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Tacoma Art Museum to Remain Closed for Now

In the meantime, Virtual Field Trips Will Bring the Museum to More Students than ever

August 21, 2020 (Tacoma, WA)— Due to the high rates of infection still prevailing within the community, and on the advice of the Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department, Tacoma Art Museum (TAM) will not be re-opening at this time.

“Our first duty is to our community and our staff, and that will always be our prime concern. We are thrilled that Governor Inslee moved reopening museums to Phase 2 and 3, and we look forward fervently to the day when we can re-open. However, we also want to play our part in controlling the community infection rate of COVID-19 so that kids can go back to school as soon as possible and more businesses can open. Many of our most frequent visitors are in older age groups who are more susceptible to this virus. Therefore, for the time being TAM will focus on digital programs,” stated David F. Setford, TAM’s Executive Director. “At this point in time, on advice from Dr. Anthony Chen from the Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) and with the steady daily infection and death rates, we do not feel that it is yet safe enough for our staff and visitors to return to the Museum. We will remain in contact with TPCHD on a weekly basis and we are keeping our fingers firmly crossed that the numbers in Pierce County will continue to decline as they have done over the last week or so.”

Other museums and attractions in the region which have opened have seen a drastic reduction in visitor rates. Portland Art Museum which opened in July has not come close to the daily capacity limitations. Around the country museums which have reopened are seeing only 5-25% of visitors returning. “Until many visitors feel safe returning to the Museum, it is also true that we are worried about the fiscal wisdom of reopening right now,” noted Setford.

For the time being, TAM will continue to concentrate on a vastly expanded virtual experience. These programs have been highly successful, with some aspects experiencing 400% increase in website traffic since March. In addition, we expect virtual school tours to allow more students than ever before to visit the Museum. “Each year we know that there are many teachers who want to bring students to the Museum but are constrained by transportation costs,” noted Christina Westpheling, Director of Education and Community Engagement. “Through digital programming we will be able to bring arts education to students throughout the South Sound and even around the state. This scale of arts education is unprecedented for TAM and it’s

exciting to be launching this initiative to support teachers and students especially when they need it the most.”

Tacoma Art Museum offers a variety of free digital programming at www.tacomaartmuseum.org.
The TAM facility remains closed for now.

About Tacoma Art Museum

Celebrating over 80 years, Tacoma Art Museum is an anchor in Tacoma’s downtown with a mission of connecting people through art. TAM’s collection contains more than 5,000 works, with an emphasis on the art and artists of the Northwest and broader Western region, 25% of which consists of studio glass. The collection includes the largest retrospective museum collection of glass art by Tacoma native Dale Chihuly on permanent view; the most significant collection of studio art jewelry by Northwest artists; key holdings in 19th century European and 20th century American art; and one of the finest collections of Japanese woodblock prints on the West Coast. In 2012, TAM received a gift of more than 300 works of western American art from the Haub Family Collection, one of the premier such collections in the nation and the first major western American art museum collection in the Northwest. The Haub family also contributed \$20 million for an endowment and expansion completed in 2014. In January 2019, TAM inaugurated the Rebecca and Jack Benaroya Wing which will feature the extensive Benaroya collection of studio glass as well as TAM’s own collection of studio glass, which was started in 1971. TAM is located in the heart of Tacoma’s vibrant Museum District which consists of six museums including the Museum of Glass, a frequent collaborator.

CURRENTLY CLOSED

ADMISSION – \$18 Adult, \$15 Student/Senior (65+), \$40 Family (2 adults and up to four children age 6-18), Children 5 and under free every day. Children 18 and under free every Saturday. TAM Members; active duty military, reservists, veterans, and their families always free.

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