

North Carolina Museum of Art
and Board of Trustees

2025 Biennial Report

Introduction

In accordance with General Statute 140-5.14(10), the Board of Trustees of the North Carolina Museum of Art is pleased to submit this 2023-2024 Report. We offer this report as a governing body of the Museum, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

Facilities, Visitors, and Program

The North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) remains one of North Carolina's top-ten visitor attractions and has advanced and continues to maintain and expand its role as a leading state and regional arts institution with national and international acclaim. As the first major public art museum collection in the nation to be formed by state legislation and funding, the NCMA has grown its holdings from 139 paintings and sculptures to 4,412 works of art. The Museum includes the Ann and Jim Goodnight Museum Park in Raleigh, which houses 34 outdoor sculptures and a Welcome Center, and NCMA Winston-Salem (NCMA WS), formerly the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) and an exhibition and programmatic space. The NCMA consistently ensures the preservation and safekeeping of the People's Collection, and the NCMA and NCMA WS provide educational tours on site and virtually; lead educational classes, workshops, lectures, publications, and online resources; host public exhibitions and concerts; and showcase the work of North Carolina artists.

In Fall 2022 and thanks to the legislature's generous capital appropriation, the NCMA began partnering with architects HH Architecture and Eskew Dumez Ripple and landscape architect Design Workshop in the design of four capital projects: the renovation of the Joseph M. Bryan Jr. Theater in the Museum Park, the creation of a multigenerational art and education space within the Museum's East Building, the creation of an outdoor plaza and Museum entrance that connects the galleries to the Park, and the construction of the new conservation studio, which will make conservation visible to the visiting public. In October 2024, we were awarded an additional \$1.85 million in SCIF funding to support this project. We are currently awaiting approval of the construction documents and have hired Consigli Construction for pre-construction services. The legislature graciously appropriated additional R&R funds to address concerns about NCMA's West Building entrance; this project is underway.

In Summer 2024, the NCMA WS received a generous capital appropriation and began partnering with

Szostak Design and Stitch Design Shop to plan major repairs and renovations to the galleries, Hanes House, and grounds. These plans include replacing the exterior siding of the galleries, installing new alarm and sprinkler systems, updating the gallery spaces, increasing accessibility across the site, renovating the existing Hanes House kitchen, installing an elevator, and designing residences and studio spaces for artists. These improvements will enhance the Museum's ability to showcase world class art and offer innovative educational programs. These projects are currently in the schematic design phase, and we will soon engage the Christman Company to assist with pre-construction services.

In 2023, the Museum welcomed 1,018,887 visitors to its campus, and in 2024, the Museum proudly welcomed 1,046,557 visitors to its campus. At NCMA WS, we welcomed 20,340 visitors in 2023 and 26,572 in 2024. Typically, visitors enjoy a wide array of exhibitions and arts programming, and in 2023 and 2024, these included *Dutch Art in a Global Age: Masterpieces from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* and *To Take Shape and Meaning: Form and Design in Contemporary American Indian Art*, which included work by 75 indigenous artists from North America, in Raleigh as well as *Kukuli Velarde: CORPUS* and *David Gilbert: Flutter* in Winston-Salem among others. The Museum continues to educate and engage over 100 touring docents, and the docent body led a combined 639 tours in FY23 and FY24 with a total of 13,649 participants. Additionally, 14,933 students participated in virtual field trips over the two years, and the NCMA's virtual field trip program continues to be a national standard among art museums, enabling us to serve students across North Carolina, as does NCMA Learn, our digital resource for learners, which continues to serve all 100 counties and had 303,000 unique users in this time period. The Museum also continues to offer programming in the 164-acre Ann and Jim Goodnight Museum Park. In Summers 2023 and 2024, the Museum's highly successful summer concert and movie series returned to the stage and included dance, featuring partnerships with both American Dance Festival and Carolina Ballet, as well as a partnership with the NC Opera. During a regular season, outdoor programming continues to attract large audiences, and over the two summers, the Museum proudly hosted a wide range of performers from North Carolina's very own Connells and Watchhouse to Grammy-Award winning performers, including Serena Joy and Wynton Marsalis.

