



Nelson
Atkins
MUSEUM OF ART

YEAR IN REVIEW
2023–2024

YEAR IN REVIEW

May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024

Our 90th anniversary year

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art celebrated with Kansas City and more than 500,000 visitors who explored galleries, attended programs and festivals, and made us part of their lives. This year saw incredible gifts of art made to the collection, including *Grand HexaNet* by Venezuelan artist Elias Crespin that moves (literally!) the museum’s collection into a new era.

Throughout this report, you will find stories from this milestone year and gratitude for the people, foundations, and businesses who make our work possible through their generosity. Joyful events such as the C100 Luncheon, ShuttleCork, and Party Arty provided significant funds to bolster our mission and introduce new audiences to the museum.

During the 90th celebration, we also heard from you as part of our 90th Anniversary Response Station project and in this report, we share quotes and stories from museum attendees who took the time to share their personal experiences and cherished memories as part of this project.

In the galleries, our popular KC Art Now series continued with *A Layered Presence/Una Presencia Estratificada*, highlighting work by 22 regional Latin-American artists whose voices and art were shared through six wonderful programs. In *Evelyn Hofer: Eyes on the City*, visitors experienced the first major exhibition of Hofer’s work in the U.S. in more than 50 years. This powerful exhibition used more than 100 of her photographs to convey the essence of her subjects and the unique character and personality of European and American capitals during a period of social, structural, and economic transformation following World War II. Soon after, the museum opened *Monet and his Modern Legacy* which explored Monet’s influence on later generations of American artists and featured three remarkable loans from the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris.

Though much has changed in nine decades, our commitment to providing exceptional experiences with art, culture, history, and festivals — for free, for everyone — is stronger than ever. Today, we see the role of museums evolving from exhibiting and preserving masterpieces to also providing a place for community, joy, belonging, and wellbeing. As we turn our gaze to the Centennial, the Nelson-Atkins is preparing for what it means to be a museum for future generations.

Our achievements this past year are thanks to the tremendous support and leadership of our donors, volunteers, and members. You are the Art & Soul of this museum.

We hope to see you in the galleries soon!

Sincerely,

Evelyn Craft Belger

Evelyn Craft Belger
Chair, Board of Trustees

Julián

Julián Zugazagoitia
Director & CEO

Cover: One of two *alebrije* sculptures created by Mexico City artist Miguel Bolivar in collaboration with local artists and volunteers for the Día de los Muertos Festival

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Nelson-Atkins at 90: A Progressive Party



The opening of *Grand HexaNet*

90th Anniversary Celebration

Progressive festivities

At the anniversary's main event, **Nelson-Atkins at 90: A Progressive Party**, guests danced, toured, and toasted to nine decades of an incredible institution. Together, we raised nearly \$300,000.

Past, present, and future

Events explored the past, present, and future at the Nelson-Atkins. **From Brick to Blockchain** showcased NFT expressions of the museum's first acquisition. In **An Evening with Khalif Tahir Thompson**, the star young artist visited to discuss his work, including *Summertime*, a recent acquisition and a guest favorite.

From the archives

The Spencer Art Reference Library's exhibition, **The Nelson-Atkins at 90: 1933–2023** told the story of the museum and its milestones through ephemera drawn from its deep, rarely seen archives.

A celebratory slice

It isn't a birthday without cake! Rozzelle Court Restaurant created a delectable cake, served throughout December.

Indelible memories

During anniversary celebrations, we prompted guests to stop by a response station in Bloch Lobby and share their favorite Nelson-Atkins recollections. We'll share some of those responses throughout this report.

"Every visit is magnificent!
Art that inspires, architecture
that transports, and grounds
that bring peace and calm."

— A guest at the 90th Anniversary Response Station

Top to bottom: guests across the museum at Nelson-Atkins at 90: A Progressive Party; Khalif Tahir Thompson poses in front of his painting *Summertime*; the cake created for the museum's 90th birthday



LEARNING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Guests attending Family Field Trip Night

Stronger together

This year, more than 400 Nelson-Atkins volunteers served our community. Volunteers are museum ambassadors — welcoming, educating, and fostering a sense of belonging for every person who enters our doors.

