

**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, Berkeley 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**

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