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VISITING & PROGRAMMING UPDATES

To stay up-to-date on Museum and Planetarium visits, as well as future programming, please see our website and follow us on Facebook.

SAVE THE DATES

Night at The Museum | September 26 • 6pm



The ***Eighth Annual Night at The Museum*** will mark the opening of ***Alphonse Mucha: Master of Art Nouveau***, which showcases original works from the 1890s to the 1920s, an age of elegance and grandeur. The night will celebrate the fall exhibition season with a spectacular show highlighting the art of turn-of-the-century France through the 'Roaring 20s.'

Over the years, the Night at The Museum planning committee successfully created an atmosphere where sponsors and guests are greeted with specialty cocktails and enjoy hors d'oeuvres in the galleries throughout the evening, while dancing to live music, and embracing the opportunity to bid on and win from a selection of high-end auction items. **See our website or email Lindsay for more information at lindsay.crist@readingpublicmuseum.org.**

(NEW!) EventBerks | September 2 • 4:30–7pm



Planning a once-in-a-lifetime event? Oversee parties or conferences for your company? Are you a non-profit or association looking for a fresh take on your fundraiser or annual gathering? **EventBerks** has all of Greater Reading's finest event venues and vendors all in one place. Discover our area's best and brightest in corporate parties, team building outings, family celebrations, and wedding planning. Leave inspired and invigorated, with dozens of Berks-based event professionals ready to help you on your planning adventure. **See our website or email Stephanie for more information at stephanie.shaak@readingpublicmuseum.org.**

MUSEUM ROAD

SUMMER 2020

A publication of Reading Public Museum • Planetarium • Arboretum



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A Note From The Director



John Graydon Smith-
Director and CEO

Social Distancing. Mandatory Masks. Red-Yellow-Green phases. COVID-19. When I last wrote for *Museum Road* in March, none of those phrases had any relevance to my life. Now, they have become a way of life.

The upheaval of everyone's routine over the past few months, and the tragic loss of lives for so many people around the world and in our own neighborhoods, is something that is still too fresh and fluid to even adequately address right now. However, life is returning to some sort of "new normal" in Berks County and the Reading Public Museum is determined to help in that transition in the same ways we've served our community following World Wars, economic and social disasters, and even prior pandemics.

For many, the loss of live sporting events left a significant hole in our daily routines and distractions, and the same can be said for the closure of so many civic and cultural institutions over the past few months. Although The Museum did its best to serve the community through our STEM-based, distance learning kits, online planetarium shows, and interactive videos and lessons through social media, nothing can replace the experience of coming in-person to explore our galleries, immersing yourself into our experiential exhibitions, walking through our outdoor gardens, or gazing into our virtual night sky under the dome. Because we know how much you value those experiences, and we want you to know how much we value you, we've been working as hard as ever to prepare for a safe and enjoyable reopening.



Summer camps and small group rentals returned to our campus on June 8, with assistance and advice from Penn State Health St. Joseph's and Highmark, helping to ensure that our campers, staff, and volunteers remained healthy and engaged. Our Arboretum Assistants' program continued to work tirelessly throughout the grounds to keep things looking green and weed-free, and our skeleton-crew of staff who remained on after significant layoffs have pitched in across departmental lines to ensure that this cultural treasure is prepared for whatever lies ahead. While there are some notable changes, like mandatory masks inside the buildings for adults, additional sanitization stations (with help from our friends at Eight Oaks Distillery), and contactless entry points at Admissions and the Gift Shop, generally speaking, the Reading Public Museum is still here, just as it was when we closed in March.

As a benefit for our Members, while we waited for a return to "green" countywide and a general reopening to the public, we announced special Member-only visits beginning June 12, becoming one of the first museums in the state to reopen. In addition, we've extended all memberships by two months through March 2021, meaning that presenting an expired membership card will still get you admission, as long as the expiration was during the prior

60 days. Of course, considering the significant revenue losses we suffered since March, we're still accepting donations and membership renewals from those who can afford to continue their support.

