

Frederic Remington Art Museum

Strategic Plan October 2016



The board and staff of the Frederic Remington Art Museum undertook comprehensive strategic planning in 2016, generously supported by J. M. McDonald Foundation, Northern New York Community Foundation, Kate Newell, T. Urling and Mabel B. Walker and one anonymous donor. That support allowed the Museum to engage Laura B. Roberts of Roberts Consulting as planning facilitator.

As the Museum was completing this plan, it acquired a new work by Remington, *Cummer's Awakening*, an 1894 work on paper. “Awakening” seems an appropriate metaphor for this plan. The re-envisioned Museum, moving towards the 100th anniversary of the opening of the museum, is one that has awakened to new opportunities and possibilities.

There are four key programmatic initiatives in this plan:

- We will encourage and share new scholarship that addresses emerging questions and keeps Remington relevant in the 21st century.
- We will develop a regional and national constituency by sharing our collection and expertise widely.
- We will expand the Museum’s education program to include interpretation of art in the galleries, high quality hands-on art making in the Eva Caten Remington Education Center (ECREC), and engaging programs in more schools.
- The permanent exhibitions on the second floor of the Museum will be as excellent as the main galleries and temporary exhibitions.

There are three key management initiatives in this plan:

- We will make critical repairs and modest improvements to ECREC, allowing it to fully support the educational program and other museum services.
- The Museum’s brand and identity will be refreshed, consistent with new approaches and goals, and used consistently in all communications, including a redesigned website.
- The Museum will fully participate in the region’s tourism development initiatives.

Accomplishing all of this will require additional expertise on staff, on the board, among our volunteers and with contractors and consultants. We anticipate launching the public phase of a second century campaign within five years.

Mission and Vision

The Museum has a new mission statement, which captures these aspirations and priorities.

The Frederic Remington Art Museum expands and deepens appreciation and understanding of Remington's work by engaging contemporary audiences and keeping his legacy relevant.

When the Frederic Remington Art Museum has successfully achieved the goals of this plan in 2023, visitors to the museum and those we reach beyond Ogdensburg will see Remington in new ways, understanding the significance of his work in his own time and its continuing relevance in theirs.

New Audiences

Currently, the museum serves primarily area residents and summer visitors to the region. In 2015, a total of 11,733 people were served by the museum via entries to the galleries, special events and ECREC activities. Of the total numbers of visitors, 239 were area school children served on and off site; 1,147 came in organized groups for tours; 2,928 visitors enjoyed special events and programs; 3,592 were child and adult caregiver visits (many repeat visits) recorded for weekly hands on art activities at ECREC; and 3,827 were people who visited the galleries on their own.

Of the 3,827 individual visitors, approximately 291 were from St. Lawrence County, 27% from other New York locations, 10% from nearby Canadian provinces, and 34% from all other locations.

This plan identifies three target markets for increased participation:

- Residents of the region of all ages, particularly for expanded educational programming
- Residents and visitors to the Thousand Islands, Adirondacks and greater Ottawa as museum visitors on day trips to Ogdensburg
- Enthusiasts of American art nationally, reached through traveling exhibitions, publications, virtual outreach, and collaboration with other museums and galleries.

Planning

Planning began with a retreat of the full board in January. After identifying the primary issues and challenges facing the museum, board members were asked to answer the following question:

Imagine it is 2023, the museum's centennial year, and you are preparing the cover memo for FRAM's reaccreditation from the AAM. What do you want to be able to say we've accomplished?

This inventory of issues and aspirations formed the framework for the planning effort. The board also completed an assessment of the Museum's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, which the staff reviewed and expanded on. A core group of planners met throughout the spring to

discuss these questions, with each meeting augmented by board members and others with particular expertise.

Ms. Roberts met with every staff member and completed 15 interviews with civic leaders, cultural partners in the region, and long-term Museum leaders and supporters including members of the International Advisory Board. As a result of these conversations, it was determined that the IAB, which for many years provided philanthropic leadership for the Museum, would evolve into two new bodies to advance the priorities of the plan. One new group will support development of the collection and a second will provide scholarly advice to the staff.

Drafts of the plan were circulated to a second set of community partners and supporters for review. The board of the Frederic Remington Art Museum accepted the plan on October 26, 2016.

This plan is intended to guide the museum for the next seven years, up to the celebration of its Centennial in 2023. The specific action steps in the plan cover the first three years, through 2019. Progress will be reviewed at an annual board retreat and a new third year will be added at that time.

Structure of the plan

The plan is organized into four goals:

- One. Redefine Remington, his work and his legacy for 21st century audiences
- Two. Be a valuable cultural asset to Ogdensburg, St Lawrence County, the North Country, and greater Ottawa.
- Three. Build the museum's audience and constituency locally, regionally, and nationally
- Four. Develop the financial and professional capacity and physical infrastructure needed to implement this plan

For each goal there is a series of objectives, followed by broadly stated action steps. The second section of this document is a series of year-by-year grids with more specific action steps reflecting both priorities and logical sequencing of actions. Staff will further develop these steps and board as planning unfolds.

