



Year in Review

May 2024 – April 2025

A Landmark Year

Thank you for another outstanding year at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. This year marked the start of something extraordinary at the museum: an expansion and reimagining of our role in the community. We see the needs and wants of our community shifting, just as the way we live is changing. Your museum is more than just a space where masterpieces are preserved and exhibited. It is a place of joy, learning, socializing, and belonging where we provide exceptional art experiences for free, for everyone.

To better serve future generations, we asked architects from around the world for their ideas about how to build meaningful spaces that encourage community connections and visitor excitement. The New York firm, Weiss/Manfredi’s vision for a west-side expansion and campus revitalization won the hearts and imagination of both our community members and Board of Trustees. The architectural competition highlighted Kansas Citian’s museum pride and affection for the Sculpture Park. We are thankful for, and delighted by, the hundreds of comments and letters from our visitors. Learning what makes the museum special to you was one of our greatest joys.

This year we welcomed more than 550,000 visitors to explore our galleries, discover remarkable exhibitions, and attend programs and festivals with friends and family. Of those, more than 60,000 were students who explored our collection on a school tour or created artwork in our classrooms. We are deeply grateful for the members, donors, foundations, and corporate partners whose generosity helps keep our museum free.

Let’s not forget the art and our incredible special exhibitions! The museum hosted our most popular exhibition ever, *Hokusai: Waves of Inspiration* from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and welcomed

back our penguin friends from The Kansas City Zoo & Aquarium so they could see *Survival of the Fittest*, our first exhibition focused on wildlife art. The KC Art Now series continued to highlight the work of some of Kansas City’s own amazing artists. Powerful works by 2024 Charlotte Street Visual Award Artists Juan Diego Gaucin, Aleah Washington, and Kevin Demery invited guests to experience the best of Kansas City’s creative community.

Additionally, we celebrated the complete launch of the digital Starr Collection of Portrait Miniatures. Featuring more than 250 pocket-sized paintings drawn from the collection of Martha Jane Phillips Starr and John W. Starr, this catalogue marks a significant milestone in the scholarly work of our curators.

Our achievements from this past year are thanks to the incredible support of our donors, volunteers, and members. Thank you for being the Art & Soul of the Nelson-Atkins.

We hope to see you in the galleries soon!

With deepest gratitude,

Evelyn Craft Belger

Evelyn Craft Belger

Chair, Board of Trustees

Julián

Julián Zugazagoitia

Director & CEO



Lunar New Year Festival

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Cover: Young guest paging through the exhibition catalogue in *Hokusai: Waves of Inspiration* from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Learning and Community Engagement



Celebrating volunteers

Every April, we celebrate our volunteers with Volunteer Appreciation Month. Last year, more than 400 volunteers contributed over 37,000 hours to welcome, educate, and foster belonging for every Nelson-Atkins guest. Now that's a reason to celebrate!

Aging creatively

With support from E.A. Michelson Philanthropy, the Nelson-Atkins offers Creative Aging Workshops for people 55 years and up. The benefits of Creative Aging Workshops were highlighted in a CBS Sunday Morning segment featuring activists Jane Fonda and Ashton Applewhite.



Remixing the museum experience

Last May, we kicked off Night/Shift, a free and free-form evening hosted multiple times a year. Featuring art demonstrations, live performances, and gallery experiences, Night/Shift presents new ways to engage with Kansas City's creative community — and has proven a hit among guests.

Big ticket, small price

Thanks to a partnership with TeenTix KC, teenagers from the Kansas City area can now enjoy \$5 admission to special exhibitions and other programming at the Nelson-Atkins.

Tomorrow's art stewards

Children who have attended the museum on a grant-funded school trip or participated in Thinking Through Art programs are encouraged to return with their families for Family Field Trip Night. This spring, the popular event debuted the Art Rangers initiative, which empowers young people to protect art around the museum.

Clockwise from left: Día de los Muertos Festival; Volunteer; Night/Shift



From left to right: Kansas City Lawn Party; A social media sensation; Parade of Hearts

Bringing the world to KC

The museum’s annual cultural festivals continue to be community favorites. Combined, the Lunar New Year Festival, Passport to India, the Native American Cultural Festival, the Juneteenth Celebration, Kansas City’s Lawn Party, the Deaf Cultural Festival, and Día de los Muertos brought more than 35,000 people to the museum.

