Our Mission
Enriching lives and connecting our community through diverse arts and history experiences.
We could not have imagined the roller coaster 2020 would be for our department. Words are inadequate to describe the effects of the 2020 pandemic, but we’re going to do our best. Annual reports usually have abundant statistics about the year’s accomplishments. The staff of Cultural Services certainly had notable accomplishments, but they are not easily measured in the standard ways. Everyone on staff has shared their personal COVID-19 year experiences in this report.

Closures were different for the Rialto, the Museum, and The Beet Education Center, which ironically was poised for a grand opening after its recent purchase. The Museum reopened (with reduced capacity) in June; The Beet shortly thereafter. The Rialto reopened in July. However, as State and County rules were developed and implemented, the Rialto, as an indoor seated venue, closed again in November.

There were budget cuts and furloughs of some of the staff—something you never want to see happen. Suddenly losing your job for an indeterminate amount of time is hard. Once again, I am thankful for a remarkable staff. Everyone person who was furloughed was understanding and gracious. Sadly, two staff members will not be coming back as a consequence of COVID-19 (not ill) —less Killingsworth and Sandi Elliott.

The remaining staff had to assume the furloughed employees’ responsibilities and navigate the many tasks that were required to reopen. Barriers, social distancing markers, masks, cleaning protocols, contact tracing, removal of any touchable features—the many things that needed to be done to open safely again. It’s a classic example of “other duties as assigned”! Cleaning staff, janitorial staff, and all our volunteers never knew how much we appreciated them, especially the volunteers who we re-opened about how they felt safe and welcome.

A few areas were barely interrupted: the Pulliam Community Building construction continued through Phase 2, ending in November until additional funds can be acquired for the final phase. The Art in Public Places program hardly skipped a beat and, if fact, was busier than ever. It is pretty COVID-19-proof as most of the collection is outside. And new initiatives were launched to support local artists through this difficult financial time.

Virtual programming blossomed, along with new skills in offering those programs. Live streaming equipment for the Rialto was funded by Backstage Rialto. An online ticketing reservation system was researched and launched at the Museum. The positive response from the community means they will continue post-COVID-19. Flexibility and can-do attitudes prevailed.

We coped. We learned. We planned. We Zoomed. We carried on. We missed each other. We missed each other. We missed each other. We missed each other. We missed each other. We missed each other. We missed each other. We missed each other. We missed each other.

In a crisis, be aware of the danger — but recognize the opportunity. ~ President John F. Kennedy
In 1988, Loveland made a profound commitment to the arts by becoming the first Colorado city to pass an Art in Public Places Ordinance, which designates one percent of the City’s capital projects (valued at $50,000 or more) for the purchase and ongoing maintenance of art. Through vision, hard work, and collaboration, Loveland has amassed a large, diverse public art collection that creates a sense of place and purpose.

Members
Loveland Museum

Lifetime
Erton, Doug
Jensen, Chris & Deborah Shields

Benefactor
Gammard, Nanci

Patron
Cook, Dendra and Don
James, Carol and Scott
Setthe, Earl and Lisbeth

Contributor
Domsief, Steve and Karen
Dunnington, Ken and Mary
Gaylord, Harvey and Suzanne
Hammond, Lynn and Norma
Kincannon, Lynn
Love, Harry and Jody
Nowack, Gerhard and Caroline
Raymond, Dorothy and Peter
Reynolds, Chuck and Sandy
Sloan, Cathy
Winters, Comelia and Donald

Arts Advocate
Dericks, William and Elisabeth
Dunnington, Ken and Mary
Farley, Phil and Janice
Fickel II, R. Bruce
Frasier, Bill and Gail
Hill, Margaret and Charles
Kincannon, Lynn
Kindschy, Peggy
Lehrer, Victoria
Ligon, Linda
Reynolds, Charles and Sandra
Williams, Kathy and Randy