In the past two years, the Museum has added 81 works of art by North Carolinian, American, and international artists. The European painting collection expanded with the significant gift of five major 19th-century and early 20th-century paintings, including the first painting by Pablo Picasso to enter the

collection, along with works by Maurice de Vlaminck, Alfred Sisley, Emil Nolde, and Kees van Dongen. Important additions to the European collection also include 19th century French paintings by Louise Faulque and Edouard Pingret. Works added to the American collection include a significant gift of major paintings by Andrew Wyeth and Childe Hassam; a pottery jar by 19th century potter, Dave (David Drake); a 19th-century painting by Lilly Martin Spencer; and two 20th century quilts by Estelle Witherspoon and Leola Pettway. Works by mid-20th century female artists were also added to the collection, including a painting by Irene Rice Pereira and works on paper by Ruth Asawa and a sculpture by Gwendolyn Knight, both of whom studied at Black Mountain College. Contemporary sculptures, paintings, and mixed media works by Willie Cole, Tony Oursler, Rodney McMillian, John Paul Morabito, Basil Kincaid, Rashid Johnson, and April Bey were also added to the collection. Acquisitions of works by North Carolina artists include mixed-media works by Stacy Lynn Waddell, Lakea Shepard, and Elliott Hundley; paintings by Ernie Barnes and Anne Wall Thomas, two photographs by Kennedi Carter, and a sculpture by artist Stephen Hayes. The collection of contemporary American Indian art continues to grow with four glass sculptures by Preston Singletary; a ceramic sculpture by Virgil Ortiz; a bronze sculpture by Joanna Underwood Blackburn; a mixed-media work by Steven Paul Judd; and a ceramic sculpture by Rose B. Simpson. The African art collection expanded with a contemporary masquerade costume by Chief Ekpenyong Bassey Nsa, a gift of a ceramic sculpture by renowned contemporary artist, Magdalene Odundo, along with the first phase of a major gift of African works from a private collector starting with 13 objects by Yoruba and Zulu artists. The Museum also continued to build its nationally recognized Judaic collection with a contemporary commission of a Miriam's Cup by Amy Reichert, along with a 19th-century Algerian Torah Crown, two 18th century textiles, a Torah Ark Curtain and a Torah Mantle; Hanukkah Lamps by Zelig Segal and David Palombo. New works of art installed in the Museum Park include transformative gifts from private donors of an interactive artwork by Daily Tous Les Jours, *Musical Swings* and musical benches, and two monumental cast concrete figurative sculptures by artist Rose B. Simpson.

Staff and Volunteers

At the heart of the Museum is a talented staff of curators, conservators, educators, programmers, designers, horticulturists, visitor experience staff, and more. Many staff members have made a career serving the people of North Carolina, caring for and cultivating its most valuable collection while simultaneously enhancing public education across North Carolina, creating a gathering space for artists and community members, and developing the largest free Museum-based art park in the United

States. In Summer 2023, the NCMA welcomed its first Curator of Judaic Art Sean Burrus, who also leads the Museum's Jewish Art and Culture Initiative.

The Museum reported 1,470 hours of service in 2023 and 2,827 hours in 2024. Our committed volunteers now number over 100 individuals, and this dedicated core team continues to maintain its enthusiasm for the Museum's mission. We have continued to expand our mission across North Carolina by establishing new connections with local organizations, including non-profits, universities, corporate groups, and other professional networks. Our bi-annual community service projects in the spring and fall were successful in providing opportunities for passionate volunteers to support and maintain ongoing preservation projects in the Museum Park; for example, annual spring and fall volunteer events in the Museum Park host as many as 60 participants who work with staff to plant over 2,000 native plants throughout Park spaces. From the galleries to the Park and trails, volunteers typically provide the services of wayfinding throughout our campus and during concerts in the amphitheater; support educational programming and summer camp initiatives; work alongside staff to maintain the 164-acre property; and provide hospitality and campus guidance in the Welcome Center. We remain extremely grateful to our volunteer corps for their ongoing and vital support of the Museum and its mission.

At the heart of this volunteer effort are the members of our own Board of Trustees and the NCMA Foundation Board of Directors. These individuals devote significant time and expertise to numerous NCMA and NCMA WS projects and partner with the Director and Advancement team to raise substantial funds for Museum initiatives, including community-based programming, traveling exhibitions, and art acquisitions.

Recent Initiatives and Coming Attractions

Since her arrival to the NCMA in November 2018, Dr. Hillings has celebrated the Museum's mission to serve all North Carolinians; one of her first initiatives was the crafting of a 2020-2025 Strategic Plan that focuses on four key goal areas: collections and exhibitions, education and outreach, the Museum campuses, and operational excellence and sustainability.

A signature component of this strategic plan was the reimagining of the People's Collection in 2022 in conjunction with the 75th anniversary of the state legislative appropriation of \$1 million dollars to purchase this collection. This reimagining was articulated in detail in our last report and continues to maintain dynamic rotations of the People's Collection; 25% more of the collection on view; and rotating thematic galleries, digital, and educational components that enhance visitor engagement. The Museum looks forward to sharing the People's Collection with more NC citizens upon the completion of capital projects at NCMA WS.