Bottoms up

For a few weeks this winter, local artist Zeke Henry (and his collaborators) were in competition with the likes of Caravaggio and Monet for greatest Nelson-Atkins attraction. His massive snow sculpture of a human posterior on the museum’s south lawn was a selfie magnet and social media sensation.

Dragon with a heart of gold

The Nelson-Atkins hosted the 2024 Parade of Hearts sculpture Guardian of the Heartland, created by the superb multimedia artist (and museum staff member!) Adrean Painter. The sculpture pays homage to the more than 600 dragons depicted in art from the museum’s collection.



Thank you to our festival sponsors and partners who help bring fresh perspectives to our festivals

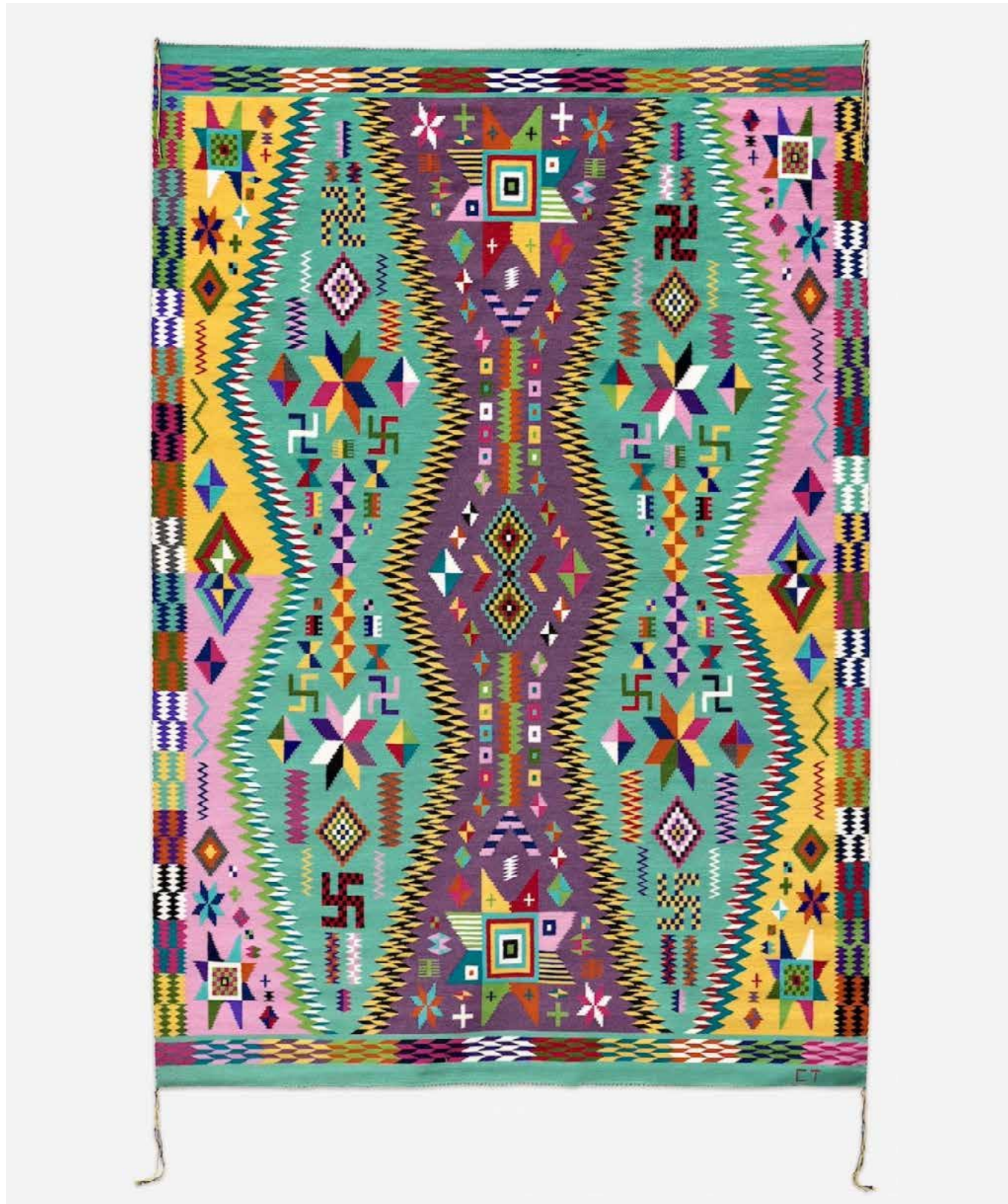
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- The Chinese School of Greater Kansas City
- Consulate of Mexico in Kansas City
- Guadalupe Centers High School Impact Academy
- The India Association of Kansas City

