records at archive.org/details/harwooddiaries

Additionally. the original early records of the Old First Church have been scanned and made available by the Congregational Library and Archives through their “New England’s Hidden Histories” program. The Bennington church and its history figure prominently in Doug Winiarski’s recent award-winning book on 18th century New England religion. The Congregational Library and Archive selected Bennington's Old First Church as their first Vermont collection to be digitized. The resources include the town’s earliest records of births, deaths, and marriages. Particularly unusual in this group are records from church trials for trespasses such as heresy, drunkenness, slander, and attending the circus. To view these documents visit congregationallibrary.org/nehh/series1/BenningtonVTFirst.

Callie Raspuzzi – Collections Manager

A1347 Apology of James Hicks of Bennington to Mrs. Margaret Adams, 1835. Both members of the church, Hicks was put on trial for “lascivious conversation and conduct” while Adams was accused of “prevarication, lying, and falsehood.” Both ended up excommunicated.
A Very Special Event for Monument Society Members

Bennington Museum recently introduced a new level of membership: the Monument Society. Members enjoy unique access to Bennington Museum, and special events and parties. While these benefits are enjoyable, perhaps the most important reason to join is to become a leader in helping to create and sustain Bennington’s cultural community. As a member, you are stating that you want to make a difference – to your Museum and to the community, and that you believe Bennington Museum is critical to the cultural, economic, and creative life of the region. Join us today!

Hall Art Foundation Private Tour and Dinner at SoLo Farm & Table for Monument Society Members
Saturday, October 19, 3:00 to 10:30 pm

- Limited to 20 attendees
- Advanced reservations are required by October 11
- Call 802-447-1571 ext. 202 to make your reservation or email ajones@benningtonmuseum.org
- Open and free to Monument Society members (membership includes a total of 2 people).
- After October 1, Monument Society members may invite additional guests for $300 per person.

Board a shuttle departing at 3:00 pm from Bennington Museum. Cocktails and light hors d’oeuvres await you upon arrival at the Hall Art Foundation. This is followed by a docent-led private tour of the former dairy farm that now houses an extensive collection of postwar and contemporary art works.

After the tour, the shuttle takes you to the SoLo Farm & Table located in South Londonderry. Combining warmth and sophisticated farm-to-table dining in an 18th century farmhouse, Chloe and Wesley Genovart offer a seasonal ingredient-driven menu that is focused on quality, sustainability and simplicity. The husband and wife duo bring with them years of restaurant experience gained in Europe and Manhattan.

After dinner, the shuttle returns to Bennington Museum, arriving by 10:30 pm.

The newest Monument Society Members include:
Carolyn Blitz and Joshua Sherman
Peter and Claudia Kinder
Abigail Martin
Jane and Kenneth Moriarty
Edie Sawitsky and Michael Keane
Consie West
James and Kathleen Williams
Tom Woodward and David LePere

Join the Monument Society today!
Visit the Museum website and go to Support/Monument Society.

Fall Social and Awards Presentation – October 4

Every year Bennington Museum honors people who have shown great dedication to this organization, the Bennington community, and surrounding towns. The 2019 Fall Social and Awards Presentation being held on Friday, October 4 from 5:00 to 7:30 pm, is open to everyone. There will be food and drink and plenty of time to socialize. Reservations are required by September 27 and can be made by calling 802-447-1571 ext. 200 or by going online to store.benningtonmuseum.org. $20/Museum Members; $30/Not-Yet-Members. Become a Museum member the evening of this event (in person) and save 10% on the first year of any membership. For Monument Society Members, this event is free!

The Honorees
This year the Walloomsac Society Award, presented annually since 1991, is given for significant contributions to the community in the field of art, history, or education, will be presented to Greg Van Houten, owner and president of GVH Studio located in Bennington, VT.

The General Stark Society Award, presented annually since 1982, is given in recognition of outstanding service to Bennington Museum. This year, it is being awarded to the George Aiken Wildflower Trail volunteers - Jackie Marro, Tony Marro, Ray Bolton, Jon Goodrich, Heather Hamilton, Liz Luca, Edd Lyon, Doug Mears, Don Miller, Jane Moriarty, Carolyn Plage, Mary Rogers, Don Trachte, and Consie West.
Sunday, September 22 - 2:00 pm • Music at the Museum
The concerts in this series are free and are made possible by a donation from Alison Nowak and Robert Cane. Come out for Natural History, a dynamic trio who embodies the improvisational essence of the 1960s.