Supporter
Adams, Steve and Gretchen
Bentrott, Craig and Karen
Boehnle, Diana
Boynton, Bruce and Teresa
Bretting, Denise and Mark
Bunde, Becky and Con
Cada, Frank and Dot
Childers, Dan and Patty
Davis, Alfred and Marlyn
Davis, Helen B.
Denton, Clayton and Patricia
Derjue, Rita and Carl Zimmerman
Dodger, Robin
Draige, Robert and Susan
Durham, Jennifer and Michael
Elsworth, Sarah
Farr, Anne
Fernandez, Jorge and Ellen B.
Field, Holly and Thomas Krebsel
Franke, George and Barbara
Frasier, Bill and Gail
Freeman, John and Judy
Freton, James and Arline
Hendrickson, Lynn
Hoff, Greg and Miriam
Holmes, Mary Ellen
Ingram, Peggy
Ison, Susan
Johns, David and Debra
Kenyon, John
Linden, Susan
Mening, Bill and Sally
Moore, Douglas and Rosemary
Moskowitz, Darla and Larry
Nicholson, Sandra
Nemeyer, Lynne
Patterson, Jon and Rachel
Pitts, Sarah
Robles, Charles and Carolyn Taylor
Rossi, Elizabeth and Claude
Scheel, Stephen and Susan
Schindler, R. Lee and Suzanne Durkin
Shea, Jill and Kevin
Smith, Jan and Nora
Stahl, Rick and Bonnie
Stevens, Bruce and Shamir
Taylor, Melissa
Tucker, Colleen
Tully, Mary and Wanda Rice
Valdivia, Sal and Laurie Wells
Ward, Ken and Lori Hvizda Ward

Joel Allen, work exhibit
CULTURAL SERVICES BOARD
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Midge Toomey
Cornelia Winters
Juanita Caceres, Alternate
Christina Gesistani, Alternate
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Maryjo Morgan
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Margaret Rosborough
Curtis Rowland, Alternate
Jade Windell, Chair
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Jim Doherty
Harrison Hand
Linda Ligon
Gail Luna
Lynne Niemeyer
Susan Ruff

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Jennifer Cusano, Curator of History
Roberta Cox, Theater Coordinator
Jenni Dobson, Curator of Education
Dennis Fisher, Asst. Tech Coordinator
Eric Franklin, Exhibits Preparator
Tegan Holten, Business Services Specialist
Susan Ison, Director of Cultural Services
Suzanne Janssen, Public Art Manager
Jess Killingsworth, Marketing Coordinator
Kimber Kreutzer, Executive Assistant
Steve Lemmon, Rialto Theater Manager
Michelle Standiford, Graphic Designer
Ashley Yager, Registrar

What a year! 2020 was unique on so many levels but, above all else, it illustrated the joy of Art in Public Places. Artwork within the public realm remained available to Loveland residents and visitors alike through our sculpture gardens, the downtown outdoor sculpture display, and City parks and right-of-ways.

In January 2020, the Loveland High Plains Arts Council donated two bronze sculptures for installation in the Benson Sculpture Gardens: Mountain Royalty by John Marsico and Shaping Strength by Jason Millward. Two additional sculptures were donated during the summer months: Two Minds Meeting by Melanie Yazzie was donated by Sandra Harris Woods in honor of her parents, Ivan and Florence Harris, whose commitment to the Loveland community spanned 6 decades. Richard Minor and his children, commissioned the Lynn Minor Memorial by Ann LaRose, featuring a bronze fireman’s helmet, trumpet and lantern.

The Visual Arts Commission held a special Art in Public Places Recognition Event for Cultural Services Director Susan Ison on Wednesday, February 26 in the Rialto Theater’s Devereaux Room.

A Maintenance Special Reserve Fund was established for the ongoing conservation of the Loveland public art collection. To our knowledge, the City of Loveland is the first municipality to establish such a fund to be used to initiate an Art Maintenance Endowment for future generations.

The Impact of COVID-19
Flexibility was a key to success in 2020. Loveland Art in Public Places moved steadily forward as we navigated the nuances of social distancing and mask-wearing as well as communicating and meeting through Zoom. All members of the Visual Arts Commission adjusted to new processes with patience and more than a little grace.

Best-laid plans often change and COVID-19 certainly...
affected mid-year plans for the International Sculpture Day Family Workshop hosted on the last Saturday of April and Art by Foot, a walking tour of Citywide projects within the Loveland Creative District. Plans quickly pivoted to allow online participation in International Sculpture Day through the AIPP Facebook page and a video was produced by the City to showcase a variety of infrastructure projects.