- Institute of Chinese Language and Culture
- Juneteenth KC
- Kansas City Indian Center
- Kansas City Parks & Recreation
- Kansas City Public Library
- Kansas School for the Deaf
- Korean-American Society of Greater Kansas City
- Mattie Rhodes Cultural Center
- The Museum of Deaf History, Arts & Culture
- Taiwan-America Friendship Association
- The Whole Person



A Spectacular Year for Art

The cornerstone of a museum is its art collection. This year, the Nelson-Atkins' dynamic team of curators made spectacular additions to our holdings.

This year we added 455 works of art in all mediums and curatorial departments—a few highlights—a beautiful portrait by Joshua Johnson (about 1763–1830), the second earliest-documented US artist of African heritage, made an important addition to our American paintings. A casket and related stand attributed to André Charles Boulle (1642–1732), the legendary French designer, boosted our European furniture. A powerful portrait of an unknown Black boy in livery by an 18th-Century English artist enriched our European paintings. A major portfolio of photographs by Joel Sternfeld (born 1944) will help celebrate the 250th anniversary of the U.S. in 2026. An

important painting by Hung Hsien (born 1933) helped boost our contemporary Chinese art by women artists.

We also acquired a mixed-media assemblage costume and performance documentation by the inventive collective Kongo Astronauts, based in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Japanese department now has one of the earliest sculptures in its collection, a Haniwa Head dating from the 4th–5th centuries CE. A major gift of art and artifacts documenting Christo (1935–2020) and Jeanne-Claude's (1935–2009) 1978 *Wrapped Walk Ways* project in Loose Park celebrates a transformative moment in our city's contemporary art history and is the subject of current and future exhibitions.

Installations by Gonkar Gyatso (born 1961) and Farhad Ostovani (born 1950) invigorate our contemporary South and Southeast Asian collections, while the gift of a complete tomb cycle by Siah Armajani (1939–2020) similarly shines an in-depth look at an artist's vision from conception to completion. A vibrant contemporary weaving by Diné artist Calvin Toney (born 1987) enriches the museum's important collection of Native American textiles.

All these acquisitions were made possible by our extraordinary donors, who either gave works of art or provided acquisition funds for purchases. We thank them most sincerely for helping ensure that the Nelson-Atkins art collections continue to be an ever-evolving source of inspiration, impact, wellness, and education — now and in decades to come.

William Keyse Rudolph

William Keyse Rudolph, PhD

Deputy Director, Curatorial Affairs

Chief Curator and Head, Architecture, Design and Decorative Arts



Left: Calvin Toney (Diné (Navajo), born 1987). *Untitled*, 2020–2021. Aniline dyed wool; overall: 105 1/2 x 73 1/4 inches. Purchase: acquired through the generosity of the Jedel Family Foundation, 2024.40.

Right: Hung Hsien (Chinese, born 1933). *Ocean Rocks*, 1970. Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper; image: 52 3/16 x 30 9/16 inches. Purchase: the Asian Art Acquisition Fund in memory of Laurence Sickman, 2024.41.



From left to right: Special visitors to *Survival of the Fittest*; Felix Gonzalez-Torres (Cuban, 1957–1996). *Untitled (March 5th) #2*, 1991. 40-watt light bulbs, porcelain light sockets, and extension cords; installation height: 113 inches. Purchase: acquired through the generosity of the William T. Kemper Foundation—Commerce Bank, Trustee, 2005.4 ; A guest enjoys the final weekend of the *Hokusai* exhibition; *Starr Minis* pack a major punch



A foundational first

The KC Art Now series returned with three powerful exhibitions by 2024 Charlotte Street Visual Artist fellows Kevin Demery, Juan Diego Gaucin, and Aleah Washington. This was the first time the Nelson-Atkins hosted presentations of the Charlotte Street Foundation’s prestigious awards.

