Come take a walk with us.

Recognized as one of the oldest and best fine art shows on the East Coast and one of the top 40 of all fine art shows in the country, the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) poduces the annual Boardwalk Art Show, now in it's 60th year.

Before you stroll along the boardwalk to view all of the fantastic works that artists from all over the country are exhibiting, take a short walk with us into the history of the event and how it developed into the nationally recognized experience it is today.

It all started in November 1952 when a group of local artists organized an exhibition to raise money for Winifred Nixon Greene, a Coastal Virginia artist who was the victim of a debilitating stroke. The event was so successful, not only at raising money for Ms. Greene's medical bills and living expenses, but also at raising awareness for artistic talent, that everyone involved decided to organize a local support network of artists, which they named the Virginia Beach Art Association (VBAA).

It wasn't until 1956 that the VBAA decided to move the event outdoors to the boardwalk, thus beginning a tradition that continues today.

Fast forward to 1971 when the VBAA merged with the Virginia Beach Museum of Art and created a new organization—the Virginia Beach Arts Center. This merger

ARTS CENTER FUND RAISING, CIRCA 1980

brought with it a new corporate structure and the hiring of the organization's first salaried director, Edward T. Jones.

In 1976 the Center moved into an old World War II-era "Hospitality House" on Arctic Ave. where it remained until 1989 when the current facility at 2200 Parks Avenue was complete. The Center changed its name to The Contemporary Art Center (CAC) of Virginia Beach and in 2003 saw the addition of the Rodriguez Pavilion (built to showcase Dale Chihuly's stunning glass chandelier) and Butler Gallery.

In 2010, the CAC was accredited by the American Associations of Museums, giving the CAC a tie to a network of advocacy and excellence that helps to strengthen the museum community as a whole. In 2011, the organization went through a rebranding process and changed its name to the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA).

ARTS CENTER, CIRCA 1970

CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER, CIRCA 1980

Throughout all of these changes, the one constant that has remained is the Boardwalk Art Show. Through it and a number of other initiatives, Virginia MOCA continues to exist to foster awareness, exploration and understanding of the significant art of our time. Through excellence and diversity in their changing exhibitions, educational programming and the Boardwalk Art Show, MOCA stimulates critical thinking and dialogue throughout Coastal Virginia and across the country.

This year's show received almost 800 applications from artists representing 13 fine art and contemporary craft mediums. 300 artists were selected and 250,000 tourists and locals will be attending the show, which spans nearly 15 blocks—from 19th Street to 33rd Street—utilizing the beach and Atlantic Ocean as a magnificent backdrop. A team of more than 300 volunteers has helped to put the event together and will be on hand to keep it running smoothly.

Proceeds from the event directly support the Virginia Museum of Contemporary

RODRIGEUZ PAVILION, CIRCA 2003

Art and help fulfill their mission to provide thought-provoking art exhibitions and education programs for the public to enrich the community. In the last decade alone, MOCA has provided exposure to the arts to over 100,000 children in Coastal Virginia.

Thank you for your interest in the arts. Please enjoy the show and share your Boardwalk Artshow story or favorite piece of art #60thBWAS.

50s

60s

70s

80s

90s

2000