In accordance with the 2020-2025 strategic plan, the Museum has focused on statewide outreach and the actionable fulfillment of our mission to share the people's art collection and inspire creativity by connecting our diverse communities to cultural and natural resources. In celebration of the creative process and the potential for human connection that exposure to the arts creates, the outreach programs of the NCMA strive to distribute resources and programs to citizens across North Carolina. The Museum's Artist Innovation Mentorship Program (AIM) pairs local artists and middle-school students in communities across NC with the goals of exposing them to the creative arts, sharing innovative thinking strategies through art-making, and strengthening creative economies especially in rural towns and under-resourced areas. Since its inception in 2021, AIM has grown from 20 to 80 annual residencies and 13 to 30 counties served annually in 2024. Building upon the AIM model, the Museum has implemented additional outreach programs, such as Art Kits On the Go, a program that designs dual-language, art inspired kits that have already served over 35,000 students in 33 NC counties; Creative Impressions, an outreach program in collaboration with partners such as Dementia NC, Alzheimer's Alliance, and various state councils on aging, designed to serve those affected by dementia and memory loss and their care partners; and the Portable Gallery program based at NCMA WS, which enables students across the region to experience regional contemporary artists and art in their own schools and community centers.

The Museum was also grateful to receive legislative funding for the development of the new digital educational tool NCMA Explore. The tool engages middle-school students through the People's Collection and their curriculum standards, inviting them into a gamified augmented reality that allows them to explore the historical settings of objects while also learning about the objects from curators and other experts. At the 2024 Southeastern Museum Conference, NCMA Explore received Gold in the digital technology category; the Museum has long and continues to lead in digital learning. These outreach

programs and others continue to expand to schools and communities.

Alongside outreach, the Museum continues to provide multigenerational audiences with exhibitions, lectures, classes, and events that reflect the citizens of North Carolina and engage participants on the Museum's campuses, virtually, and in communities across the state. In Raleigh, we remain proud to offer everything from What's in the Box for preschool age children to College Conversations for our college students to a wide array of studio, lecture, music programs, and more that engage non-student audiences. As part of our 2020-2025 strategic plan, we continue to spotlight North Carolina artists; in the last two years, we have partnered with artists and artisans in local communities to support outreach programming; celebrated North Carolina musicians, dancers, and actors, including K-post-secondary students in these categories; integrated more NC artists in our retail model with 143 unique artists represented there in FY24 alone; and commissioned artists like Martha Clippinger to create commissions and activate objects in our galleries. We continue to draw upon both internal creativity and external collaborators and share a few additional highlights here: In FY23, we provided 30 professional development opportunities to 1,076 teachers; hosted 14 concerts for 21,160 guests; and provided 3,744 hours of arts enrichment to 208 youth in rural counties. In FY24, 17,286 students attended 238 virtual field trips; 155,000 learners of all ages engaged with content on NCMA Learn, our instructional website; and 3,062 visitors participated in Park tours and programs.

At NCMA Winston-Salem, the past two years have seen important growth in community outreach, educational programming, and cultural events. The Museum instituted its Portable Gallery program, enabling students across the region to experience contemporary art in their own schools and community centers. Additionally, it secured \$150,000 in ARPA funds through Forsyth County and employed them to build a new Art in the Parks program, offer art courses in community centers, and contract artists to create public murals across the city. On campus, the Museum united its evening education programs under the Nite School header. Nite School includes monthly book discussions, music appreciation sessions, and artist conversations. The Museum now offers tuition-based seminars on art and culture led by working artists and scholars. Regular educational programming, such as Second Saturday Family Days and artist-led workshops continued, as well. On the entertainment front, the Museum added three new music series to its programming: Night Moods (electronic music), Lakeside (emerging artists), and Southern Idiom (NC-based artists).

Growth in the Ann and Jim Goodnight Museum Park has been significant since its 2016 expansion and is currently guided by the Museum Park Vision Plan completed in 2021. For the last two years, the Museum has been in stream restoration design and is preparing to break ground on Phase 1, the restoration of the Unnamed Tributary, in February 2025. In addition to sustainability efforts, enhancing Park visitorship through our Art in the Environment initiative continues; the Art in the Environment fund invests in outdoor sculpture, providing engaging, accessible, and meaningful experiences for the people of North Carolina as well as visitors to our state. New works of art installed in the Museum Park include transformative gifts from private donors of a pair of interactive, musical artworks by Daily Taus Les Jours and two monumental cast concrete figurative sculptures by artist Rose B. Simpson.