No small feat

The digital Starr Collection of Portrait Miniatures celebrated its final launch of entries this spring. Drawn from the collection Kansas City philanthropists Jane Phillips Starr and John W. Starr gifted to the museum, the catalogue brings to life more than 250 pocket-size paintings through deep scholarship and high-resolution images. Several of these works are showcased in the exhibition *John Smart: Virtuoso in Miniature*.

Arctic art lovers

The Kansas City Zoo & Aquarium’s penguins made their long-awaited return to the Nelson-Atkins since their popular visit in 2020. Their long waddle was worth it to see the wildlife art in *Survival of the Fittest*.

Hometown heroes

Gallery 214 in the Nelson-Atkins building hosted multiple exhibitions related to Kansas City. *Our Town* chronicled iconic views of the City of Fountains. *The Lawrence Lithography Workshop: Highlights from the Archive* celebrated a foundational gift by Richard Belger and Evelyn Craft Belger and the John and Maxine Belger Foundation (later amplified by a significant purchase) that resulted in the acquisition of lithographs from local printer Michael Sims. *Wrapped Walk Ways* recollects Christo and Jeanne-Claude’s 1978 “wrapping” of Loose Park, in anticipation of the installation’s 50th anniversary.

Depth of field

Collection exhibitions continued to showcase the remarkable breadth and depth of the museum’s photography collection, bolstered by generous contributions from the Hall Family Foundation. *Still Performing* spotlighted the high drama of the medium’s early years. *Strange and Familiar Places*’ contemporary photography tells compelling stories about people in the rural U.S. and the lands they inhabit.

Extra-special exhibitions

Special exhibitions drew new and established crowds to the Nelson-Atkins. *Hokusai: Waves of Inspiration* was a high-water mark, drawing national attention and smashing attendance projections. *Survival of the Fittest*, the museum’s first presentation of wildlife art, proved a community favorite.

To conserve and protect

Two mainstays of the Donald J. Hall Sculpture Park received vital conservation efforts. A generous grant from Bank of America funded repairs, protective coatings, and other treatments for Ursula von Rydingsvard’s *Three Bowls*. And the Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts funded cleaning, repainting, and structural reinforcement of one of Claes Oldenburg and Coosje Van Bruggen’s iconic *Shuttlecocks*.

Burning brief and bright

In December, one of the two lightbulbs in Felix Gonzalez-Torres’ *Untitled (March 5th) #2* burnt out. Commemorating the artist’s partner who died of AIDS in 1991, the work suggests a pair of lovers — one of whom will extinguish before the other. The powerful image was shared widely on social media and news outlets.



Hank Willis Thomas (American, born 1976). *Until Ex parte Endo (Part 1)*, 2024. Inkjet print and applied media on retroreflective vinyl mounted on Dibond and decommissioned US flag. Overall: 79 × 61 3/4 × 7 1/2 inches. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase acquired through the generosity of Ann Baum, Carol Hudson, Jackie Reses, Maurice Watson, Sandra and Willie Lawrence, Ward and Donna Katz, Gary and Debby Ballard, Irvin and Pamela Bishop, Devin W. Blackburn, Esq., Valerie Chow and Jon Gray, Mark and Gaye Cohen, Thomas Cohen and Lena Price, Paul and Bunni Copaken, Erica and Lorin Crenshaw, Stephen Figge, Daniel and Kristen Fromm, Bill and Christy Gautreaux, Jeffrey Goldstein and Kim Klein, Laura Greenbaum, John and Sharon Hoffman, Damian Lair, Eleanor and David Lisbon, Stephen and Mary Anne McDowell, Sheryll Myers, Kim and Nikki Newton, Barbara Nicely, Walter and Jon Porter, Rob and Doris Rogers, Heather and Clint Slusher, Matthew and Mandi Strange, Oscar and Ratana Tshibanda, Michael and Jamila Weaver, Jerry and Debbie Williams, Andy and Toma Wolff, Lynn Hoffman Carlton and Matt Hoffman, and an anonymous donor, 2025.36.1,2.