UMKC x NAMA

The Nelson-Atkins proudly hosted events in partnership with talented musicians from the University of Missouri – Kansas City Conservatory. **Sight x Sound: An Art & Music Series** and **For the Birds** explored the fascinating intersections of art, music, and performance.

Creature collaboration

Mexican artist Miguel Bolivar spent five weeks in Kansas City creating the larger-than-life *alebrije* sculptures seen at the **Día de los Muertos festival**. Bolivar was assisted by local community groups and volunteers, including students from the Guadalupe Center High School Impact Academy and Mattie Rhodes Cultural Center.

Bringing global cultures to KC

The museum's annual cultural festivals — **Lunar New Year, Passport to India, Native American Cultural Celebration, Juneteenth Celebration, Kansas City's Lawn Party, Deaf Cultural Festival**, and **Día de los Muertos** — continued to be community favorites. Together, they drew more than 32,000 guests to the museum.

Capturing KC

Inspired by the featured exhibition *Evelyn Hofer: Eyes on the City* and in collaboration with Kansas City Society for Contemporary Photography, participants in the **Portrait of a City workshop** studied street photography and captured images of Kansas City. The photographs were subsequently exhibited at Cerbera Gallery and bound into a catalogue.

Picture Day

At the **Middle School Summit**, students were invited to explore the museum's photography collection, conduct interviews, and create portraits of themselves and their peers.

Top to bottom: Artists work on an *alebrije* sculpture; UMKC dancers perform a scene from *For the Birds* in a gallery; guests at Juneteenth celebration; attendees organizing photographs during the Portrait of a City workshop; students at the Middle School Summit



Thank you to the following festival sponsors and community partners

Sponsors
JE Dunn Construction; The Bill & Christy Gautreaux Collection; Hall Family Foundation; Hallmark Cards, Inc.; Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation; W.K. Kellogg Foundation Trustee Donor Advised Fund – Ramón Murguía, Trustee; Ellsworth Kelly Foundation; Lilly Endowment Inc.; PNC Bank.

Community partners
Belger Arts Center; Consulate of Mexico in Kansas City; the Guadalupe Centers High School Impact Academy; Hammerspace Workshop; Juneteenth KC; Kansas City Indian Center; Kansas City Parks & Recreation; the Kansas School for the Deaf; Museo de Arte Popular; The Museum of Deaf History, Arts & Culture; Mattie Rhodes Cultural Center; The Whole Person.

More than 32,000 people attended festivals at the Nelson-Atkins this year

Right, top to bottom: a performer at the Native American Cultural Celebration; dancers at the Passport to India Festival; participants at Sight x Sound
Page 9, clockwise from upper left: a participant at the Portrait of a City workshop; Ford Learning Center teaching artist Anthony High at the Juneteenth Celebration; guests at Kansas City's Lawn Party; visiting artist Miguel Bolivar with an *alebrije* sculpture; an artist painting a wing of an *alebrije* for the Dia de los Muertos Festival



“Something I loved at the Nelson-Atkins is that they are inclusive of all the cultures and explain all the traditions. Especially being South Indian, I experienced and looked at my culture in this museum. I loved it here.”

— A guest at the 90th Anniversary Response Station





Reflections from Curatorial Affairs

It was a year of great art at the Nelson-Atkins, bookended with major retrospectives of important women artists.

Co-organized with The High Museum of Art and opened in September 2023, *Evelyn Hofer: Eyes on the City* presented the transportive urban photography of Evelyn Hofer. The Nelson-Atkins is one of the largest repositories of Hofer's works, thanks to the Hall Family Foundation.

In April 2024, we debuted the first U.S. museum full-career survey of *Niki de Saint Phalle: Rebellion and Joy*, whose distinctive works disrupted the art world and engaged with critical social issues.

Indeed, it was a year of exhibitions celebrating women in art. In October 2023, artist Sonam Dolma Brauen presented the moving installation *My Father's Death* (2010). In November, *Glamorous Women* revealed women's roles in China's elite society. And in March 2024, the museum opened *"To Prove that I Exist": Melissa Shook's Daily Self Portraits, 1972–1973*, featuring early self-portraits by the influential artist Melissa Shook.

Monet and his Modern Legacy explored the influence of Claude Monet's later works, complemented by four exceptional paintings from the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris and a local collector.