Goal One: Remington

Redefine Remington, his work and his legacy for 21st century audiences

Objectives

1. Share new insights into Remington's work and legacy at the museum and beyond
 - Contribute to a more accurate and complex understanding of Remington as more than a "western artist" by developing exhibitions, publications and programs that encompass the full range of his artistic work
 - Create and circulate a new traveling exhibition
 - Collaborate with other American art, sculpture, and illustration museums to place Remington's work in larger contexts
 - Develop interpretive programs and services that can be presented virtually, and off site to a wider audience [e.g. podcasts, distance learning programs]
 - Explore and assess collaborative opportunities that would bring the museum to new audiences, including programming in other locations in the region and beyond
 - Work to ensure that Remington's Chippewa Bay studio is preserved
2. Develop organizational capacity to support or undertake new scholarship on Remington and related topics and artists
 - Secure funding for short-term fellowships and/or residencies for artists, scholars, and educators who would develop current interpretation of Remington and his work
 - Create university partnerships to support new research at every level, including internships
 - Create a Scholarly Advisory Board (SAB)
 - Digitize the rest of the archival collections and make available online
3. Continue to build and refine the collection
 - Identify and acquire works that complement the collection
 - Forge and sustain strong relationships with collectors and dealers through a new support group (referred to below as Roughriders or RRers)
 - Continue prudent de-accessioning of materials not relevant to the museum's mission, generating funds for acquisition
 - Judiciously develop collections that are closely related to Remington and his artistic legacy, specifically work by Sally James Farnham.

Goal Two: Community Asset

Be a valuable cultural asset to Ogdensburg, St Lawrence County, the North Country, and greater Ottawa.

Objectives

1. Enhance the visitor experience

- Rotate artwork more frequently, using objects from the collection and loans, to highlight different aspects of Remington's work and promote changes to encourage repeat attendance
- Create a visitor lounge and reading room in the Hirschey Gallery
- Create new explanation of the lost wax process of bronze casting for the galleries and for use in programming, online, etc.
- Reinstall second floor galleries to achieve the quality of the first floor
- Work with the Sharp family to devise new ways to exhibit and interpret the glass and ceramic collection
- Explore additional options for small temporary exhibitions in the galleries and on the grounds of the museum

2. Reimagine the educational program, grounded in Remington's work and legacy

- Develop a menu of tour options appropriate to a range of visitors such as specialized tours, in-depth tours, audio tours, programs for kids, directed writing or sketching, or thematic tours
- Develop programs for adults that explore and expand on the themes and topics of Remington's work in creative and innovative ways
- Develop hands-on classes on painting, illustration, sculpture and related art forms for adults, children and families
- Expand exemplary partnership with Ogdensburg City School District to other school districts
- Expand program of exhibitions of art by area students to include an exhibit of work by regional college students.

3. Be a regional leader in cultural tourism

- Create informational promotional exhibitions [using reproductions] for airports and hotels in US and Canada
- Develop joint and cross-promotional campaigns with Thousand Islands, Canadian and Adirondack museums and cultural organizations
- Work with the Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority, St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, Ogdensburg Chamber of Commerce, St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency, Thousand Island Bridge Authority, and other agencies to increase local tourism, particularly capitalizing on the expanded Ogdensburg airport and cruise ship dock
- Explore opportunities for collaboration with existing and proposed area museums and arts organizations

Goal Three: Build Audience

Build the museum's audience and constituency locally, regionally, and nationally.

Objectives

1. Understand current and potential audiences and better utilize data in planning, funding and evaluating marketing efforts
 - Collect data and contact information from museum visitors, program participants, and event audiences
 - Survey current and target audiences on their interests, priorities and needs
 - Analyze data from web analytics, social media followers, and others reached online
 - Utilize available data and information about visitors to St Lawrence County
2. Raise the museum's profile with target markets by developing and implementing marketing plans for each of the museum's target audiences
 - Ensure regular coverage in local media [including new cable provider] and publicity through posters, word of mouth and partnerships
 - Continue NCPR sponsorships and expand to public television and Canadian news outlets
 - Reach a national audience through select advertising and joint promotions with partner museums
3. Revamp the museum's graphic identity and messaging to emphasize Remington's multi-faceted creativity
 - Work with branding/design professionals to develop fresher, cleaner graphical design standards and templates for all printed materials and electronic communication
 - Write new taglines and boilerplate descriptions of the museum and of Remington's work and legacy that convey their relevance to contemporary audiences
 - In anticipation of the Centennial and major fundraising campaign, develop and implement a new brand for the museum
4. Make more extensive use of social media and the website to engage audiences
 - Redesign the website with appropriate hosting and service providers, consistent with new graphical design and messaging, incorporating greater access to collections, research, and educational resources
 - Use social media and new technologies to engage with audiences and attract new markets.
 - Build the museum's electronic mailing lists and develop regular communication vehicles
5. Offer fun ways to engage with the museum to attract new audiences
 - Continue and grow successful fundraising events and develop irresistible new events.
 - Evaluate and expand successful community events and programs (yoga, road race, etc.)

Goal Four: Capacity and Infrastructure

Develop the financial and professional capacity and physical infrastructure to implement this plan

Objectives

1. Fund growth and change and improve sustainability of the museum

- Increase membership at all levels
- Expand the Ingleneuk Club by establishing additional membership levels
- Nurture and expand the William R Clark Legacy Society planned giving program
- Develop cost projections for all initiatives in this plan
- Develop and implement plans for a major fundraising campaign to fund the initiatives of this plan and grow the Long Term Investment Fund

2. Add or develop greater expertise in key areas with staff, contractors, consultants, board members or volunteers

- Collections management
- Programming, education and interpretation
- Marketing
- Development
- Governance

3. Ensure that the buildings are appropriately used and well maintained

- Use the spaces in the entire campus more efficiently and effectively
- Renovate and repair ECREC to meet the emerging programming and administrative needs of the museum and, potentially, partners