

Knoxville Museum of Art
FY 2018-2020 Strategic Plan

Approved by KMA Board of Trustees April 24, 2017

The Knoxville Museum of Art has achieved considerable success over the past decade. During this time, the organization has refined and focused its mission, attracted increasing numbers of visitors, and stabilized its financial position. The May 2014 opening of Richard Jolley's *Cycle of Life* marked the completion of the comprehensive restoration and improvement of the landmark Clayton Building, and represented the culmination of years of planning, fundraising, and hard work. The renewal and upgrading of the museum's physical space, so crucial to the visitor experience, has bolstered and strengthened the KMA's sense of identity and purpose.

The KMA's collecting direction and its exhibitions and related programs have cemented its role as the preeminent home of the rich and distinctive visual culture of our region. The developing Beauford Delaney Project, which aims to reintroduce Knoxville to one of its most accomplished native sons, is a shining example of the power inherent in focusing on homegrown artists and their connections to national and international cultural developments. With free admission and an active and growing schedule of education and outreach programs, the KMA has worked hard to dispel the myth that the art museum exists for and serves only the elite. We have worked hard to make the museum experience available and welcoming to everyone. The museum's progress to that end is seen in attendance figures 20% and more above the five-year average as well as increased fundraising success.

As we enjoy the accomplishments of this period of growth and financial stability, we have a renewed opportunity to dream and plan for the next phase of life for the KMA. During the fall of 2016 we asked staff, trustees, and volunteers to imagine the best possible future for the museum, and they responded with enthusiasm and thoughtful feedback. In the course of this process of self-examination, we learned some key truths that are intertwined with and helped generate the strategic goals outlined below.

First, there is power in making personal and authentic connections. The KMA can and should weave a rich tapestry of storytelling into its work. Bringing art and artists to life with rich narratives creates the special bonds that enliven the museum experience and engage audiences. A scholar at Seton Hall University recently described "storytelling" in the context of art museums as "a method of communicating the qualities and attributes of art through a story. It helps the visitor bring the work of art to life and understand something the eye cannot see, a compelling narrative. It is important for visitors to discuss art and share stories on tours and through virtual media. We learn and form our own meanings from stories. These interactions will help build more relationships within communities. It is the museum's job to take visitors on a journey and introduce them to new objects and perspectives." (1)

Second, we recognize the need for additional revenue. We have identified the need to grow incrementally our annual operating budget, which can be achieved through a combination of fundraising efforts, board engagement, and an exploration of new revenue sources. This growth will allow us to expand the visitor experience while also reaching out to a broader audience base, protect the works in our care, properly maintain the physical plant, and ensure that the museum is able to attract and retain the most qualified professional staff.

Third, and perhaps most important, we must continue and intensify our commitment to inclusion and diversity in all that we do. The KMA strives to be a valued member of our community in addition to fulfilling our mission of artistic excellence. In this way, we can tell the stories of our rich heritage, connect with new audiences, and become further incorporated into the Knoxville experience for everyone who lives in and/or visits Knoxville and the region.

(1) Trinkoff, Hayley P., "Storytelling in Art Museums" (2015). Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses (ETDs). Paper 2083.

Following is a summary of the six broad strategic goals that emerged from months of institutional self-examination and have been reviewed and approved by the KMA Board of Trustees. In the pages that follow, each of these goals is supported by more specific strategies distilled from our conversations last fall, while each strategy is in turn supported by the detailed action steps—a “to do” list for the next three years--developed by staff and stakeholders to further the museum’s strategic goals.

**Knoxville Museum of Art
Strategic Goals FY 2018-2020: Summary**

In order to ensure the best possible future for the museum, the Knoxville Museum of Art will:

- 1. engage diverse audiences in the legacy of East Tennessee’s rich visual culture by acquiring, conserving, exhibiting, and interpreting outstanding works of significance to our mission.**
- 2. concentrate educational efforts on opportunities to build emotional and knowledge-based affinity for the KMA and its collection by highlighting the legacy and voices of the artists and works that we represent.**
- 3. maintain the KMA building and its property in ways that best steward its assets while also considering the needs and interests of a diverse visitor base.**
- 4. focus the KMA’s marketing on a compelling message and strong visual elements that reach a diverse audience.**
- 5. expand our relationship-building approach to fundraising with a focus on acquiring and retaining a strong donor base through the strategic use of staff and board resources.**
- 6. recruit and retain an active, engaged, and diverse staff, volunteers, and board of trustees dedicated to the fulfillment of the museum’s mission.**