Most importantly, the Reading Public Museum – your museum – is back open for you and your family, just as we have been for more than 100 years. This crisis isn't our first, isn't likely to be our last, and may not even prove to be our worst. However, it is our most recent and one that we will be dealing with the after-effects of for some time to come. So, while some measures may be annoying or disruptive, The Museum is taking the steps necessary to keep all our constituencies safe, while continuing to address the educational, cultural, and entertainment needs of the communities we serve. We provide a welcoming environment for everyone in our communities, and will continue to do our part to educate and demonstrate through daily actions that we all need to support and understand each other. It has been too long since we have been able to say it, but we're happy to invite you back and look forward to seeing you at The Museum soon!



Updated Exhibition Schedule



The American Spirit: Public Art from the Great Depression

Rescheduled for Summer of 2021

This exhibition features artwork produced under the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) — a New Deal relief program that brought employment to artists during the Great Depression. Over 60 PWAP artworks from RPM's collection will be on exhibit, all of which are on permanent loan from the United States Government.



Katharine Hepburn: Dressed for Stage and Screen

Rescheduled for Summer of 2021

Spotlighting over five decades of the star's most iconic roles, *Katharine Hepburn: Dressed for Stage and Screen* provides a rich and entertaining look not only at the clothes that helped create indelible characters, but also at the importance of fashion in crafting the image of one of the most memorable performers of the 20th century.



Rising Voices: The Bennett Prize® for Women Figurative Realist Painters

Extended through August 2, 2020

Rising Voices features more than 25 works by the ten finalists of *The Bennett Prize®*. *The Bennett Prize* is a celebration of women's voices and the enduring power of the figure in the visual arts. Finalists were selected for technical excellence, emotive and conceptually expressive qualities, and for the ability of their artists to tell stories that address the timeless and contemporary issues facing not only women, but society as a whole.



Jon Carsman: The Scenic Route | Extended through Fall 2020

Jon Carsman, from Wilkes-Barre, PA, made a reputation for his dramatically colorful images of familiar suburban streets, Victorian architecture, gardens, and scenic country roads. This exhibition features more than 35 prints and watercolors from The Museum's permanent collection.

Presented locally by Stevens & Lee Griffin



Top Secret: License to Spy | Extended through January 10, 2021

Based around a James Bond-style fantasy of exotic locations, high-tech equipment and, of course, a mystery to solve, *Top Secret: License to Spy* focuses on the science and technology of spying and espionage. Solve your mission, today!

Presented locally by the Friends of the Reading Public Museum and Bruce and Reneé Dietrich Endowment Funds.



Flamenco: From Spain to the U.S. | Through September 20, 2020

This festive and multi-dimensional exhibition explores the origins, influences, development, and appreciation of flamenco as a highly respected art form on the world stage. Featuring approximately 140 objects dating from the late 19th century to the present, this exhibition focuses on the folkloric roots of flamenco, tracing its history as it was transformed into a performance art.



Alphonse Mucha: Master of Art Nouveau | September 26, 2020 – January 3, 2021

Alphonse Mucha: Master of Art Nouveau includes more than 70 original works by Mucha, who many consider the creator of the Art Nouveau style. With a focus on the works created during the 1890s, this exhibition shows a creative man exploring possibilities when the emphasis was on defining a new art, fit for the new century.

Presented locally by the Marlin and Ginger Miller Exhibition Endowment



Forever Forest | October 3, 2020 – February 7, 2021

Explore the realities of forests through play! Families will learn about sustainability, selective harvesting, transportation needs, and the every-day products we use that are made from trees.

Forever Forest exhibition is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Hardwoods Development Council in cooperation with the Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group, Keystone Wood Products Association, Northern Tier Hardwood Association and the Pennsylvania Forest Products Association.