Above: *Mapping the Heavens* explored connections between scholars and scientists; Below: Cheech Marin, inaugural guest on Art Bytes

The art of conversation

Last year, the Nelson-Atkins debuted its second podcast production, Art Bytes. Hosted by Nelson-Atkins manager of media relations & production Kathleen Leighton, the show presents casual, compact conversations with art professionals like Cheech Marin about the past, present, and future of the art world.

Lending library

Partnerships with Linda Hall Library produced exciting new art experiences. The free exhibition *Mapping the Heavens* was co-organized with the library and featured stellar objects from its collection. The special exhibition *Survival of the Fittest* featured the library's original edition of Charles Darwin's seminal *On the Origin of Species*.

Art in a new light

Society of Fellows and Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey members enjoyed a behind-the-scenes visit to the Brooklyn studio of artist Hank Willis Thomas, where he shared the striking work in progress *Until Ex parte Endo (Part 1)*. Featuring an upside-down flag over a ghostly photograph, the work comments on the unjust mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. Shining light on the image reveals students saying the Pledge of Allegiance. John and Sharon Hoffman rallied support from 61 patrons to purchase the work on behalf of the Nelson-Atkins, where it went on view in fall 2025.





Strange and Familiar Places explored regional identity through storytelling

Amenities and Guest Services

A vow to wow

The Nelson-Atkins has seen consistent growth from externally hosted events, particularly weddings. The museum’s remarkable spaces and talented events team make our institution one of Kansas City’s premier wedding venues.

Hokusai mania

Guests came in waves to see last year’s Hokusai exhibition. This popularity extended to the Nelson-Atkins Museum Store, which realized more than six times

its projected revenue from the exhibition’s supporting merchandise (and with special thanks to the store’s tireless team).

Movies at the museum

Tivoli Cinema lit up silver screens inside and out. Atkins Auditorium showed a run of successful films, including the museum’s first presentation of Studio Ghibli features. Outdoors, Tivoli Under the Stars proved extremely popular — despite the best efforts of inclement summer weather.



Tivoli Under the Stars attracts guests of all ages

Thank you to our exhibition sponsors who help bring art from around the world to Kansas City

- The Alan and Judy Kosloff Fund
- Evelyn Craft Belger and Richard Belger
- Owen and Lynne Buckley
- Campbell/Calvin Fund for Exhibitions
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- Richard J. Stern Foundations for the Arts—Commerce Bank, Trustee
- Kent Sunderland

Fundraisers



C100 Luncheon
The Committee of 100 is responsible for one of the museum's signature fundraisers, the flagship C100 Luncheon. The 2024 luncheon, which featured architect Stan Dixon, raised more than \$340,000 in support for the museum's programs and collection.

ShuttleCork 2025
Renowned vintners and chefs united in support of the Nelson-Atkins, offering fabulous dinners, unique auction items and experiences, for more than 500 guests. This year, participants raised a record-breaking \$2.4 million in support of art education, making ShuttleCork the museum's most successful event ever.

Party Arty: Opulence and Intrigue
Voted the best fundraiser in the city by KC Mag, the annual Young Friends of Art fundraiser supports art education in our community and raised nearly \$145,000.

Clockwise from left: A guest leans into the opulence of Party Arty; The C100 Benefactor Party; The festive ShuttleCork atmosphere



In Memoriam: Donald J. Hall

May 4, 1928–Oct. 15, 2024

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art mourns the loss of Donald J. Hall, a visionary business and civic leader whose decades of support shaped Kansas City's cultural landscape and the museum.

Serving as a member of the Nelson-Atkins Board of Trustees for 31 years, Hall's influence modernized Nelson-Atkins governance and broadened the Board from three members to 21. Hall funded the building of the roof over Rozzelle Court — thereby helping to establish the court's restaurant service — and oversaw the design team for the sculpture park later rechristened in his honor. He was also instrumental in the design and architect selection for the Bloch Building expansion, for which his wife Adele led the fundraising.

