

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

UNIVERSITY
GALLERIES

2019 – 2024
STRATEGIC
PLAN



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

Since the department was created in 2012, the University Galleries have been on a steady, upward trajectory. Before that time, the Hoehn Family Galleries in Founders Hall, Fine Art Galleries in the Kroc School of Peace Studies, and David W. May Gallery in Saints Tekakwitha and Serra Hall, functioned as more-or-less autonomous entities, with separate programmatic objectives. Due to steadfast support from both the Provost's Office and our advisors, the team has worked diligently to coordinate efforts and to make University Galleries' programs more vibrant and professional. Evidence of success can be found in the launch of a new gallery space within the Humanities Center in 2017, the sheer quantity of projects undertaken, fundraising accomplishments, and peer recognition received in the form of awards, press, and competitive grants.

The arrival of a new President, James T. Harris III in 2015, and a new Provost, Dr. Gail F. Baker in 2018, together with the launch of an institution-wide "Envisioning 2024" strategic plan provide occasions to review the goals we set for ourselves. Throughout the fall of 2018 and spring of 2019, my colleagues and I listened to key supporters, outside academic units, and our students in order to learn more about their specific hopes for this department. What follows is a plan that draws upon their insights. This document will guide University Galleries' efforts for the next five years (2019-2024). From the outset, it should be clear that this plan seeks to do more than merely refine the edges of our mission or tighten the thematic focus of art exhibitions on our campus. We aspire to more fully integrate the work of the galleries into campus life and to make the collections we steward more visible to all who



work here. At the same time, this plan aims to foster still greater stability and financial independence for the department's key functions.

Because we are the only campus-based art collection in our region, we have the ambition to share objects as generously as possible with our constituents. Making our collections easily searchable is a top priority, therefore. We also believe that qualitative goals are more meaningful than quantitative measures at this point in our history. All of our programs, including collecting, have the virtue of involving small numbers of highly engaged students in their success. We hope to proliferate opportunities to engage these constituents. We are fortunate, too, to have marvelous supporters—both longstanding and new—and we want them to feel inspired by the range of our activity. Our values for achieving results are clear: we



aspire to follow the best professional practices of our field; we want to collaborate; and we will be transparent about our decision-making processes. Continuing our productivity, doing less perhaps, but doing everything better, is the top goal of this plan.

USD will turn 75 years old in 2024. That anniversary may not seem large by global standards, but there can be little doubt that in becoming a more experienced Catholic institution, USD merits having the strongest possible museum presence. During the next five years, we expect University Galleries to build upon a nascent reputation among campus programs within and beyond our region. We look forward to sharing results with you.

Derrick R. Cartwright
Director

OUR MISSION

The University Galleries

COLLECT,
INTERPRET,
and **DISPLAY**

the finest works that artists have created over time, instructing and engaging the broadest conceivable audience of students, faculty, staff and interested community.

OUR VISION

The University Galleries strive

to **EXPERIMENT**
as learning laboratories,

to **COLLABORATE**
by providing spaces for
convening dialogue,

and to **ACTIVATE**
our assets for the good of
the **University of San Diego**, whose
Catholic mission and values they support.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following strategic priorities for University Galleries mirror the goals established in USD's "Envisioning 2024" plan:

1. Enhancing Student Learning & Success
2. Strengthening Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice
3. Improving Structural & Operational Effectiveness
4. Elevating Faculty & Staff Engagement
5. Amplifying Local & Global Engagement and Reputation



#1 Enhancing Student Learning & Success

Objectives:

- Broaden current internship opportunities to include stipends for summer and in-depth, individualized projects
- Promote opportunities for students to research, curate, and acquire works on behalf of the permanent collection
- Assemble a student advisory board to help guide and assess various gallery programs
- Investigate the practical considerations and community benefits of a new student art loan program
- Sponsor regular informal and social opportunities through the galleries

Campus-based museums offer internship experiences and access to collections as part of their services to students. University Galleries aspire to do something more than just introduce interested undergraduates to the basics of how museums function through such programs. Internships—currently offered to up to 8 students per academic year—are conceived as for-credit experiences working in a hands-on fashion with professional staff (most often the Hoehn Curatorial Fellow, but also the May Gallery’s Collection Specialist).

