

Transcript for Anne McKim Oral History, 2020/03/24

Interviewee: Anne McKim

Interviewer: Tory Schendel

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Tory Schendel Cox 0:01

Hi, my name is Tory Schendel Cox. I'm the Virginia G. Schroeder Curator of Art at the Evansville Museum and today we have Anne McKim, she's from the Arts Council. She's going to give us a better understanding of what life for her is looking like and by all means and take it away.

Anne McKim 0:16

Hi, it's so nice to see you. This funny situation. And well, our organization like yours, like so many others, we shut down pretty quick and stopped doing our stop doing any public programming. Which of course is what we exist to do. So, we've been having these conversations with board leadership and among staff and even with some of our artists, musicians and artists that we work with, on how we can take our programming to sort of the virtual realm and how can we continue to serve the community virtually over the upcoming weeks. And hopefully not much longer than that, but who knows? It's interesting, you know, from-from just an operations perspective, it's harder to raise money when you can't truly offer a deliverable. So, this is one of those times where can you write a grant, can you ask for sponsorship for something that may or may not happen, no matter how far down the road it is. So that's been-that's been challenging. We're a small shop and that's good. So, we so we really are able, or we've been able to outline, a slate of programming that will, that will take advantage of the staffing resources that we have. There's three of us; myself, Andrew Adams, who's our gallery director, and Zack Evans, who has an incredibly long title of Director of Communications and Community Programming. So, what-what I think this will look like, and we're obviously still in the very, very early phases of this is concerts, virtual concerts, virtual gallery exhibits. Yesterday, prior to the governor making the announcement that everything's going to be shut down. Pretty soon, we set up the front of our gallery in. We're doing a drive by gallery or a walk by gallery. So, we're blocking off the like the back, because we don't want it to be depressing where you look in a window and you're like, "Look at all that space that we don't get to take advantage of." And we're highlighting one artist at a time. And we have these great windows on Main Street, those arcade windows. So, if you're out going for a walk, if you're-if you're driving

past, you'll be able to see this artist and of course, the signage that will go along with it will remind folks that that work can be purchased even in time- time of quarantine.

We have a lot of ideas for children's programming. I don't know if you can hear in the background, I-I currently have two children locked in the house with me. And so, they're helping me refine ideas on what type of, I hate to say in enrichment, but that's kind of what it is. What- what type of enrichment can we be- can we offer to parents, that takes advantage really only, um, you know, things that you would find in a in an average household? Your house, my house might look a little different just because they're full of art, supplies and crap, but-but what-what would most people have around? And how could they use those to really allow children to be creative and allow children to be expressive?

So, and this is sort of, I know I'm going all over the place, but this is sort of the big picture thing. Right now, at a time like this people need emotional outlets. They need an outlet for creativity. And that's what the arts have always done is allow individuals to make sense of the world, no matter what's going on. Make sense of shared experience and-and help articulate our common humanities through the creation. So, we're really trying, whether it's the artists that we're doing virtual galleries with, whether it's the musicians that we're recording and putting that music out there, whether it's providing resources for visual music, theater, activities at home young to old, we have a creativity challenge that we're going to be putting out weekly. All of those things, what we're really trying to do is offer those or provide that-that platform for people to be creative and express everything that they're feeling.

So yeah, wow. And of course, it's-it's really sad Tory, and I know that you feel this way too, I am so sad to not have programming going on. That's what we do and that's what we do well, and I miss the I miss having all those creative people or just having the community come together in our space. We do about 70 programs a year at the gallery on Main Street and then out in the public. And man, it's just breaking my heart to not be able to do these things that I know people look forward to that I know people find meaning from the I look forward to find a meaning from. Um, so yeah, there's-there's every-every meeting that we have at home ends up with at least one cat making an appearance. If there is a silver lining in all of this, it's that our cats are really active participants in community conversations these days.

Yeah, there's just a lot there. I don't know if there's a-I'm thinking about your audience and who it is who turns to you and they did the folks who will be watching this are the people who are who really understand the importance of what you guys do. And I hope that they recognize how special it is to have a team at the museum who's reaching out to the entire arts community. That's something that we've been talking about for a little bit now. Beyond before Coronavirus, and everything but the-the fact that we really are stronger when we're supporting each other, that each institution fulfills a very different role in the community. And that and that we have a great partnership and collaboration. I think that's really special. And I hope that that your museum donors know how amazing it is that you're sharing this whole story.

My cat just bit me so I'm gonna throw him off the couch. Um, how's everything going? Are you at home? Are you in your house?

Tory Schendel Cox 7:43

Yep. So, I'm recording live from my home. And I appreciate the comments regarding our donors and what it means to be a community partner. Because especially times like now we need to lean on each other more so than ever for content, for materials to really just have that conversation because like you, within 48 hours of quarantine, I've learned a lot about myself. I have to make some programming to survive as an individual.

Anne McKim 8:12

Right, right. Oh my gosh, I know. And it's-it's we're all learning. We're all in this and like, "Oh my lance." There's not an hour that goes by that I'm not thinking about how impressed I am in some ways with people's resiliency. And I'm like, "Oh, this is amazing humanity." And then the next time like, "How am I going to survive this?" Emotionally, not like but physically we're going to survive it with lots of hands. And yeah, I just hope we get to have this conversation in person.

Tory Schendel Cox 8:52

Absolutely.

Anne McKim 8:54

In 4 to 12 months. [laughing] Well say hi to a baby for me.

Tory Schendel Cox 9:01

I absolutely will. And is there anything else you'd like to share with us at this point?

Anne McKim 9:05

You know, not now. But well, okay, so something that I would encourage anyone who-who has the opportunity to watch this make sure that you are following all of our organizations on social media and-and subscribe to our newsletters. I think that that is a good way for-for you know, folks out there to know what it is that we're doing during this time, but also really encourage people to tell their friends and their family and their peers to check out our information at this

time. We really want to continue to serve and it's going to be a huge party when we're finally back up and running again. I don't know what it's gonna look like Tory we have lots of planning to do. We're definitely gonna celebrate at some point. So, um, but yeah, that's it. That's all I've got.

Tory Schendel Cox 9:59

All right, Anne I definitely appreciate your time. And for everyone watching this is recording by the Evansville Museum of Arts, History, and Science and again, thank you Anne McKim from the Arts Council for your time. So, we'll see you soon.

Anne McKim 10:12

See ya, bye.