Don saw the importance of photography as an art form and began building the Hallmark Photographic Collection in 1964. He grew it into a world-class collection that

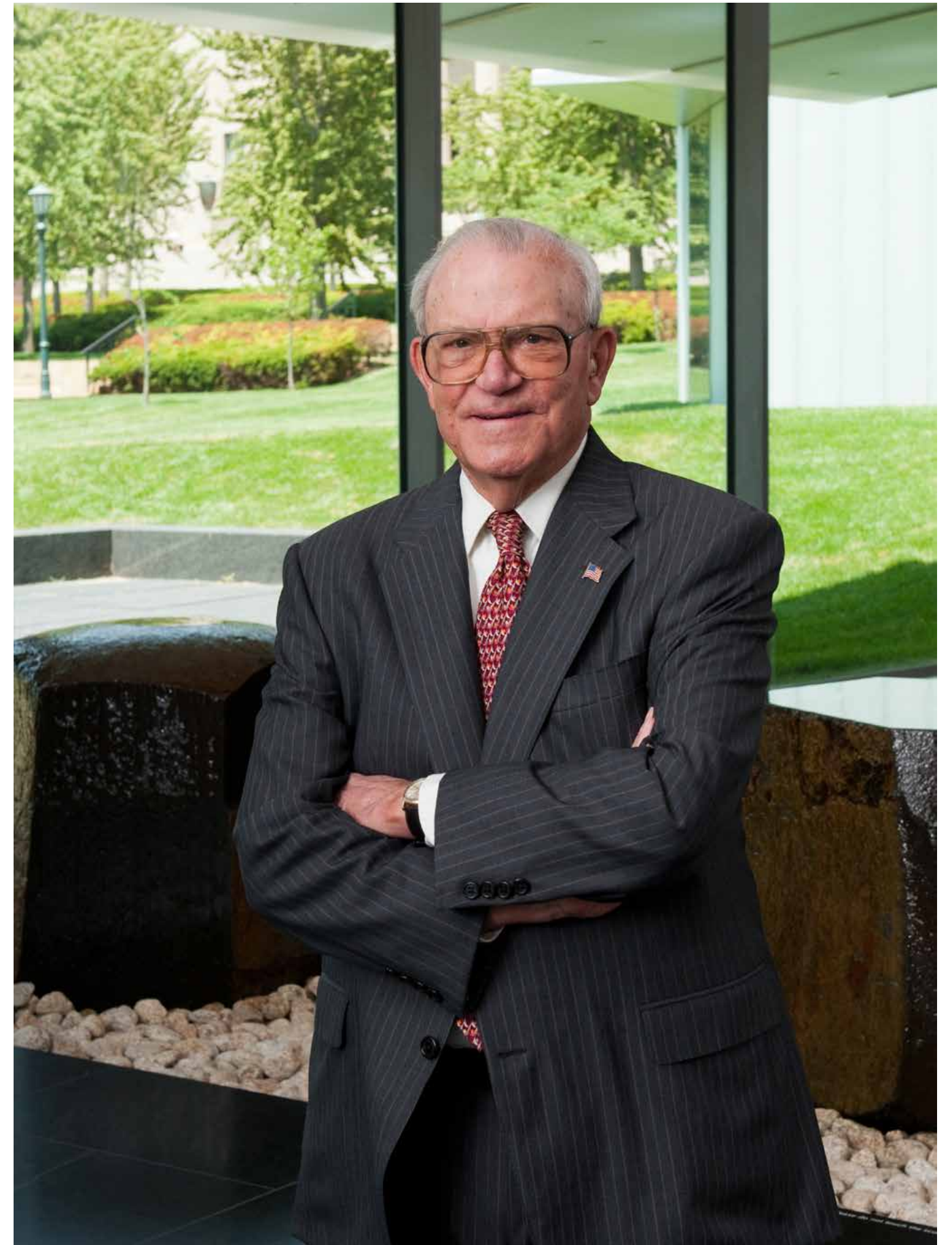
consisted of more than 6,500 works by 900 artists by the time it entered the Nelson-Atkins collection in 2005. This significant acquisition immediately distinguished the museum as one of the premier museums for photography in the world.

The Halls were also passionate collectors of African art, and regularly loaned objects to the museum from their cherished collection. In 2010, Don and Adele gifted seven extraordinary works of African art to the Nelson-Atkins in celebration of the museum's 75th anniversary.