Every sculpture installation has a story to tell and 2020 was no exception. Early in the pandemic, the largest disruption to operations occurred with coordinating the de-installation of 7 downtown sculptures for the TAAP 3D on-loan sculpture project and the installation of 7 new artworks for 2021. Several out-of-state artists faced strict travel restrictions when removing their sculptures from other cities to deliver to our downtown. The usual two-day turnaround was stretched out over a three-week period. Additional delays were also felt by artists due to the disruption of materials distribution. Artist Mark Aeling, sculptor of an 18’ tall sculpture to be installed at the Northern Colorado Law Enforcement Training Center in February 2021, experienced significant delays in acquiring the stainless steel for his artwork. Based in Florida, Aeling also struggled against the series of tropical storms and hurricanes that hit the Florida Coast as well as COVID-19 restrictions.

New Programs Created

Art in Public Places developed two new programs to assist local artists during the pandemic. The AIPP Community Art Grant was funded to support public artwork displays for a minimum of 30 days. Additionally, an artist call for entry for the direct purchase of artwork resulted in 12 new two-dimensional artworks selected for public display within the Civic Center.

People have asked me if working as a graphic designer for the marketing department of Cultural Services during the pandemic meant I had nothing to do. While the Museum and Rialto Theater had to close for parts of this past year, it did not stop the creative process for me. I had to embrace the challenges and creatively find new ways of doing things to reach our patrons and provide new resources while our buildings remained closed or opened with reduced capacity.

One of the biggest challenges was focusing on how to keep our youngest guests active and learning with schools and playgrounds shut down. I wanted to address that hurdle and use my creativity and design skills to find a solution to bring art and history to them. I decided to take the Explorers program, a program I created a few years ago, outside and utilize our public art collection to create fun activities for families. Our sculpture collections provided the perfect subject for a variety of activities including i-Spy games, art safaris, transformation box exploration, downtown history hunts, and map activities.

With the museum closed, bringing an early end to some art and history exhibits, it was decided we needed to find a way to continue to share those exhibits with our patrons who may have missed them. I quickly shifted gears from print design to video design and put together a few simple virtual exhibition videos for the Women in the Vote and She Bends art exhibits and the Dam It and Building Steam history exhibits. While I know there is not an Oscar in my future, it was my hope that these videos provided an opportunity for visitors to still see our exhibits and experience the Museum safely.

Maintaining our web sites became all the more important as it became the best way to keep our patrons informed of all our changes through the pandemic. Even the aha! publication underwent a design and layout change to meet the needs of reaching our community while becoming a slimmer down version of its former self.

While these challenges meant a full 180 degree turn in our normal day to day routine, I think they opened our eyes to unique ways to reach people going forward. It showed us that while life may put roadblocks in our way from time to time, we are able to surpass them with our creativity and ingenuity and can bring more things to you!
If you asked the Cultural Services Marketing team what are a few words or phrases to describe marketing during a pandemic, you might hear us say things like:

- flexibility
- trial-and-error
- always have a plan B and maybe a plan C
- develop creative partnerships
- thankfulness for amazing co-workers

We found ourselves pivoting from promoting in-person cultural experiences to developing creative ways to allow our patrons to continue enjoying the Museum, the Rialto, and Art in Public Places.

We offered several virtual exhibitions including She Bends: Women in Neon, Vote: A Centennial Celebration, Building Steam, and Digging Stout. The virtual exhibits allowed art enthusiasts from around the world access to what would normally only be available to see in-person at the Museum. Additionally, the team created several activities for children and families to do together at home and outside. Art scavenger hunts, Loveland history lessons, I-Spy activity cards, and a kids’ pandemic journal are only a few of the activities that were available for families to download, print, and complete. Our team also supported several live-streaming/virtual performances at the Rialto. Utilizing social media, leveraging our website, and partnering with the artists allowed “the show to go on.”

While the number of people who physically walked through our doors in 2020 wasn’t anything to brag about, our team is proud of the creativity and work that went into bringing the Museum, Rialto, and Art in Public Places to the community’s doorsteps.

Experiencing the arts in-person can never fully be replaced with participating through a screen. However, our team worked diligently to make sure we were able to offer meaningful experiences to our patrons young and old. Pablo Picasso said, “the purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls.” Throughout 2020, daily life seemed to collect a lot of “dust” and I am glad the Museum, Rialto and Art in Public Places program could play a small part in helping us all shake a little of the dust off.
The Loveland Museum is an accredited art and history museum that was founded in 1937 by local author, collector, curator, and mountain guide Harold Dunning. Today, the Museum is home to a variety of history exhibits; hosts world-class art exhibitions; and provides family events, adult and youth classes, lectures, poetry readings, and other programming opportunities for the Loveland community and visitors from around the world.