We envision the expansion of unique opportunities for our interns, beyond the customary limits of a single term or usual course-hour requirements. Such opportunities might include **summer stipends for in-depth/individualized research, invitations to self-curate projects** beyond the standard internship experience, direct **involvement in our collaborations with outside partners**, and **joint-authorship of publications**. Additionally, we seek to build upon the current practice of enabling groups of students the chance to direct acquisitions as

part of USD coursework to provide new opportunities for **individuals to propose acquisitions** as part of independent study.

Beyond promoting formal opportunities for engagement, University Galleries will expand its commitment to informal learning. The time is right to assemble a **student advisory board**, staffed by undergraduates and graduate students from a variety of departments across the university. Such a group will meet regularly to discuss and propose new programs. Researching what has worked the best at other institutions and will guide the rhythm and institution of this board in 2021. Students have expressed their strong interest in casual meetings with staff and collections. Impromptu conversations connecting issues and objects and convenings around food and ideas will be an outgrowth of the advisory board.

Finally, following successful models at Williams College and MIT, we will explore the possibility of sharing objects with USD students as part of a well-monitored **student loan program**. Responsible individuals would have the chance to borrow select works from a pool of objects in an “Outreach Collection”—objects defined by their qualities of beauty, goodness, and truth—and could live with them for defined periods of time. In this way, selecting and living with great art will become a familiar part of the undergraduate experience at USD.

#2 Strengthening Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice

Objectives:

- All collections in full compliance with NAGPRA
- Assess and analyze gaps in the collections, including the Print Reference Library, and create a collections plan for increased diversity, as well as an acquisition plan for the utilization of the Therese Truitt Whitcomb Founding Director's Fund
- Create staff development and training around inclusive practices through resources such as the MASS Action toolkit. Test viability of bilingual didactics and programs for specific curatorial projects
- Create coherent programming through semester-long themes based on equity, inclusion, and social justice

Collecting and displaying art from diverse cultures, ethnicities, geographies, and historical periods encourages a global perspective among members of the campus community. To this end, the University Galleries have generated exhibitions across campus that encourage interdisciplinary dialogue around issues of equity and social justice. The exhibitions and programming in the Fine Art Galleries, for example, have been organized around themes of social justice, including the recent photography exhibit, *Love is the Measure: Photos of Dorothy Day* by Vivian Cherry. With its Humanities

Center exhibition, *Political Skeletons: The Art and Afterlife of José Guadalupe Posada*, the University Galleries will also present, for the first time, **labels in both English and Spanish** to contextualize the career of a socially-conscious artist called the "father of Mexican printmaking." We will seek out further opportunities and partnerships to **generate projects that speak to San Diego's geographical and cultural position** on the border with Mexico, amplifying local and global engagement. As the University Galleries seek to **develop semester-long themes** that cohere the various

gallery spaces, themes involving equity and Catholic ideals of social justice (such as global warming) will be paramount.

Similarly, the David W. May Collection is dedicated to documenting and displaying the rich cultural contributions of indigenous peoples. The University Galleries have worked closely with tribal groups, USD's Tribal Liaison, and government officials to follow NAGPRA guidelines in repatriating objects of cultural patrimony. Along with this commitment, the May Collection has pivoted towards **programming focused on contemporary Native American art**. The May Collection offers the unique opportunity to acquire and display work by contemporary Native American artists and printmakers, as well as to cultivate curricular tie-ins with the departments of Ethnic Studies and Anthropology. The May Distinguished Lectures Series invites Native American artists to discuss their work and its impact on communities. In 2022 a major retrospective of prints by Seneca artist Marie Watt will coordinate exhibitions and programming across the University Galleries, fostering opportunities for campus-wide dialogue and engagement. A scholarly catalogue will accompany the exhibition, marking a significant contribution to the field of contemporary Native American art.

The University Galleries will continue to collaborate with campus partners and peer institu-

tions to realize exhibitions, publications, and programs that address issues of equity and inclusion. Throughout this process, we will also seek to engage international students and students from historically underrepresented communities through departmental outreach and outreach to student groups. The University Galleries aim to build on its recent efforts to **diversify the collection**: The Therese Truitt Whitcomb Founding Director's Fund will support acquisitions of works by women artists, for example, and we will assess the collection for gaps and opportunities. We expect to **deepen our connections to local and international artists and museum professionals** as we **add objects of distinction to our holdings**. In adding these works we seek to clinch our status as a resource for the region, and expand that reputation to become a go-to resource for prints by women artists prior to the 20th century and Native American works on paper.