Goal / Strategy	Action(s)	Responsibility	Timing	Annual Ongoing Expense	One-time Expense	Benchmark(s)/ Notes
Goal 1:	Engage diverse audiences in the legacy of East Tennessee's rich visual culture by acquiring, conserving, exhibiting, and interpreting outstanding works of significance to our mission.					
A. Expand efforts to identify and acquire works of significance to the KMA, and connect with supportive donors and collectors locally and nationally who share our vision and interests.	Establish an art acquisition fund to supplement annual acquisition contribution of the KMA Collectors Circle.	Administration	FY 2020			
	Alert key dealers and auction houses around the country to KMA acquisition priorities.	Curatorial	Ongoing			
	Establish a national advisory/support group of collectors, dealers, and KMA friends to gather in Knoxville annually to learn about the KMA collection and its development.	Administration	FY 2019	\$2,500		
B. Invest in the conservation and documentation of works that reflect our unique understanding of the visual legacy of East Tennessee.	Increase designated conservation funds in the annual operating budget and complete conservation treatments per annual priority list.	Administration	FY 2019	\$10,000		
	Purchase additional art storage equipment (flat files, screens, shelving).	Curatorial	Ongoing		\$5,000	
	Hire a part-time registration assistant to help manage collection records and provide other administrative support.	Curatorial	FY 2019	\$20,000		
	Deaccession and sell works outside the scope of the KMA collection focus per procedures detailed in collections policy.	Curatorial	Ongoing			
C. Build the visitor and community experience and increase the storytelling potential of KMA exhibitions.	Establish an interpretation working group representing curatorial, education, and marketing to review and evaluate interpretive/promotional strategies for permanent and temporary exhibitions.	Administration	FY 2018			
	Add images and information to the collection database and explore options for making appropriate portions of the database available online.	Curatorial	Ongoing			
	Make available on the KMA website and accessible via cellphone all exhibition-related interpretive material (labels, text panels, other printed material, videos of gallery talks and lectures, etc.).	Education	Ongoing			

Goal / Strategy	Action(s)	Responsibility	Timing	Annual Ongoing Expense	One-time Expense	Benchmark(s)/ Notes
	Develop timeline and budget for publication of collection highlights catalogue.	Curatorial	FY 2018			
	Publish collection highlights catalogue.	Curatorial	FY 2020		\$25,000	
Goal 2:	Concentrate educational efforts on opportunities to build emotional and knowledge-based affinity for the KMA and its collection by highlighting the legacy and voices of the artists and works that we represent.					
A. Connect our educational messaging with a strong emphasis on storytelling and shared experiences, crafting story-based interpretive strategies and using technology and non-traditional tools to reach audiences who are diverse in age, ethnicity, and background.	Complete the “Beta” version of smartphone app currently in development and continue to expand available content.	Education	FY 2018			
	Make all interpretive content available online and, when possible, accessible via smartphone.	Education	FY 2019			
	Develop docent training course(s) that emphasize storytelling as a key strategy for teaching and talking about art.	Education	FY 2018			
	Translate selected interpretive content into Spanish, including printed gallery interpretive material, self-directed Family Guides, and smartphone app.	Education	FY 2019			
	Develop hands-on/tactile/interactive gallery activities aimed at family interaction that communicate the stories told by exhibitions.	Education	FY 2019			
	Develop additional opportunities (lectures, gallery talks, workshops, digital resources, publications) that provide opportunities for the general public to learn more about the museum’s stories.	Education	Ongoing			
	Provide professional customer service training for all front-line personnel, paid and volunteer, with an emphasis on making all visitors feel welcome.	Education	FY 2019		\$2,500	
B. Develop new programming around the stories generated by the art and life of Beauford Delaney and his international impact.	Organize <i>Gathering Light: Works by Beauford Delaney from the KMA Collection</i> in summer 2017.	Curatorial	FY 2019			
	Organize exhibition of Beauford Delaney works from Paris collections and related international symposium in fall 2018.	Curatorial	FY 2019		\$150,000	