Contemporary artists enriched our walls — and ceilings. Opened in September 2023, the exhibition *A Layered Presence/Una prescencia estratificada* showcased 22 local artists with cultural ties to Latin America. And in March 2024, Venezuelan artist Elias Crespín installed his kinetic sculpture *Grand HexaNet* (2018), which dances above Bloch Lobby.

The European Arts department added a new digital publication with its first installment of the Starr Portrait Miniatures collection catalogue, sponsored by the Bloch Family Foundation and the Starr Family Foundation.

An extraordinary, multi-year grant from the Hall Family Foundation will fund strategic acquisitions and essential research for our photography curators. And as a silver lining to the bequest-mandated sale of Claude Monet's *Mill at Limetz* (1888), the museum's share of the proceeds will create an endowment honoring the Atha family and ensuring decades of ambitious acquisitions.

Finally, two highly anticipated curatorial hires bring renewed attention to important collections. Rachel Kabukala returned to the museum in January 2024 as Associate Curator, African Art. Tahnee Ahtone joined in April 2024 as Curator, Native American Art, a position supported by a multi-year grant from the Mellon-Wingate Foundation.

The curators, conservators, registrars, and exhibition planning teams join me in thanking you for making our work possible. We look forward to seeing you in the galleries!

William Keyse Rudolph, PhD
Deputy Director, Curatorial Affairs
Chief Curator and Head, Architecture, Design, and Decorative Arts

Gallery view of *Niki de Saint Phalle: Rebellion and Joy*

Monet makes an impression

Monet and His Modern Legacy explored the influence of Claude Monet’s later works on the Abstract Expressionist movement of the 20th century — and uncovered the Kansas City Art Institute’s pivotal role in the museum’s monumental acquisition of Monet’s *Water Lilies*.

Evelyn Hofer’s globetrotting photography

The exhibition *Evelyn Hofer: Eyes on the City* featured the photographer’s thoughtful portraits of the world’s cities and the people who inhabit them.

A garden of joy

Niki de Saint Phalle: Rebellion and Joy brought the trailblazing avant-garde artist’s imaginative and socially conscious works — including the iconic, feminist Nana sculptures — to the Nelson-Atkins.

Local artists reveal their layers

The KC Art Now exhibition series returned with *A Layered Presence / Una presencia estratificada*. The bilingual exhibition featured 22 Kansas City artists with cultural ties to Latin America, delving into such themes as immigration, LGBTQIA+ identity, and ancestry.

A grand acquisition

This spring, the Nelson-Atkins unveiled the kinetic sculpture *Grand HexaNet* by Venezuelan artist Elias Crespin. Its network of anodized aluminum tubes floats in a perpetual dance over Bloch Lobby. The acquisition was made possible by the William T. Kemper Collecting Initiative — Latin American/Caribbean Art Fund.

A major collection of miniatures

A new digital catalogue brings to life more than 250 pocket-sized paintings. Collected by Kansas City philanthropists Martha Jane Phillips Starr and John W. Starr, the Starr Collection of Portrait Miniatures, accessible on the museum’s website, features deep scholarship and high-resolution images of each portrait.

Meditations on family and memory

Last fall, artist Sonam Dolma Brauen visited the Nelson-Atkins to construct her sculpture *My Father’s Death*. Composed of traditional votives and robes donated by Tibetan Buddhist monks, the installation is a moving tribute to the artist’s father, himself a Tibetan monk.



China’s early trendsetters

Glamorous Women: Gender and Fashion in Chinese Art used rarely seen paintings, textiles, and objects to explore how Chinese artists revealed the roles women played in elite society.

Selfies that stick

“To Prove that I Exist”: Melissa Shook’s Daily Self-Portraits, 1972–1973 chronicled Melissa Shook’s daily self-portraits, which powerfully conveyed her relationships with memory, family, her body, and sense of self.

Visiting visionaries

Photographer Catherine Opie and art star Khalif Tahir Thompson shared their works with guests in lively artist conversations. Actor, collector, and museum founder Cheech Marin described his vision for the power of Chicano art in the annual Atkins Lecture.

