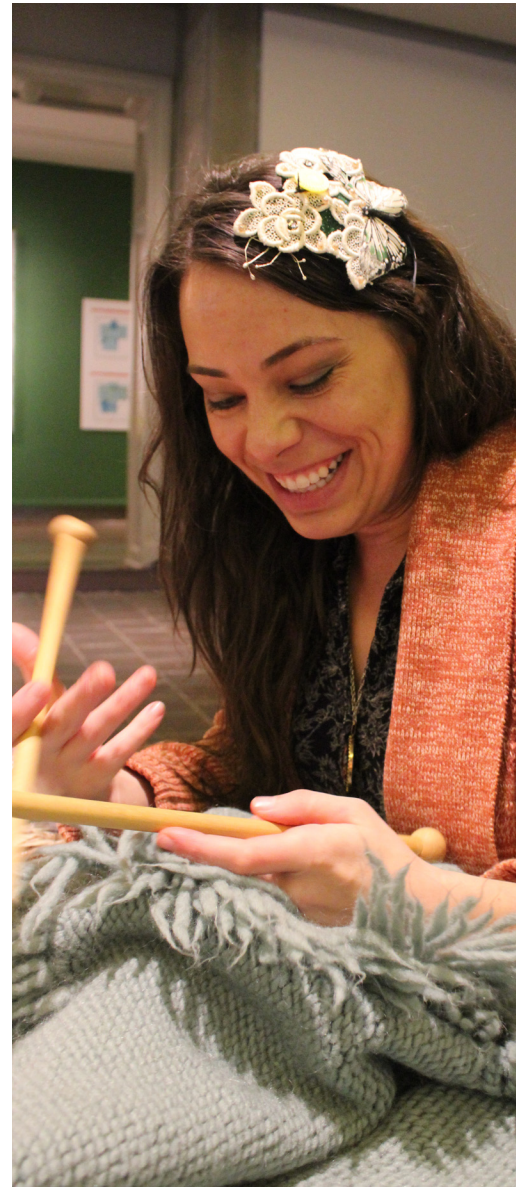


THE STORY BEHIND CFC

"I do not want art for a few any more than I want education for a few or freedom for a few." - William Morris

The Columbus Museum of Art (CMA) is at a pivotal moment as it strives to redefine the art museum in the 21st century. A strategic institutional shift in CMA's core values resulted in a focus to promote and champion creativity. This shift has repositioned and deepened CMA's relationship with the Central Ohio community, while also attracting the attention of national museum colleagues. We believe that to provide public value and to be a meaningful catalyst for change, all experiences must be centered around the visitor, be outcome driven, and be focused around our core institutional values.

In 2007, the Columbus Museum of Art began its Art Matters endowment and capital campaign to renovate its historic building and to build a 50,000 sq. ft. expansion. At the same time, CMA intentionally and strategically began a journey of reinvention. As so many like-sized, peer institutions, CMA had attempted to replicate the traditional model of "American museum as destination," with significant numbers of visitors from out of town. CMA, however, is a mid-sized museum with a dynamic and distinguished, but not encyclopedic collection and a visitor base that is almost exclusively made up of residents of Central Ohio. CMA's board and staff knew that the reimagined focus needed to be on impact, public value, and serving community. They questioned how that would be achieved - focus on *the art?* or focus on *the people?* In the end they realized it had to be about both. The resulting new mission statement—to create great experiences with great art for everyone—now guides all efforts.



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“transformative, active, participatory, and impacting the health and growth of the community.”

As the renovation progressed, CMA leadership increasingly realized that the CMA must evolve to embody a 21st century museum - one we define as “transformative, active, participatory, and impacting the health and growth of the community.” CMA also needed a social mission - a lens in which to measure its impact on the community. Creativity was deemed the designated driver for change as CMA's permanent



collection galleries house some of the best practices of creativity. Innovative thinkers like George Bellows, Pablo Picasso, Aminah Robinson and Ann Hamilton became models for the type of thinking CMA could cultivate and advocate for in its community.