University Galleries staff will also explore opportunities for training on these issues through resources such as the MASS Action toolkit, which aids organizations in developing more inclusive practices. The department also answers the field-wide call to develop "pipelines" into the museum world through internship opportunities and professional development for artists and students from historically marginalized communities.

#3 Improving Structural and Operational Effectiveness

Objectives:

- Cultivate support groups for the David W. May and photography collections
- Conduct an overall study on the use of spaces, and explore the potential benefits of deaccessioning collection objects as a part of this process
- Invest in staff through professional development, including conferences and travel opportunities
- Assess potential exhibition programming for quality over quantity
- Create a more sustainable rhythm for all programming

University Galleries aims to make the most effective use of its resources, including space, finances, and staff. The department's team doubled exhibition programming and publications in the previous five years, creating publications and professional displays that received national and peer recognition. To continue a program in which such high standards remain sustainable, a balance between projects undertaken and the resources available to complete them successfully, must be met. To this end, the University Galleries will **pilot an evaluation process to prioritize the curatorial projects**

that are most beneficial to the campus community, while still maintaining its collaborative spirit. All exhibitions, publications, and events should be able to synergize with the department's programmatic goals and continue to raise the profile of the University of San Diego, and will be subject to review by the department's advisory groups. Exhibition schedules already aim to serve the campus community during peak times of the academic year, but should also allow for the most inclusive and thoughtful process of curation, with an **emphasis on facilitating student involvement.**

Longer lead times for exhibition organization and research, along with the continued display of an exhibition across the academic year in some cases, would further enable student input and collaboration. Not all University Galleries spaces can be programmed at all times of the academic year, in this case, and we will aim to take on **a maximum of 6 to 8 curatorial projects each year.**

In 2012, the creation of the Print Society support group enabled focused growth for the university's print collection, strengthening the value and teaching capabilities of that group of works. University Galleries will seek to duplicate this success for its two additional collections: the nascent group of street and documentary photographs and the better-established David W. May Collection of Native American art. **These support groups will serve to build the collections** through both financial and in-kind donations. Any funding raised can also be applied towards the operational support for the display and care of the collection objects.

Campus space is limited not just for University Galleries, but for almost all campus groups. We must continuously consider how to efficiently utilize our spaces, especially areas used for the storage of artwork. The department will **research models for how to best assess collection objects** for teaching, artistic,

and historical value, with the goal of deciding whether to **undergo a deaccessioning process.** Such a process would need to free significant enough space to allow for additional acquisitions with more potential for use by the campus community. **More efficient storage methods, such as compact storage and its associated cost for May Collection and framed objects,** will also be included in this study.

#4 Elevating Faculty & Staff Engagement

Objectives:

- Publish collections both in the form of an online, searchable database, as well as catalogues of merit
- Develop interactive opportunities and events rooted in partnerships with other university departments
- Connect exhibition programming deeply to campus centers, academic departments, and schools
- Explore creation of stipends for “scholars in residence” within the department
- Encourage use of select objects by faculty for in-class learning experiences and track this usage

University Galleries programming remains steadfast to serving its campus community. Providing faculty and staff with unique opportunities and access to the collections is a vital part of this commitment. The department will work to **publish the majority of the collections online in a searchable database**, allowing faculty to look through objects and “curate” groups of artworks relevant to their courses or research. With this new tool, the department will also look to **increase accessibility for classroom visits to the collections**, and

research models for **classroom “loans” of objects for teaching purposes**.

Programming is most effective when matched to the goals of campus partners. In the past, co-sponsored events, such as the David W. May Distinguished Lecture Series partnered with USD’s Tribal Liaison, or exhibitions created in tandem with the Center for Catholic Thought and Culture, Kroc School of Peace Studies, and Humanities Center, have created momentum, introduced the galleries to new campus and

community visitors, and strengthened our ties to those great campus centers. It is important that we continue **to initiate the first step in inviting faculty and staff to become partners with our collections and galleries**, utilizing and showcasing their support and expertise. The department will explore funding possibilities to **create grants or stipends for USD faculty to work on a research project founded on objects from the collection** of their choosing. Increasing diversity among the the volunteers who serve on advisory boards for the galleries is a related objective that might be accomplished through great student/staff/faculty participation.