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	Make the acquisition of works by Beauford Delaney the museum's highest collecting priority.	Curatorial	Ongoing			
	Develop and promote new Beauford Delaney content: gallery guides for children and families, K-12 teacher guides, themed gallery tours, video and other content for website, ART2GO travel case, and Meet The Master program.	Education	FY 2019			
	Collaborate with and support the efforts of other organizations—Beck Cultural Exchange Center, East Tennessee History Center, The Links, Incorporated, etc. to promote awareness of Beauford Delaney's legacy.	Administration	Ongoing			
C. Continue to leverage the potential of academic and community partnerships to expand the museum's programmatic reach and to build educational and outreach capacity.	Build on the success of the East Tennessee Regional Student Art Exhibition by developing new activities ("drawing slam," etc.) to recognize/support exhibiting student artists.	Education	Ongoing			
	Enlist faculty and students from the University of Tennessee, Pellissippi State, and other area universities to help develop content for school and public programs.	Education	Ongoing			
	Formalize internship opportunities for area university students.	Education	FY 2019			
	Create an electronic drop-box with virtual exhibitions and other images, information, etc. for use by teachers and students.	Education	FY 2018			
	Expand collaboration with Knox County Schools, Great Schools Partnership, Parent/Teacher Organizations, and other community organizations to strengthen the museum's role in the Community Schools Program and other ventures.	Education	FY 2018			
	Increase operating budget to increase the KMA's participation in the Community Schools Program.	Administration	FY 2018		\$10,000	

Goal / Strategy	Action(s)	Responsibility	Timing	Annual Ongoing Expense	One-time Expense	Benchmark(s)/ Notes
	Expand collaboration with community health-care organizations to strengthen the museum's on- and off-site site wellness programs.	Education	Ongoing			
Goal 3:	Maintain the KMA building and its property in ways that best steward its assets while also considering the needs and interests of a diverse visitor base.					
A. Research and develop strategies to present the museum as a "lifestyle destination" by providing the types of interactions and services most appealing to the community.	Create a task force to explore non-traditional revenue opportunities related to space reallocation, such as the location of the gift shop, a potential food or beverage service location and/or gathering spaces, as well as the feasibility of a satellite exhibition/activity space.	Administration	FY 2018			
B. Address and respond to opportunities to make the exterior of the KMA a more welcoming and inclusive space, and evaluate the highest and best uses of the outdoor components of the museum's footprint, considering its current traffic patterns and use for events.	Place existing works suitable for in the collection for outdoor display in KMA gardens.	Curatorial	FY 2018			
	Acquire and place additional art outdoors.	Curatorial	Ongoing			
	Establish fund for outdoor art.	Administration	FY 2018		\$250,000	
C. Invest in the maintenance and upkeep of the Clayton Building, grounds, and mechanical systems.	Increase building maintenance cash reserve to cover unforeseen repairs.	Administration			\$150,000 (\$50,000 per year)	
Goal 4:	Focus the KMA's marketing on a compelling message and strong visual elements that reach a diverse audience.					
A. Develop, refine, and communicate the museum's stories.	Refine and streamline mission statement to better express core of the museum's stories.	Administration	FY 2018			
	Identify the story or stories we want to tell for every museum exhibition and related program.	Administration	Ongoing			
	Incorporate refurbished South Garden into overall museum interpretive strategy (native plants=East Tennessee content).	Administration	Ongoing			

Goal / Strategy	Action(s)	Responsibility	Timing	Annual Ongoing Expense	One-time Expense	Benchmark(s)/ Notes
	Disseminate the museum's stories through current communication vehicles such as Canvas, exhibition postcards, website, docent materials, traditional media, and social media.	Marketing	Ongoing			
	Find new cost-effective ways to deliver story content over multiple platforms to a variety of audiences.	Marketing	Ongoing			
B. Gather more data on community perceptions of the KMA and expectations for/obstacles to the visitor experience.	Develop mechanisms to collect visitor feedback and rate experience.	Marketing	Ongoing			
	Commission polling to determine attitudes/perceptions/expectations of people who are not visiting the KMA.	Marketing	FY 2019		\$5,000	
C. Pursue existing connections and make new connections to key audiences through partnerships with businesses, ethnically diverse media outlets, and academic institutions.	Create and promote a volunteer Speakers Bureau to visit civic organizations, nursing homes, medical facilities, etc. to tell the KMA's story.	Education	FY 2018			
	Continue working with tourism organizations (such as Visit Knoxville) to reach additional audiences and increase awareness locally and regionally.	Marketing	Ongoing			
D. Promote the "museum experience" in ways that are culturally competent and welcoming to non-traditional museum-goers.	Collect examples of what the KMA has meant to people by adding testimonials to the website.	Marketing	Ongoing			
	Find new ways to share visitor impressions and reviews on social media.	Marketing	Ongoing			
E. Invest resources in technology to provide more means to tell the museum's stories	Add a part-time technology position to work with marketing, education, and curatorial to work on technical projects and add content to website, education apps, curatorial database, etc.	Administration	FY 2020	\$20,000		
	Invest in new purpose-built museum website that is more flexible, easier to update, and adaptable to mobile devices.	Marketing	FY 2020		\$25,000	