Leading up to the unveiling, staff were excited but cautious. CMA believed it was uniquely positioned to impact creativity in the Central Ohio community, but did not know how the community would respond or if it would, value this new role. As an informal learning institution, CMA is well-equipped to provide lifelong learning experiences that foster 21st century skills including creativity. Indeed, museums and libraries, with their varied strengths and flexibility, must take up this charge. As Sir Ken Robinson, noted creativity authority, stated in his 2006 TED talk, the formal education system is challenged to make any significant progress in fostering creativity. Columbus is the largest city in the state of Ohio, and it has a strong, diverse economy

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dance, music, theater, and visual arts “are essential to preparing our nation’s young people for a global economy fueled by innovation and creativity,”

that is capable of risk as well as a robust creative economy that is hungry for more resources. And although the arts are still touted as creative drivers by key policy drivers such as Secretary of Education Arne Duncan who wrote that dance, music, theater, and visual arts “are essential to preparing our nation’s young people for a global economy fueled by innovation and creativity,” the arts have done a poor job communicating how their disciplines foster creativity. In addition, the 2009 Qualities of Quality report produced by Harvard Project Zero suggested that quality arts education has enormous, untapped potential a key potential to cultivate a broad capacity for creativity. With its combination of resources, expertise, and knowledge CMA was poised to become a major catalyst for creativity in Central Ohio.

In October 2010, in anticipation of opening the CfC, CMA hosted its first Creativity Summit, a four-day event for hundreds of community business leaders, educators, families, and museum docents, who took part in myriad events focused around creativity and 21st century learning. This event, funded by an IMLS grant, was a great success and alerted the community to the idea that CMA could be used as a community hub and resource for creativity.



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On January 1, 2011, CMA opened its renovated, historic building and an 18,000-square-foot Center for Creativity (CfC). The Center for Creativity—both as a space and a program initiative—champions new and different ways of thinking and doing. It celebrates the process and results of creativity and provides opportunities for people to discover the value of creativity in their own lives. By fostering imagination, encouraging collaboration, cultivating critical thinking, and celebrating innovation, the Center for Creativity makes CMA relevant and vital to the community.

Since the CfC's opening two years ago, the community need for fostering and understanding creativity has been far greater than anticipated. CMA staff have presented nearly 90 workshops and presentations specifically focused on creativity, for audiences as diverse as Nationwide Insurance, medical students, and school district administrators.

Now, in 2012, CMA is leading the national conversation in creating a visionary, innovative, visitor-centered model for a participatory 21st century museum. This is not because we have all the answers, rather we are asking the pointed questions, and testing and prototyping to evaluate and learn from our experiences.

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"The Center for Creativity (CfC) of the CMA is positioned to play a significant contributing role in its vision for citizen success by using resources and training that the Art Museum is uniquely positioned to deploy and support."

Guiding questions include:

What does lifelong learning look like in the 21st century?

What do we want visitors to gain from their visit to the museum?

How can an art museum have an impact on school reform?

What fosters teaching for creativity?

How do we help our families cultivate the next generation of thinkers?

What must happen for art museums to have real impact on thinking (critical & creative) skills?

How do collecting initiatives, scholarship and selection of exhibitions support the new model?

Addressing these questions is an ongoing process. For example, CMA staff formed an interdisciplinary team to research visitor habits and develop exhibition outcomes. Today, a visitor to CMA will encounter connectors—objects or activities other than art that help visitors connect to the art and foster creative thinking skills (i.e. Join the Conversation Stations,

puzzles, custom games, and making, drawing and voting stations.) Connectors are installed throughout the building and designed to provoke visitors to slow down, collaborate, have conversations, think critically and creatively, and look closely at works of art. The connectors represent a new, purposeful, museum-wide practice that has transformed the visitor experience from passive observation to active participation.

CMA's strategic plan was revised in March 2011 to reflect an institutional commitment to creativity: "The Center for Creativity (CfC) of the CMA is positioned to play a significant contributing role in its vision for citizen success by using resources and training that the Art Museum is uniquely positioned to deploy and support." This was an important step as Executive Director Nannette Maciejunes felt that the CfC could not be just the mission of the Education Department, but rather an institutional endeavor. CMA also successfully completed an arduous reaccreditation process in 2010 at the same moment it was embarking on this philosophical shift. AAM reviewers noted under areas of commendable practice that "the museum is a high-performing institution that has become a role model for the various ways in which it engages its local community."