We are excited to offer visitors opportunities to engage with both nature and art in the Museum Park and are thrilled to share that we launched the NCMA Park App in December 2022, creating a hand-held opportunity for visitors to learn more about art, nature, and the Museum's campus. In Fall 2023, the All-Access Eco Trail opened in the Museum Park. The All-Access Eco Trail was designed using integrated access to enhance visitors' experience of the Park's native plants, wildlife, and habitats. Each sign stop along the trail features audio described stories through the NCMA Park App about the Park's natural features and sensory exploration prompts paired to each sign. This new educational experience in the Museum Park contains 14 interpretive signs. Each sign includes large print, braille, and tactile images.

Looking ahead, the NCMA is excited to host *The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure*, previously on view at the National Portrait Gallery in London and at the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the exhibition will be on view in Raleigh March to June 2025. The Museum also celebrates its many staff artists this year in *Internal Review* on view at NCMA WS February to May 2025. In Fall 2025, the Museum will open *The Book of Esther in the Age of Rembrandt* and will take this opportunity to make meaningful connections to its own Judaic Gallery and Judaic Arts and Culture Initiative.

Needs and Concerns

Urgent Needs

The NCMA has a series of repair and renovation needs to address in its West Building, including repairs to its six sets of entry doors, which become inoperable on a regular basis and are preventing Museum visitors from experiencing art in the West Building as it was intended. West Building lighting systems

need to be updated to achieve its current goals: artwork conservation, operations & ease of use, granularity and flexibility based on the findings of the West Building Gallery Lighting Assessment Feasibility report completed in 2024. We are also working on a number of projects to ensure both NCMA and NCMA WS campus buildings and parks are accessible. These projects include an accessible pedestrian bridge at NCMA, interior upfit projects in the East building at NCMA, and the NCMA WS auditorium, which was built in 1991 and requires renovations to meet ADA requirements and to facilitate production quality that meets the standards and expectations of Triad residents.

The NCMA Park Operations building in Raleigh is also in critical condition and needs to be replaced. To maximize functional use of this operational building, the Museum would also like to include a flexible educational component in the form of an Environmental Center. The new operations facility would create a connection between interior program spaces to an outdoor environment that features demonstration gardens, composting, and the natural habitats of the Museum Park for which the Museum received recognition in 2024 from the Sir Walter Raleigh Award committee. As the Blue Ridge Corridor continues to grow and increase in its occupancy, it is essential that the Raleigh campus be prepared to support and sustain higher human traffic flow and to meet visitors' wide-ranging needs.

The NCMA WS workroom is in disrepair and requires the removal of hazardous materials, restroom updates, proper sealing of the old carriage doors, new exhaust, concrete work, brick repainting and weather proofing. This workroom is the heart of exhibition design and art handling for NCMA WS, and in its current condition it is a danger to both art and staff. To streamline design and for construction cost savings, additional projects have been added to the NCMA WS \$15 million dollar appropriation scope of work. Because of this there is a critical need for more funds to ensure that all the needs are met in this scope of work.

Finally, the stream and pond at NCMA WS need restoration. The most immediate need is restoration of approximately 345 linear feet of the Unnamed Tributary to Silas Creek, the pond (approximately 2.6 acres) and additional shoreline work is estimated at .9 acres. Both onsite and offsite urban runoff contributes to the poor water quality conditions of the stream and pond. As the pond, now 100 years old, was not built with stormwater in mind, its present condition provides limited habitat and little stormwater treatment. NCMA WS has received a Land & Water grant to assist with paying for the

design of this phase of the stream restoration. A dam stabilization project has been underway for two years, and additional funds are needed for the critical, life-safety repairs required to ensure the campus does not prove a danger to the two newly-built nearby neighborhoods.

Other Important Needs

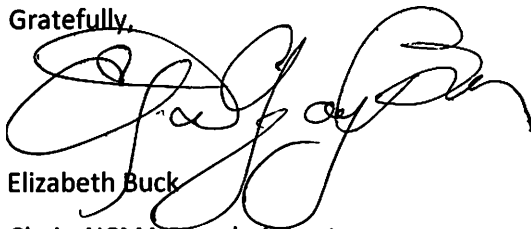
The NCMA's East Building windows, lighting, and electrical infrastructure need to be updated to meet current environmental, energy-efficient standards and to meet our collection and programmatic needs, particularly in the realm of multimedia objects and performing arts.

Conclusion

The Board of Trustees has been partnering with Dr. Hillings, the NCMA staff, the NCMA Foundation Board of Directors, and the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to identify and prioritize the Museum's needs. We respectfully ask the General Assembly to work with us immediately to meet the urgent needs of the North Carolina Museum of Art and NCMA WS, two of North Carolina's major attractions and educational and historical treasures.

This report is respectfully submitted on this day, January 28, 2025, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the North Carolina Museum of Art.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Buck', written over a horizontal line.

Elizabeth Buck

Chair, NCMA Board of Trustees