Hall's contributions, both personal and professional, will continue to inspire future generations of museumgoers and Kansas Citians.



Above: Donald J. and Adele Hall in their home; Right: Hall among the sculptures in Noguchi Court



Financials

A Letter from the CFO

Thanks to the support and contributions from friends like you, I am happy to share the results of another extraordinary year at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. The balanced operational budget for the museum’s fiscal year ending April 30, 2025 was \$36.5 million.

The year produced standout fundraising, a record for membership contributions, and continued growth in earned revenues, buoyed by museum store sales during *Hokusai*, and event rentals. These stellar ongoing efforts, combined with the community’s excitement for the museum’s international architectural competition, led the museum to end the year with balanced operation actuals of \$39.5 million.

A debt of gratitude is owed to our volunteer leaders in the Finance, Investment, and Audit Committees. These committees provide critical financial oversight and advice throughout the year. This leadership is key to the museum’s sustainability. The Finance Committee reviews budgets and monitors operational results throughout the year. The Investment Committee is responsible for the oversight of the museum’s investment performance and works closely with the investment advisory team to offer recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding investment policy, including asset allocation. The Audit Committee recommends the engagement of a firm for audit and tax preparation services, the issuance of reviewed audit results, and filing of reviewed tax returns to the Board, for their approval. The time and expertise these individuals dedicate to the success of the museum is deeply appreciated.

Thanks to each of you for helping the Nelson-Atkins provide another year of vibrant exhibitions and engaging programming for our entire community.

All the best,

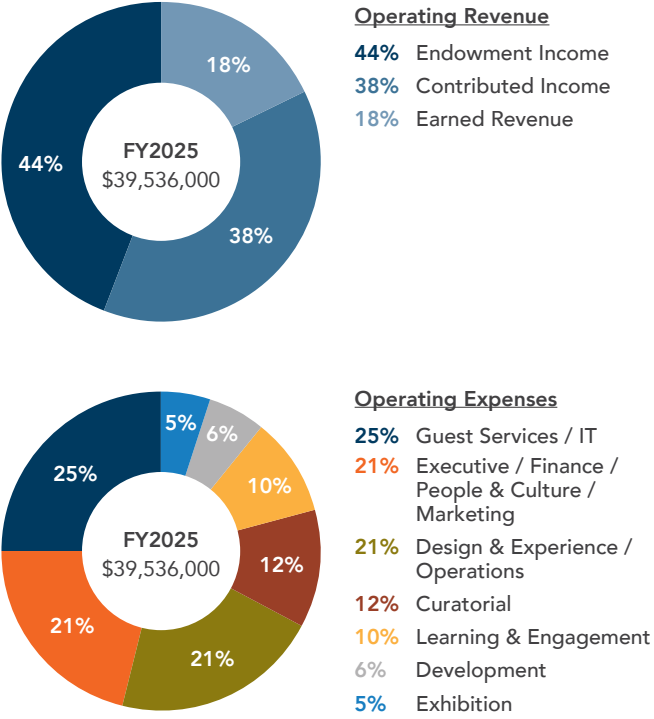


Tammy J. Bluhm, CPA
Vice President, Finance & Chief Financial Officer

2024 – 2025
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William Rockhill Nelson Society

May 1, 2024 – April 30, 2025

“One Sunday, a college friend brought me to the Nelson. The art was good, but it was so quiet. Fast forward 50 years and everything has changed. We have the Bloch Building. We celebrate different cultures with annual festivals and welcome families of every size, shape, and color. When I was deciding how I could give back to my adopted home of Kansas City in my trust, the Nelson was immediately on my list.”

Katie Allison, William Rockhill Nelson Society member

The William Rockhill Nelson Society celebrates the extraordinary donors who ensure the future of the museum through estate gifts. We are honored that they have chosen to create a legacy at the Nelson-Atkins. Thank you!

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May 1, 2024 – April 30, 2025

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“Our experience with The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art has grown and changed as my family has grown and changed. The kids started with Saturday morning art classes, and now the museum is their must-visit stop when they are back in town. It truly is a world-class experience that is both consistent and ever-changing.”

Dan Blegen, Society of Fellows member

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