Prior to the shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Rialto Theater was on track for another great year.

### REVENUE AND ATTENDANCE DATA

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### EVENT SIDE

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When January 2020 arrived, the lull in the bookings was a welcome break. I focused on integrating the Event Temple scheduling system, which we launched in late January. In the beginning stages of the rollout, it was a hybrid model with new renters able to make direct inquiries and finalize contracts via our website.

In March, we shut down due to the pandemic, and Roberta and I switched our focus to working with patrons and renters, and rescheduling events. I learned the basics of the new ticketing software, ETix, while focusing primarily on refunds. Working from home was an adjustment with the sudden loss of our team’s camaraderie and the easy access to information. The stress of an impending layoff was also ever-present during this time. When it came, I was not surprised, as I was the newest member of a team and had always felt my position would be the first to go.

In June, I was happy to be hired as the part-time Development Assistant for Backstage Rialto. This position works very well in conjunction with my Rialto role as Assistant Theater Coordinator.

In August, my furlough ended. I enjoyed a season of dusting off the Event Temple software and filing in for the house manager for the few shows we were able to present. Our quarantine in October came at a disruptive time, but I was proud of our ability to pivot and pull-off a successful fundraiser with Backstage Rialto. Creating the Ghost Takes Video Tour was a great team-building experience and well-received by the public.

We have all become accustomed to working from home as part of our new normal. The team has found effective ways of communicating while apart, and the end is thankfully in view. I have enjoyed navigating between my roles with Backstage Rialto and the Rialto staff to help integrate live streaming, among other things, into our services menu. Despite the constant flow of challenging news and dire information from the city and the world throughout the year, I felt supported by the Rialto team. That kind of consideration and respect is invaluable.

I have worked for the Museum for 20 years and even before that time, we have held classes. Classes for tots, kids, teens, and adults. Classes that teach young artists how to hold a brush, and advanced classes that teach people how to use their brush in new ways.

For many of these years, we held classes in a ‘classroom’ space at the Museum that measures about 10-feet by 10-feet. It was a space that was “cozy” for some or “too tight” for others, depending on how you looked at it. A space that has now been turned into a storage closet. A space that would have completely shut us down from holding classes in the year of a pandemic. If we hadn’t moved our classes into our new building in February 2020, we would no longer be holding classes.

Our new building, lovingly dubbed the Beet Education Center (“see why below”), allows students to work at their own table and in their own space. They can easily be spaced the magical ‘6-feet’ of distance we are all now familiar with. The Beet allowed us to reopen to the public in July, and since then we have held classes for kids and adults, as well as hosted a community tile painting workshop.

While not everyone enjoys taking an art class, there are many people who are ready to either get back out there or try new things this year. If you are ready to do the same, send us ideas for classes and programs... with this new space, our programming possibilities are endless!

“The Beet Education Center at the Loveland Museum has been a 13-plus year plan that finally came to fruition in early 2020. While the name of the annex evolved with time, the idea for the expansion has always included an educational focus. In April of 2019, the city purchased the old Reporter-Herald newspaper building as an annex, and potential expansion site. Museum staff lovingly dubbed it "The Beet" - a play on words, that combined a newspaper reporter’s beat, and northern Colorado’s primary cash crop for decades- the sugar beet.

The Beet is currently home to a large classroom space. In time of COVID-19, this means more room to spread out. In the future, the Beet will add more programming space, a print shop, and an art education resource library.
Outreach Programs
Loveland Museum

The Loveland Museum has always been dedicated to providing tours, outreach, programming, education, and support to Thompson School District, as well as surrounding school districts, and to the community. This year, things were different, but we still wanted to provide what we could, when we could.

SCHOOL OUTREACH
As teachers navigated the waters of online or hybrid teaching, we wanted to help as we could to provide resources. In May 2020 when we couldn’t welcome our annual 1,000+ second graders to History Days, our team quickly developed an online virtual learning page. The page welcomes teachers, parents, educators, and the community to utilize the resources found on this site. Activities on the page are geared mainly toward elementary-aged students, but all ages can have fun and learn something from them.

LONE TREE SCHOOL
Our first programming to resume in 2020 was Lone Tree Summer School. In July we welcomed two sessions, with a total of 13 students. Our instructor, Teri Johnson and I were so impressed with how the students adhered to their mask-wearing and our safety protocols for the class. These kids had been shuttered from schools in March and were ready to be back amongst peers and learning in person. Our modified program had to welcome much smaller numbers than usual and spent more time outdoors, but we learned how to better individualize supplies and modify programming for future use.

