Spencer Museum of Art
Strategic Plan
2017–2021
Introduction

The Spencer Museum of Art (SMA) is a university art museum dedicated to fostering creative and critical thinking; serving as a site for inclusion, dialogue, and reflection; and acting as a catalyst for inquiry and discovery. Our 2017-2021 strategic plan reflects emerging opportunities at this unique moment in our institution’s history. In 2016, we completed a major renovation of 30,000 square feet of our facility and launched a major initiative to integrate arts research throughout the University. The transformation of our facility introduced new technologies and expanded spaces for teaching, learning, and research. Within these spaces we are experimenting with deepening relationships with our communities and partners. Similarly, the establishment of the Integrated Arts Research Initiative in early 2016 builds upon our long history of leading interdisciplinary research collaborations and positions us to further reaffirm the role of university art museums in scholarship and creative endeavor.

This plan also acknowledges the need to address current priorities in the museum field and in higher education, both at The University of Kansas and more generally. In keeping with the University’s strategic goal to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, we too are amplifying our efforts to provide a welcoming space for dialogue and discovery. We foster inclusive teaching and learning experiences through our dynamic programming, digital innovations, and global art collection.

The 2017-2021 strategic plan extends from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2021. It was developed through an investigation of our internal practices, University and community partnerships, and current developments in museums and related fields. The plan was driven by a perspective of inquiry and led by a cross-departmental team, with guidance from independent consultant Marc Vogl (see appendix). They gathered valuable comments from the entire SMA staff, as well as partners and key stakeholders through interviews, surveys, and group discussions. These perspectives significantly shaped the strategic directions outlined below.

Mission
The Spencer Museum of Art sustains a culturally diverse collection of art. It encourages interdisciplinary exploration at the intersection of art, ideas, and experience. The Spencer strengthens, supports, and contributes to the academic research and teaching of The University of Kansas and is committed to serving communities of learners across Kansas and beyond.

Vision
Stimulate creative thinking and spark new ideas through transformative arts experiences

Guiding Principles
Art at our Core
- Explore art in ways that support teaching, learning, and programming and stimulate research and creative work
- Grow our collection sustainably, responsibly, and respectfully to better reflect and illuminate the fabric of our global community
- Preserve and share the works of art we steward, which are vital to the Museum and all that we do

Catalyst for Inquiry and Discovery
- Transform ways of seeing, thinking, and acting by generating and facilitating interdisciplinary collaborations and research
• Inspire and support artists at all levels, generate new creative work, and document artistic processes and works of art
• Foster individual and institutional innovation and creativity in order to produce new and expanded benefits for our communities

Site for Inclusion and Dialogue
• Amplify the capacity of art and artists to create a space for engaging audiences with critical issues and human experiences
• Employ a broad range of voices, ideas, and experiences, including both practices proven successful and methods that challenge traditional museological practices
• Create an accessible environment that promotes individual life-long learning

Strategic Directions

Activate Art
Definition: Develop and steward the Spencer Museum’s collection in order to share it with our audiences in broader ways.
• Develop a collection that embodies diversity in accordance with best practices that reflect a changing world.
• Expand information about our collection and how we share it.
• Use the collection to proactively investigate enduring questions through exhibitions, programs, and digital initiatives.

Inspire Inquiry
Definition: Encourage and support a research environment open to collaboration and innovation.
• Establish and nurture reciprocal relationships with diverse individual and institutional research collaborators.
• Build openness among museum staff to critique and adopt new ideas and methods.
• Model and advocate for interdisciplinary and artistic research/inquiry.
• Develop and utilize public platforms to broadly disseminate research and discovery.

Stimulate Engagement
Definition: Offer multifaceted opportunities for diverse community participation.
• Co-develop rich content and socially relevant programs and exhibitions.
• Expand inclusive opportunities for communities across Kansas and beyond to experience museum resources.
• Sustain the Spencer as a valued resource through innovation, responsiveness, and strategic communications.