Thank you to our exhibition sponsors

Atterbury Family Foundation; G. Kenneth and Ann Baum Philanthropic Fund; Evelyn Craft Belger and Richard Belger; Marion and Henry Bloch Family Foundation; E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation; Paul DeBruce and Linda Woodsmall-DeBruce; the Fondation Foyer; J. Scott Francis and Susan Gordon – Francis Family Foundation; Jacques & Natasha Gelman Foundation; Nancy and Rick Green; Hall Family Foundation; Don Hall Jr.; Hallmark Cards, Inc.; Shirley Bush Helzberg; Husch Blackwell LLP; Neil Karbank and Gretchen Calhoun; Muriel McBrien Kauffman Family Foundation; Lilly Endowment Inc.; Liz and Greg Maday; Stephen and Mary Anne McDowell; Bill and Sara Morgan; SpecChem.

Page 12, top to bottom: guests at *Monet and His Modern Legacy*; guests at *Evelyn Hofer: Eyes on the City*; gallery view of *A Layered Presence / Una presencia estratificada*
Left, clockwise from upper left: guests at *Niki de Saint Phalle: Rebellion and Joy*; guests at *Evelyn Hofer: Eyes on the City*; Cheech Marin at the Atkins Lecture with curator Stephanie Fox Knappe; *Grand HexaNet* in Bloch Lobby; gallery view of *Glamorous Women: Gender and Fashion in Chinese Art*; Sonam Dolma Brauen constructs *My Father’s Death*



Amenities + Services

A Rozzelle refresh

Guest favorite Rozzelle Court Restaurant debuted a fresh look, including new greenery and ramps for guests with mobility devices. We also welcomed executive Chef Andrew Wigger, who brings global experience to the museum's culinary services.

Museum Store milestone

The Museum Store, which sells collection-inspired gifts and handmade wares from local artists, surpassed \$1 million in revenue.

Lights! Camera! Atkins!

Tivoli Cinemas continued to light up the museum's silver screens. Inside Atkins Auditorium, guests enjoyed contemporary and classic fare. Outdoors, **Tivoli Under the Stars** proved popular with Kansas Citians seeking outdoor crowd pleasers.

A matter of course

Art Course swung in for another successful year on the mini-golf green. The nine holes saw updates, too, including a new interpretation of Niki de Saint Phalle's sculpture, *The Bench*.

"My favorite memory is playing Art Course! The scavenger hunt to find the pieces in the museum will always stay with me."

— A guest at the 90th Anniversary Response Station

Left to right: Chef Andrew Wigger; guests at Tivoli Under the Stars; a staff member on Art Course

FINANCIALS

I'm pleased to report another great year at the Nelson-Atkins, thanks to the service and contributions from friends like you. The balanced operational budget for the museum was \$34.4 million for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2024.

Early in the year, \$1.2 million of unrestricted funds became available through a final approval of Employee Retention Credit (ERC) funding earned during the pandemic. This, combined with successful fundraising and strong earned revenue allowed the museum to finish the year with balanced operations at \$36.1 million.

The increased funding allowed for growth beyond what was budgeted in ongoing departmental expenses and project expenses associated with the year's exhibitions and programming. Departmental growth included the filling of additional staff positions.

Volunteer leadership from three committees provides critical financial oversight throughout the year. The Finance Committee reviews budgets and monitors operational results. The Investment Committee oversees current investment performance and offers recommendations to the Board regarding Investment Policy, including asset allocation. The Audit Committee recommends the engagement of a firm for audit and tax preparation services for the museum and approves the audit results and tax returns before recommending to the Board. The time and expertise committed by these individuals in service to the museum is greatly appreciated.

We thank each of you for helping the Nelson-Atkins provide another great year of exhibitions and programming for our community.