CLASSES
The Beet Education Center was ready in February 2020 to begin hosting programming that had outgrown the Museum’s existing spaces. We held three classes in the space before Museum doors were shuttered on March 13. Since re-opening in July, classes for kids and adults have seen over 150 students. We were able to bring back a few of our instructors and are hoping to bring back more, as well as additional classes for other age groups.

ZOOM PROGRAMS AND VIRTUAL TOURS
With a small staff, finding the time and resources to offer everything we wanted to in this area of education has been a challenge. But we were able to host a few ZOOM artist talks with the help of the Loveland Public Library. Our team also worked to create a few virtual tours of our exhibits for the time that we were closed to the public. We know that virtual and Zoom programming will not go away for some time, and we will be expanding these offerings in 2021.

It’s no secret that 2020 was not what any of us expected. As I reflect on what this year has meant to our production team, I see many bright moments in an otherwise dark year. As we closed our doors to events in the spring of 2020, it gave us a chance to tackle some projects that would otherwise be difficult to find time to accomplish. We’ve reorganized and revitalized some of our spaces, but we’ve also taken the time to assess our procedures and protocols – tweaking them to put our best foot forward once the public health crisis is over.

We’ve installed and integrated a brand new multi-camera live-stream system into the theater with support from Backstage Rialto. We have produced live-stream events of exceptional quality with this new equipment, most notably for Acoustic Eidolon and Loveland Opera Theater. The feedback from stream viewers has been overwhelmingly positive and encouraging as we’ve begun a new chapter in our historic theater’s technical capabilities.

Our capital improvements are worth celebrating as well. We purchased and integrated sixteen new intelligent light fixtures in our repertory light plot. Pared with our new cameras, these new additions enable us to show off our stage better than ever. Finally, we’ve purchased three new subwoofers for our audio system. Patrons will recall the vast improvement made to our sound system several years ago when we installed the left and right speaker arrays, center speakers, and audience front fills speakers. These new speakers will complete our sound array as a fully integrated system from Acorn Audio.

On a personal note, I had the privilege to become the Technical Coordinator in July. Even though the uncertainty and heartache in the performing arts endured in 2020, the Rialto team has been genuinely welcoming and gracious as I stepped into my new role.

2020 may have knocked us down, but we are far from out of the fight. As we continue to prepare to fully reopen our beloved theater in the coming months, I can palpably sense that we are poised to deliver the best technical quality we ever have through 2021 and beyond.
Ringing in 2020 was incredible, with the theater full of energy from countless sold-out events and alcohol sales at the new bar exceeding revenue projections. It was an inspiring time! Fast forward to March and the first shutdown; we were all stunned when the theater came to a standstill. The administrative staff had to quickly shift gears. Initially, events were postponed following the shutdown with no real idea of how long we would be closed. This process meant confirming new dates with the Rialto Presents artists and our rental partners. Creating spreadsheets, tracking responses, and giving requested refunds took intense organization and effort. At first, we focused on the events through May as we remained optimistic that the pandemic would be short-lived. As the shutdown continued, we repeated the process of canceling or finding new dates multiple times.

The hardest part of 2020 was the employee furloughs. The Rialto team is a tight-knit work family and to see many of our staff out of work was tough on everyone! We had also just filled a position before the shutdown and had to wait to bring our new Technical Coordinator on board until July. We were so grateful he waited it out and joined our team!

Reopening in July brought some hope. With staff back to work and our Technical Coordinator able to start, we reopened with strict safety guidelines in place that included mask-wearing, mandated waivers, daily sanitizing using our Clorox 360 fogging machine, and social distancing throughout the facility. Only a few volunteers were comfortable coming in and helping us run these events, which added to the situation’s stress. Staffing events was challenging, but with our Rialto staff and a handful of volunteers, we exceeded all safety guidelines. It was good to open our doors!

In November, the second shutdown presented the same challenges for events as the first shutdown, but we were prepared this time!

It’s been a memorable year! Administratively it has been a year of many firsts. From creating guidelines, procedures, and policies that were continually changing to an “all hands on deck” mentality as we staffed our events. Supporting our co-workers and other city departments through these extraordinary times became part of our daily routine. We were all glad to see 2020 in the rearview mirror and grateful to ring in a new year…cheers to 2021!

