Connecting Local Students with Exceptional Arts Experiences
Dr. Rebecca Tucker, Museum Director

From its founding in 1919, the Fine Arts Center expanded and grew on the radical (at the time) premise that education and the arts go hand in hand. Education continues to be a key component of the museum’s strategic plan goals for excellence, access, and collaboration.

REMOVING BARRIERS
In January 2018, the museum initiated two new programs that establish better connections between K-12 schools and our renowned collections. These programs began with research conducted by Professor Kris Stanec, Director of Museum Education, who set out to investigate how the museum could better engage with the learning objectives of K-12 schools. Through a survey sent to educators last fall, Stanec identified three main stumbling blocks for teachers: admission cost, tour structure, and lack of transportation. In response, the museum set new admission policies to include free admission for all students and teachers, and beginning in January, all docent-led school tours became free as well. In addition to removing financial barriers, Stanec worked with our dedicated corps of skilled docents to develop new educational training and techniques. Now 90 minutes in length, the museum’s school tours incorporate an audience-centric, interactive approach to learning about the arts and culture of the region, as well as about literacy skills, principles of art, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) connections. Finally, with the help of a generous, anonymous donor, the museum was able to address transportation issues by fully reimbursing bus expenses for school field trips to Title I schools; all other schools receive up to 50 percent bus funding.

CREATING OPPORTUNITY
During the first two months of 2017, six schools came for tours; by contrast, in the first two months of 2018, 22 school tours were conducted. The available tour slots for the Spring Semester are almost entirely booked. If you visit the museum on a weekday morning, you will hear the excited sounds of children’s voices and see students in front of the art engaged and learning.

By working with teachers and their curricula, the museum will be able to provide students with educational interactions and perspectives not found in textbooks.
“What a great opportunity for young learners,” says Rebecca Johnson, of Gateway Elementary School, who brought 37 third-grade students in February — only three of whom had been to the FAC Museum. Another Gateway teacher, Lauren Lehman, commented on how an “environment full of beauty, challenging ideas, and unique use of materials” created a “spectacular and memorable experience.”

Looking forward, the museum is committed to building dynamic educational programs for all visitors. Watch for more information about enhancements to our educational program in the coming months.

Meet our Museum Interns: Suzy Lewis and Hannah Seabright

The start of the school year brought new and exciting opportunities for the museum and the students of Colorado College. With the introduction of the Museum Internship Program, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, four students committed to a year of interning across the FAC Museum. Meet two of our bright interns:

Susan (Suzy) Lewis ’19 is a major in art history with a minor in anthropology. For her internship, Lewis is researching the ethics, laws, and processes that impact repatriation of objects of cultural patrimony to the Native American tribes and pueblos in the Southwest.

Hannah Seabright ’18 is a senior art major whose creative work is in collage and illustration. As an assistant in the photography project for the museum’s new online platform, Seabright is helping to make the FAC’s remarkable collections more accessible to the world.

Colorado Springs K-12 students visit the FAC for tours with museum docents. Photos by Julia Tarantino