Enhance Organizational Adaptability
Definition: Strengthen internal systems and capacity toward achieving long-term stability in response to changing landscape of museums and structure and support for the arts.
• Cultivate a positive work environment that supports individual staff members and builds cohesion by increasing opportunities for professional growth, creative intellectual work, and teambuilding.
- Develop an efficient and dynamic staffing structure and improve communication to strengthen existing initiatives and respond to emerging opportunities.
- Establish a healthy financial foundation that promotes transparency, accountability, and flexibility that acknowledges shifts in public and private support for the arts and education.
Appendix: Participants

Consultant
Marc Vogl, Vogl Consulting

SMA Strategic Planning Committee
Margaret Perkins-McGuinness, Director of External Affairs, Co-Chair
Jennifer Talbott, Director of Internal Operations, Co-Chair
Annette Becker, Assistant to the Director
Richard Klocke, Exhibition Designer
Casey Mesick, Curator of Global Indigenous Art
Saralyn Reece Hardy, Director (ex officio member?)
Celka Straughn, Director of Academic Programs
Angela Watts, Associate Collection Manager

SMA Staff
Sue Ashline, Matter/Framer
Doug Bergstrom, Exhibition Technician
Cathy Brashler, Development Communications Coordinator
Rachel Brown, Berkeley Education Intern
Dan Coester, Exhibition Technician
Emma Cormack, Rights and Reproduction Student Assistant
Emma Davison, Administrative Student Assistant
Janet Dreiling, Assistant Director for Collections
Amy Duke, Public Programs and Visitor Experience Manager
Myles Dunigan, Sloan Print Intern
Susan Earle, Associate Curator of European and American Art
Kris Ercums, Associate Curator of Global Contemporary and Asian Art
Alexis Fekete, Grant Writer
Sydney Gaylord, Berkley Multicultural Intern
Sofia Galarza Liu, Collections Manager and Database Project Co-Manager
Michael Ann German, Internal Operations Administrative Assistant
Alex Gilmore, Legal Extern
Steve Goddard, Associate Director and Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings
Robert Hickerson, Information and Image Manager
Will Hopkins, Web Programmer/Designer
Lauren Johnson, Mellon/Loo Global Indigenous Art Intern
Elizabeth Kanost, Communications Manager
Sam Lyons, Mellon/Loo European and American Art Intern
Amanda Martin-Hamon, Associate Director of Community Engagement
Jeffrey McKee, Graphic Designer
Laura Minton, Mellon Academic Programs Intern
Megan Murphy, Digital Imaging Student Assistant
Julia Reynolds, Public Programs and Visitor Experience Student Assistant
Kayle Reiger, Tours and Education Intern
Shannon Sweeney, Collections Intern
Ryan Waggoner, Photographer/Videographer
Kristina Walker, Director of Education
Rose Wolf, Archive Student Assistant  
Weitian Yan, Carpenter Asian Art Intern  
Claire Zimmerman, Graphic Design Intern

**SMA Advisory Groups**  
Linda Bailey, National Advisory Board  
Diane Horning, Friends of the Art Museum Board  
Mike Michaelis, National Advisory Board  
John Pierce, Friends of the Art Museum Board  
Reggie Robinson, Friends of the Art Museum Board  
Pam Sullivan, Friends of the Art Museum Board

**Lawrence Academic Community**  
Cody Charles, KU Office of Multicultural Affairs  
Sarah Crawford-Parker, KU Office of First Year Experience  
Anne Dotter, KU Honors Program  
Joshua Falleaf, Haskell Indian Nations University  
Mary Lee Hummert, KU Vice Provost for Faculty Development  
Jennifer Humphrey, KU Natural History Museum/Biodiversity Institute  
Mary Anne Jordan, KU Department of Visual Art  
Emily Ryan, KU Commons  
Anthea Scouffas, KU Lied Center of Kansas  
Sally Utech, KU Hall Center for the Humanities  
Doug Ward, KU Center for Teaching Excellence

**Lawrence Creative Community**  
Jason Barr  
Diane Guthrie  
Amber Hansen  
Rick Mitchell  
Meredith Moore
Appendix: Bibliography