Students enjoying art classes in the Beet Education Center
At the start of 2020, I looked forward to hosting a series of exhibits and programs relevant to the history of Loveland. The Newest Americans: New Citizens Reflect on What America Means to Them featured beautiful portraits of immigrants on the day they became citizens with a statement portraying their thoughts about why citizenship was personally important to them. Dam It featured historic photographs from the Bureau of Reclamation archive showing the construction of the reservoirs built to store water for the Colorado-Big Thompson Project. Laundry: Taking Time, Changing Ways brought to the Dunnag Gallery washing machines and related materials from the Museum’s own history collection and a video installation, Fold, by artist Sunbhi Sarai loaned by Kenton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin. These exhibits were silently opened with no additional programming due to the onset of the pandemic. My fear was that the Museum would be closed to the public for an extended time, and both The Newest Americans and Dam It would remain installed but never viewed by the public. I am so pleased that Museum and City staff were able to make changes to our facility enabling visitors to safely view these shows. I hope they provided a sense of normalcy, thoughtfulness, and wonder to those who ventured in during the beginning of this strange time.

When the Museum closed during the initial phase of the pandemic, we quickly changed gears from in-person exhibits and programming to on-line possibilities so we could continue to engage our audience. We created two virtual exhibits using materials readily available from the history exhibits that were installed, at that time, in the history

Last year was unlike any other in our lifetimes. As a result of the pandemic, the twists and turns were, at times, almost impossible to navigate. There wasn’t a manual or playbook that you could use to guide you through the craziness. But as is often the case in life, we are defined by what we do when things are the most difficult. As the Theater Manager, I am continually humbled by each staff member’s willingness to step into whatever role is needed regardless of position. Suddenly, we all became professional cleaners, ushers, and concessionaires while never losing our sense of humor or desire to help. As I wrote as this might sound, 2020 defined the Rialto Team and set us on a course for bigger and better things to come.

On a personal note, I have spent my entire life working in the performing arts, so the consequences of this pandemic were devastating to watch. Many of my closest friends, who make their living as performing artists, found themselves not knowing how to feed their families. I often spoke with booking agents and touring artists who were forced to give up their careers due to the uncertainty caused by COVID-19. Closer to home, I watched the Rialto go from its best year on record in 2019 (with over 250 events and revenue that almost doubled from 2017) to a year where revenues dropped nearly 75%, and we produced only a fraction of the events from the previous year. Our closure also meant that our long-time renters had no performance home. Groups like Loveland Opera Theatre, Loveland Choral Society, and many others were forced to take time off with no means of recouping lost income. It is fair to say that the pandemic battered our industry and bruised our theater.

Fortunately, there is always a silver lining and an opportunity for growth even in the most difficult times. At the Rialto, we have strengthened our technical capabilities, added a much-needed scheduling software solution, updated our ticketing platform, implemented a turnkey live-streaming system, and hired critical positions with precisely the right people. While we aren’t out of the woods yet, the light at the end of the tunnel is coming into view. The Rialto is ready to pick up right where we left off in 2019 and continue bringing world-class entertainment to the people of Loveland in our historic community theater.
The Rialto Theater Center opened as a silent movie theater in 1920 and is currently Loveland’s premier performing arts venue, welcoming nationally touring musicians, comedians, and performers as well as local performing arts groups.

The Rialto c. 1920

The Rialto and Building Steam provided visitors a chance to engage with our current exhibits during the stay-at-home quarantine period. The virtual exhibits have become a permanent part of our website, broadening access and our audience. In addition, we asked our community to share their COVID-19 experiences with stories, photographs, and audio file submissions to be part of our permanent collection and for use in a future exhibition after the crisis passes.