Further opportunities for informal social engagement within University Galleries spaces should be generated not just for our students but for staff and faculty alike. **Opening up the galleries to faculty and staff for scholarly discussions** held a few times each academic year could provide another source of knowledge about the May, photography, and print collections. Events could be as simple as a brown bag discussion, lasting 20 minutes, and held one of the department’s dynamic spaces, such as the May Gallery.

#5 Amplifying Local & Global Engagement and Reputation

Objectives:

- Partner with both large institutions and close peers on exhibitions and publications
- Invite distinguished curators and interested scholars to meet with students and faculty
- Develop social and earned media presence for programs and experiment boldly with these tools
- Participate actively in dialogues at international/national conferences, competitions, and other museum organizations
- Pursue American Alliance of Museum accreditation for University Galleries
- Commission original works for the University of San Diego by leading artists, such as prints or temporarily-sited public works on campus

Working closely with institutions such as The British Museum, The Getty, and The Timken is a source of pride for University Galleries.

We will continue to **pursue partnerships with these and other prestigious institutions.**

Doing so once every other year, or so, brings significant new knowledge and awareness of

best practices to USD. We also look forward to more **regular collaboration with closer peers**—the model, campus-based museums that are similarly resourced and which face similar challenges to our own. Exchanging ideas and projects with these partners holds out the promise of expanding our success into new

circles. By offering **annual distinguished lectures and semi-regular seminars benefiting our students/interns, staff, and broader university community** we will add to USD's programming goals. At the same time, **promoting our own knowledge at conferences** (e.g., Association of Academic Museums and Galleries) will further University Galleries' effort to share its activities beyond the campus itself. We particularly hope to **initiate partnerships with colleagues across the border in Tijuana**, as a way to expand regional impact, build new relationships of high value to our students, and deliver on our Catholic institutional mission.

We feel we are ready to experiment with **inviting select artists to our campus and to collaborate with colleagues in the Visual Arts and University Design** areas to initiate both small and large commissions for the campus community. By celebrating the presence of renowned artists through both tangible productions and social media mechanisms, we expect to further elevate the reputation of our department and the University more broadly. The publication of our collections online holds out still more promise of spreading news about our growth, success, and appetite for experimentation.

Once necessary systems upgrades to Founders Hall are complete, we will be ready to begin the process of **seeking accreditation from the**

American Alliance of Museums for University Galleries. The renovations associated with the "Renaissance Plan" provide the best opportunity to improve our storage systems and display functions, two areas about which we are sometimes sensitive and which can benefit from modest technical and organizational improvements. **Ensuring that the galleries are energy efficient and equipped for disasters** is a priority. It is worth noting that, while we may not complete the process of accreditation during the term of this plan, this planning should be underway by the time the next 5-year horizon is imagined.

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE IN 2024?



- Total collections will number more than 6,000 across all areas; the vast majority will be published online with digital images and can be searched from anywhere in the world.
- University Galleries programming is better integrated into USD's curriculum; faculty and students will identify the galleries as a strength of their academic experience and will have the opportunity to curate groups of objects or request them to be pulled out for classes to consult.
- Endowments will account for still larger percentage of annual operations and are supporting the full spectrum of museum activities (e.g., acquisitions of works of art and books, exhibitions, publications, internships, and scholarly residencies).
- Publications will be distinctive and authoritative, receiving peer recognition and making significant contributions to larger fields of study.
- Reputation as a leader among campus-based museums in San Diego is consistent and broadly acknowledged.
- Our partners and advisors will better reflect the greater diversity of the USD campus community as a whole.
- Annual or semester-long themes will create synergies across all galleries and connect programming to academic interests and USD's Catholic mission.
- While the main emphasis will be on the quality of our efforts, we will establish longitudinal metrics to record our projects' impact on target audiences.
- Programming for all galleries under the departmental label "University Galleries" will be stable and well-supported.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This strategic plan was created with the thoughtful guidance and feedback provided by members from across the University of San Diego's campus. University Galleries wholeheartedly thank the students, faculty, outside advisors, and administrators who contributed their time and energy to our stakeholder sessions held in the fall of 2018. Their insights and enthusiasm propelled this plan forward and ensured its success:

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