All the best,

Tammy J. Bluhm
Vice President, Finance & Chief Financial Officer

2023–2024

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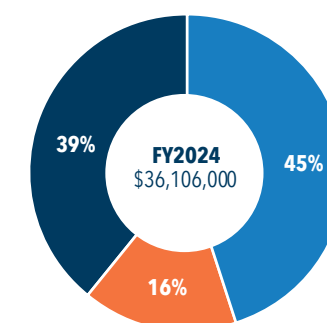
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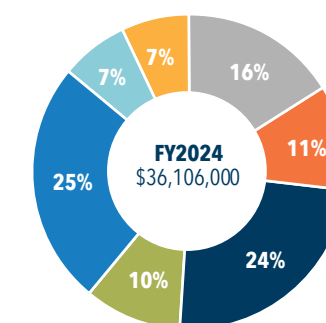
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OPERATING REVENUE

45% Endowment Income
39% Contributed Income
16% Earned Income



OPERATING EXPENSES

25% Guest Services / IT
24% Design & Experience / Operations
16% Executive / Finance / HR / Marketing
11% Curatorial
10% Learning & Engagement
7% Development
7% Exhibitions

Membership

We would like to thank the following volunteers for giving their time to make the museum a more welcoming, exciting, and joyful place for the members and guests of the Nelson-Atkins. Thank you!

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Top to bottom: guests at Party Arty; a Society of Fellows tour; guests at the member opening for Niki de Saint Phalle: Rebellion and Joy

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Established in 2010 to celebrate the generosity of planned gift donors

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“I’ve been coming here my whole life and it’s one of my favorite places in the world. Having lived in Paris, NYC, and DC — the Nelson-Atkins is still my favorite museum. Thank you for making art accessible.”

— A guest at the 90th Anniversary Response Station

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Fundraisers

C100 Luncheon

The Committee of 100 welcomed Ashley Whittaker, author of *The Well-Loved House*, as the featured speaker for C100. This year, participants raised nearly \$370,000.

ShuttleCork 2024

Renowned vintners and chefs united in support of the Nelson-Atkins, offering unique auction items and experiences plus first-class cuisine for gourmet guests. This year, participants raised a record-breaking \$2.2 million in support of art education.

Party Arty: Chaos in Color

Voted the best fundraiser in the city by *Kansas City Magazine*, the Young Friends of Art fundraiser brought the house down while raising more than \$140,000 for art education programs at the museum.

Clockwise from upper left: guests pose at Party Arty; featured wines from a ShuttleCork Winemaker Dinner; more festivities at the C100 Luncheon, Party Arty, and the ShuttleCork Grand Auction.



In Memoriam: Charles Egan (1932–2024)

The Nelson-Atkins mourns the passing of Charles Egan. As a Founding Trustee of the Stanley H. Durwood Foundation, Charles was a key voice in the establishment of the Durwood Internship endowed program, which offers students from the Kansas City Art Institute paid, hands-on professional experience at departments throughout the Nelson-Atkins.

Since its inception in 2010, the Durwood Internship has paved career paths for countless art professionals — including current Nelson-Atkins employees. Mr. Egan's contributions will be felt for generations to come.

Please join us in remembrance of, and gratitude for, Charles Egan.

“In 2018, I interned at the Nelson-Atkins and got to design pieces for a festival. I loved getting to see things I made at the museum!”

— A guest at the 90th Anniversary Response Station

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Right: Guests pose at Kansas City's Lawn Party

A Look Ahead

We look forward to seeing you at these exciting programs and events:

Hokusai: Waves of Inspiration from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston | Open through Jan. 5, 2025

2024 Charlotte Street Visual Artist Awards |
Open through Aug. 10, 2025

Community Impact Fund Campaign |
Nov. 18, 2024–Jan. 15, 2025

Day of Giving | Dec. 11, 2024

John Smart: Virtuoso in Miniature |
Dec. 21, 2024–Jan. 4, 2026

Highlights from the Lawrence Lithography Workshop | Dec. 21, 2024–TBD

Lunar New Year Festival | Jan. 26, 2025

Strange and Familiar Places | Feb. 4–July 25, 2025

Native American Cultural Celebration |
March 2, 2025

Survival of the Fittest: Picturing Wildlife and Wilderness, Masterworks from the Rijksmuseum Twenthe and the National Museum of Wildlife Art |
March 22–Sept. 14, 2025

Passport to India Festival | April 27, 2025

ShuttleCork | May 1–2, 2025

Also in 2025, we will share plans for a transformational comprehensive campaign to renovate and expand the museum.

Our generous members, community partners, and sponsors make our mission possible. We have enjoyed an incredible year, thanks to you.



If you'd like to donate to the Nelson-Atkins, email giving@nelson-atkins.org or call **816.751.1278**