Saturday, September 28 • All Day Community Day
One of several special days at the Museum when everyone is admitted at no charge. Join us at 10:00 am for a reception and panel discussion for Visible in Vermont: Our Stories, Our Voices. At 2:00 pm participants in Vermont Vision for a Multicultural Future discuss building inclusive and equitable communities. Plus the VAE Art Bus will be on site noon to 4:00 pm. Explore the galleries and enjoy a hike on the Aiken Wildflower Trail.

Friday, October 4, 5:00 – 7:30 pm
Fall Social and Awards Presentation
Details on Page 6

Saturday, October 19
Trip to Hall Art Foundation for Monument Society Members
Details on Page 6

Sunday, November 3, 3:00 – 4:30 pm
Bread and Puppet Theater presents Diagonal Life: Theory and Praxis
Bewildering. Beguiling. This production brings funny possibilities and implications of diagonality to life with song, dance, magic, mechanism, and stunning cardboard and paper maché puppets painted by Peter Schumann, founder of Bread and Puppet Theater. This is a presentation of Music at the Museum made possible by a donation from Alison Nowak and Robert Cane. Ada Paresky Education Center of Bennington Museum. Free, but reservations are required. Call 802-447-1571 ext. 203.

Friday, November 29 • Opening of Annual Festival Exhibition
Celebrate the life and work of the beloved poet Robert Frost as we open the Annual Festival, A Snowy Evening. Exhibition of work by regional artists responding to the words of Frost on view through December 30. Closed-bid auction of artwork closes December 22.

Saturday, December 7 • Festival Family Day
Admission to the museum is only $3 for everyone. Children who bring an item for donation are admitted free (see website for details). Children’s Shopping Boutique, crafts, photos with Santa, bake sale, and so much more. Activities conclude at 4:00 pm

Saturday, December 14, 7:00 to 10:00 pm • Festival Gala
The highlight of the Bennington holiday season is this fabulous annual celebration. Welcoming music performed by members of the MAUHS Choral Society, with gypsy jazz by Hot Club of Saratoga throughout the evening. Silent and Closed-Bid Auctions of great art by regional artists, and items that anyone can win. Savory and Sweet Fare, fine wine, Vermont brews, and signature drinks. $100/person. $85/person for reservations made and paid for prior to November 15. Millennial pricing. Personal Benefactor and Corporate Sponsorship packages are available with great benefits. Call 802-447-1571 or go online to store.benningtonmuseum.org to make your reservation.

Tuesday, December 31, 11:00 am to 12:30 pm
Kids’ “Noon” Year’s Eve Celebration
Celebrate the new year in style with kid-made party hats, noisemakers, and a countdown to noon, complete with a sparkling grape juice toast. Reservation recommended. $3/child/ members; $5/child/non-members

Museum ABCs is open to all children ages 3 to 5 and their families and caregivers. Each program includes stories on the month’s topic, visits to the galleries, plus an art or craft activity. The monthly program was developed and is offered in collaboration with the Bennington Free Library. Admission Free. Registration is not required. Sponsored by The Bank of Bennington. Join us on October 17 for Puppet Play; November 21 for Print It; and December 19 for Snow Days.

Bennington Historical Society meets in the Ada Paresky Education Center in the Bennington Museum. Each meeting explores a wonderfully interesting topic on the history of Bennington and the area. These meetings are free and open to the public. Coming Up: September – Just Who Was Natty Bumppo; October – Windmills and the Bears of Searsburg; and November – Shay’s Settlement near Sandgate.
Dorado Beach, Puerto Rico

Win a one-week stay

for 6 people at a luxurious privately owned home.
RAFFLE TICKETS: $100 Only 100 tickets are available!
Visit our website for more details.

Looking Ahead…

Through October 14
September 22
September 28
October 4
November 23 through December 30
December 3
December 7
December 14
December 22
December 31

1863 Jane Stickle Quilt

Music at the Museum – Natural History Trio

Community Day — FREE Admission

Fall Social and Awards Presentation — Open to Everyone

A Snowy Evening — Exhibition and Closed-Bid Auction

Artists’ Reception

Festival Family Day

Festival Gala

Closed Bid Auction Closes

Kid’s “Noon” Year’s Eve Party