Grant writing became an important focus, too, competing with many of the nation’s top museums for National Endowment for the Humanities and Institute of Museum and Library Services CARES grants. As luck would have it, we received a Colorado Humanities CARES grant to create pop-up history exhibits so we can take our programming outside the constraints of the Museum’s walls to students unable to attend field trips and to community members unable or unwilling to visit us inside the Museum building. We hope to continue to create flexible experiences for our community that meet their needs no matter what unexpected restriction comes our way!
As 2020 began, Loveland Museum was looking forward to an ambitious slate of exhibition programming, in many cases helping to break barriers regarding art-making, gender, and medium. The Main Gallery opened with a new exhibit of neon art titled She Bends: Women in Neon, which highlighted the work of 26 female-identifying neon artists and included a catalogue. The industrial underpinnings of neon art is an area traditionally dominated by men, and the She Bends group provides support and exhibition opportunities for women in the field. Unfortunately, after an energetic and hands-on opening event, this was only on view for a brief time. To fill the gap of in-person opportunities, a number of videos were made available online to teach about the field of neon, its history within fine art, and the individual approaches of each artist. As limited access continued, Loveland Museum was grateful to artists who pushed forward with us and helped keep our schedule moving along. Steamboat Springs artist Joel Allen and his team made over the Main Gallery with his intricate explosion of carefully wrought suspended sculptures, a bright light of color and form, including a site-specific fortune cookie box interactive sculpture that made use of boxes from a 2017 Hung Liu installation.

Later in the fall, the ever-popular annual Governor’s Show, re-scheduled from the spring, was reimagined with online sales only. Despite many changes, it was the most well attended exhibit of the year and the brisk art sales exemplified our visitors’ strong support for the philanthropic projects of the Rotary clubs, even under these difficult circumstances.

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Additions to the Collection
Loveland Museum

- 2019’s official Loveland Holiday Ornament, Museum Purchase from Winter Holiday Ornament
- 2020 Loveland Valentine card, Museum Purchase
- 2020 Loveland Valentine cachet stamp, Museum Purchase
- Loveland Auto Supply pencil, William Zoller
- Pocket braille writing kit, Kim McClelland
- Teachers calculating slide rule, Sharon Schultz
- W&P hat and name tag, maps of Masonville (1971) and Loveland (1969), Loveland businesses ephemera, Lawn watering permits, Pulse coffee mug, Commemorative coins for 2013 flood, and Green Ridge Glade Reservoir Project publication One Year Stronger, Kent Woodward
- Loveland Valentine Candle, Sharon Perry
- TVHS cheerleading outfit, shoes, pompons, letter jacket, patches, Heather Rubald
- Negatives from the “Mural Project”, Bob Campagna
- Desk from Washington School, Kelly Boettger
- Proctor’s Dairy Milk Bottle, Lakewood Heritage Center
- Great Western Railroad documents, Scott Kretschmer
- Graduating Seniors Banners, Chamber of Commerce
- LHS track team photo, LHS letter sweater, Robert Orange
- Duff’s Yardstick, Nancy Roos
- Polariometer, Jim Linden
- HP Belt Buckle, OPA coins, Robert Orange
- Drawing of Old St. Louis, Bill Meriath
- Drawing of Fritz White, from Dan Ostermiller, Betsy Ostermiller, Karen Ellwood, Herb and Sherry Mignery
- Loveland Grocery Co. coupon, Jean Nadig
- Shaker Blue by Barbara Takenaga, Museum Purchase
- Lines of Force (Fire Red) State II by Barbara Takenaga, Museum Purchase
- Frenetic Isolation By J.C. Milner, Museum Purchase
- Altered Lilies By Dan Augenstein, Museum Purchase
- Local history books, Gail Fraser
- Collection of 190 art books, Doug Moore
- Matching Hair Care Set, Kim McClelland
- OPA Token, Robert Orange
The offsite storage facility purchased in 2016 and the acquisition of the Reporter Herald archives have served as a catalyst for positive change within the history collections of the museum over the past few years. These big events precipitated the need for more staff time dedicated to the collections and so my position as Registrar became full-time. With more staff time dedicated to our history collections came the ability to bring on and manage volunteers to really jump start new projects and address long-standing issues. For reference, in 2015 we had 2 volunteers with a year total of 184 hours served. At the end of 2019, however, we had 22 volunteers with 1,581 hours served that year! The momentum seen over the past few years, however, came screeching to a halt with the shutdown in March. Since so much of the work with the collection needs to be done on-site, the closures led to the daunting task of figuring out how to work at home while still making progress on meaningful projects. During this time, there was a refocusing of effort on data entry which is always needed, but never prioritized due to the numerous other projects that demand attention. Unfortunately, due to the nature of collections, there was little volunteers could do from home, and so our 16 volunteers had to stop work on their projects.