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Goal 5:	Expand our relationship-building approach to fundraising with a focus on acquiring and retaining a strong donor base through the strategic use of staff and board resources.					
A. Expand and purposefully focus the role of board members in the fundraising and donor cultivation processes.	Report cultivation and giving activities, successes and opportunities regularly to the Board of Trustees.	Development	Ongoing			
	Engage trustees directly and frequently in donor cultivation and document their involvement.	Development	Ongoing			
B. Ensure sustainability of existing funding bases and development activities, and evaluate and streamline development efforts to ensure maximum benefit.	Create new membership brochure and webpage and implement annual membership drive to increase overall membership	Development	FY 2018			
	Implement nominal membership rate increase.	Development	FY 2018			
	Review membership tracking to ensure that data is clear and actionable.	Development	Ongoing			
	Hold annual grant funding steady, understanding that new sources must be added each year to maintain stable revenue from this source.	Development	Ongoing			
	Maintain strong execution and financial success of existing fundraising events.	Development	Ongoing			
	Maintain strong and positive relationship with auxiliary museum groups (Guild, Art House, Collectors Circle). Provide balanced and effective staff support as necessary.	Development	Ongoing			
	Implement detailed monthly stewardship plan.	Development	Ongoing			
	Invest in new software needed to upgrade donor record database and integrate it with other financial systems.	Development	FY 2019		\$20,000	
C. Engage new stakeholders to broaden base of support and thereby reduce dependence on fundraising events.	Identify significant characteristics of upcoming curatorial and educational programs to open the door for new grants and new stakeholders.	Development	FY 2019			
	Target specific corporate partners to increase donor base.	Development	Ongoing			
	Explore and offer additional sponsorship opportunities.		Ongoing			
	Develop activities to encourage planned giving and identify tactics to increase.	Development	Ongoing			

Goal / Strategy	Action(s)	Responsibility	Timing	Annual Ongoing Expense	One-time Expense	Benchmark(s)/ Notes
	Consider existing and new fundraising events carefully to ensure alliance with mission and strategic goals.	Development	Ongoing			
D. Research and implement additional strategies to expand museum, Art House, and KMA Guild membership based on the interests and preferences of potential members.	Create an incentive program to encourage existing museum members to recruit new members.	Development	Ongoing			
	Designate a task force of Guild leadership and KMA staff and trustees to make specific recommendations about the most effective ways to support the Guild's mission to raise funds for the museum and build appreciation for the visual arts.	Administration	Ongoing			
	Continue to grow Art House as a means to engage millennials and cultivate the next generation of stakeholders.	Development	Ongoing			
Goal 6:	Recruit and retain active, engaged, and diverse staff, volunteers, and Board of Trustees dedicated to the museum's values and the fulfillment of its mission.					
A. Engage all the museum's stakeholders in sharing its stories, including but not limited to our strong core of docents, volunteers, and board members.	Devote time at every board meeting to a segment of the KMA's story per curriculum developed on an annual basis.	Administration	FY 2019			
	Assist Guild and Art House leadership in developing programming that vividly and effectively communicates the museum's stories.	Administration	Ongoing			
B. Continue to make diversity (geographic, cultural, demographic, etc.) a high priority in the identification and recruitment of potential trustees.	Share recruitment results annually with Board of Trustees per the diversity factors specified in the board development matrix.	Administration	Ongoing			
C. Review staff salary level and adjust upwards if necessary to reach parity with mid-point of regional averages.	Increase staff salaries across the board to recognize merit and achieve parity with regional averages.	Administration	Ongoing	\$50,000		
	Increase annual funding for staff training, travel, and enrichment.	Administration	Ongoing	\$5,000		
	Increase institutional match for employee retirement as resources permit.	Administration	Ongoing	\$12,000		

Goal / Strategy	Action(s)	Responsibility	Timing	Annual Ongoing Expense	One-time Expense	Benchmark(s)/ Notes
D. Ensure the preservation of institutional memory and the museum’s stories by establishing a viable archive for significant documents in all media.	Transfer KMA and Dulin records to the care of the McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Libraries, housed at the East Tennessee History Center.	Administration	Ongoing			
	Annually review, organize, and transfer relevant records to the McClung Historical Collection per plan developed by the Archives Committee.	Administration	Ongoing			
F. Fully engage staff and board in monitoring and evaluating success in reaching strategic goals.	Review progress toward goals with relevant staff twice yearly.	Administration	Ongoing			
	Dedicate time at monthly board meeting twice yearly to review progress on strategic goals.	Administration	Ongoing			
			3-Year Expense Totals	\$132,000	\$630,000	