In May, the City asked each department to make cuts in order to balance the budget. The Collection was one of the departments in the Museum that was affected by these cuts and I was placed on furlough for 6 weeks. This meant that all work from both staff and volunteers completely stopped for the early part of summer. Once the furlough was over, the museum was also able to welcome back volunteers on-site. Volunteers were able to return for 6 weeks, until there was another 2 month hiatus starting at the end of August due to my maternity leave. Needless to say, 2020 was incredibly challenging due to needing to restart and stop projects as the available work from staff and volunteers came in spurts throughout the year. Even with the major impact of the pandemic, volunteers still managed to serve at nearly 50% of the previous year, with 781 hours served. I am grateful to our wonderful volunteers for navigating it all and sticking with us. The majority of them have returned already and more plan to return in the future. It will take time to regain the momentum we had achieved at the beginning of 2020, but I’m optimistic we will get back there.

Due to COVID-19, schedule changes were rampant. Flexibility and patience were the name of the game. The year closed with Flora and Fauna, a sculpture exhibition by Loveland artists Kathryn Vinson and Ellen Woodbury. Originally scheduled for 2021, these artists worked hard to meet the deadlines to accommodate the Museum’s request for an earlier date, and produced a graceful and transcendent exhibition that met our need for beauty and hope in a challenging time. Additionally, videos were produced to introduce the artists and their art online. Online content will continue to be part of the art exhibit experience.

Our other galleries hosted exhibits by Daniel Augusteinstein, Doug Palmer, Erin Leeper, and Bonnie Lebesch, as well as the artists of the Loveland Art Studio Tour, all of whom didn’t flinch at the challenge of installing exhibitions under significant restrictions. Erin’s exhibit found a new home with us for a very extended period of time, and the inspirational subject matter of her work was influential to many. A new exhibit space, ‘12 Pt of Wall, held artwork by Kerri Sewell and David Hobbs. Devoted to local artists, this space is another chance to view the many talents within reach in Loveland.

We are grateful to our exhibiting artists for reminding us all of the valuable role art plays in everyday life and how the depth of creativity and artistic expression has intrinsic power that drives us on.
Front desk staff and volunteers embraced “other duties as assigned” during the Museum’s closure from March to June. We collected information for grants and helped proofread the activity cards and history lessons that are offered on our website. We dove into filing cabinets to do some long overdue organizing and attended webinars focused on how other museums or cultural organizations were navigating the pandemic. We cleaned. We cleaned some more. And when we couldn’t work, we waited.

Eventually, guidelines changed and we were able to plan for reopening. Our work shifted from projects behind the scenes to making the Museum safe for visitors to return. We attended webinars, this time focused on capacity restrictions, social distancing, symptom screenings, and masks. We walked through the Museum scribbling on maps, figuring out what exhibit components needed to be closed, moved, or monitored more closely. We stocked up on all of the sanitizer and disinfecting wipes we could find. We cleaned... and cleaned some more. We have been open for just over 7 months now and have been so happy to be able to welcome guests again. A visit to the Museum does look different these days, and things continue to change and require adjustments – like reconfiguring our point-of-sale system to offer a way to sell admission online and adding an online gift shop for contactless shopping.

What has not changed is that we are still committed to offering you diverse arts and history experiences. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Exhibition design certainly made a shift in 2020, along with everything else. The changes we made have been quite counter to our ideal visitor experience. When considering the content and layout of our exhibits, we incorporated larger areas for traffic flow and in some cases tried to provide visitors a more direct path through the exhibit than we typically prefer to construct. Additionally, we removed all seating areas from the galleries as to not encourage visitors to linger too long in one place. We also had to remove interactive elements that visitors would physically engage with to help keep virus spread to a minimum.

Under normal circumstances, we would have some occasional help with the physical aspects of exhibit installation from an outside contractor, but this past year it has seemed more reasonable to not bring another person into the environment if it was not necessary. Exhibit changes are always a challenge as there is a narrow window of time where everything must happen. There certainly has been more pressure lately as I have been doing all the work on my own, but for the most part this has worked out pretty well. On several occasions where we really needed an extra set of hands with something, someone from Facilities has been more than willing to show up on short notice to lend a hand.

During the extended museum closure, I took the opportunity to do some renovations to the permanent history exhibit areas. The half walls around the map area needed some updating so those received a new surface of sheetrock and paint to match the gallery area in the other parts of the mezzanine. The interactive kiosk was integrated into the Reporter-Herald exhibit and the surrounding handrails were refinished.

I am hopeful we will soon move past the COVID-19 era and have galleries full of people again. When that time does come, we will have amazing visitor experiences ready for everyone.