Building Momentum: A Three-Year Strategic Plan

JULY 2019 – JUNE 2022

MINNESOTA MUSEUM of AMERICAN ART
Re-imagining the way a museum presents its work and engages with the community.
To the community:

With roots dating back to the 1880s, Minnesota Museum of American Art (the M) has reinvented itself many times. Currently, the M is growing quickly, receiving positive attention, and re-imagining the way a museum presents its work and engages with the community. With this momentum, we approached strategic planning with a sense of anticipation and excitement.

We began our planning by listening. What does our community think we do well? How could we improve? What ideas are bubbling up? Our committee members met one-on-one with stakeholders who included educators, artists, donors, collaborators, and community leaders. Ideas we heard helped shape brainstorm retreats with staff and board. We followed up with surveys.

As we considered what we had heard, we realized the M’s strength is its ability to take a fully interdisciplinary approach to programming while incorporating and respecting a diversity of perspectives.

As we met over six months to articulate the M’s vision for the future, one of our concerns was how to create sustainability in a growing organization with an ambitious vision for community impact.

With this strategic plan, the M aims to offer art and the opportunity for creativity, sparking curiosity and reflection about what is hopeful, beautiful, complicated, and illuminating in our country and the world. One encounter at the M may delight you with the familiar. The next may open your mind to an entirely new point of view.

The M’s board of trustees is energized by the museum’s momentum and proud to offer this strategic plan to guide the next three years.
From 2015–19 we achieved the following outcomes to our strategic goals:

1. Develop programs that engage and are relevant to the community.
   - Mounted 14 exhibitions including critically-acclaimed *Ken Gonzales-Day: Shadowlands, American Art: It’s Complicated*, and *100 Years and Counting*.
   - Developed Arts Access programs that led to ongoing partnerships with Hmong Museum, Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, and other community organizations.
   - Launched Learning and Engagement focus in the new Josephine Adele Ford Center for Creativity.
   - Added works to the permanent collection from underrepresented and historically marginalized artists, as well as from collectors who had never given to the M before.

2. Establish a permanent home that supports the M’s programming and serves the community’s needs.
   - Secured funding for, built, and opened Phase 1 of a permanent home in the historically significant Pioneer Endicott Building in Lowertown St. Paul.
   - Welcomed more than 17,000 people in the first six months of operating in our new home, a 100% increase over any prior year since the early 2000s.
   - Named one of the “15 Most Noteworthy Museums Opening in 2018” by *Architectural Digest*.

3. Build the capacity of the organization.
   - Grew annual budget from $830,000 in FY16 to $1.7M in FY19.
   - Expanded staff from eight to 20; among the added positions were: Curator of Learning and Engagement, Registrar, Director of Advancement, Communications Manager, Visitor Services and Volunteer Manager, and Facilities Manager.
   - Rebranded with the nickname “the M” as a way to emphasize our rebirth.
MISSION

To explore American identities and experiences through art and creativity.

VISION

We believe the M, from our home in the middle of the country and in the heart of a diverse capital city, can inspire understanding of our common humanity through the power of art, artists, and community engagement.

VALUES

BOLD: We dare to respond to complex truths and envision a hopeful future.

ENGAGING: We build participation through fun and stimulating artistic experiences.

RELEVANT: We question, listen, and exchange ideas with our diverse communities.

INCLUSIVE: We strive to make the M welcoming and accessible to all.

RESPECTFUL: We seek authentic relationships and act thoughtfully and transparently with resources in our care.
EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

Adopted September 25, 2019

Minnesota Museum of American Art seeks to expansively explore American identities through art, recognizing that the lived experiences and creativity of many artists, cultures, and communities have been historically, and presently are, underrepresented by museums. In order to do this, we will directly address issues of inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility, and race in how we hire, develop exhibitions and programs, enter into relationships, create opportunities, eliminate barriers to participation, and authentically live our mission and values.

We are committed to advancing the richness of differences and the equitable inclusion of them. We recognize that this work is constant, ongoing, and will evolve over time.
GOAL 1
Realize the renaissance of the M with the completion of our expanded permanent home.
STRATEGIES

- Complete the capital campaign to fully fund the new facility.
- Advance and complete building project for new facility.
- Boost operations and systems to align with the needs of an expanded museum.
- Create a community gallery to focus on the talent and creativity in the world around us.
- Leverage the expansion to ensure that the museum is accessible and welcoming to all audiences.

SUCCESS MEASURES

- Open the expanded galleries, new offices, prep areas, and loading dock.
- Raise 100% of funds needed to complete the capital campaign.
- Establish a series of community-focused and community-led exhibitions.
- Staff appropriately to match increased facility and operational needs.
- Expand attendance to 60,000 annually.
GOAL 2

Cultivate deeper understanding of our individual and collective identities through innovative and engaging programs.
STRATEGIES

- Mount exhibitions that provoke discussion and reflection.
- Organize public programs, tours, and conversations that enliven art and its many stories for all visitors and participants.
- Employ a diverse array of artists, curators, advisory groups, and educators to expand perspectives in program planning and implementation.
- Inspire creativity through artmaking and art-learning opportunities in the Ford Center for Creativity.
- Leverage the power of our collection through increased visibility and a dedication to art that represents the diversity and increasingly transnational identity of Minnesotan and American artists.

SUCCESS MEASURES

- Manage an increasingly complex rhythm of exhibitions, curated in house and outsourced, featuring the permanent collection, loaned work, and traveling exhibition opportunities.
- Grow class participation by 20% every year.
- Plan 25% of programs by consulting individuals representing diverse perspectives and voices.
- Create a policy that strategically grows the collection to align with our values.
- Ensure that 50% of the collection’s growth focuses on traditionally marginalized and underrepresented artists in American art collections.
- Develop and sustain relationships and programming partners in greater Minnesota.

Opposite: Photograph Ryan Stopera
GOAL 3
Authentically engage our community through deliberate, inclusive, and sustained relationships.
STRATEGIES

- Support and engage artists at all stages of their careers.
- Serve as a creative platform for community-led convenings organized with strategic partners.
- Expand community engagement by meeting people where they are.
- Embrace and further cultural competency through internal anti-racism work in tandem with courageous engagements with community groups, individuals, and initiatives.
- Build a loyal and diverse audience that feels welcome and included and can help grow the M.

SUCCESS MEASURES

- Develop an interpretive plan that guides the M in how we communicate, in an accessible and equitable manner, our artistic programming.
- Be a desirable and equitable community partner.
- Build sustained relationships with key community organizations.
- Maintain progressive and sustained work on anti-racism and intercultural competency for staff and board.
GOAL 4
Balance growth with human and financial capacity while adhering to operational best practices.
STRATEGIES

■ Assemble a task force to recommend models for realistic financial sustainability.

■ Advance development strategies by diversifying income sources and expanding contributed income.

■ Strengthen our governance and board practices as the M transitions from growth to mature organizational stage.

■ Improve infrastructure and systems to keep pace with expanding operations.

■ Demonstrate best practices with a focus on transparency, trust, inclusivity, learning, and a positive staff environment adhering to priorities that lead to excellence in our community programming.

SUCCESS MEASURES

■ Establish a defined operating budget with a clear path to sustainability.

■ Launch endowment campaign.

■ Staff and board are more diverse and inclusive.

■ Staff receives pay and benefits commensurate with industry-standard salary and benefits surveys.

■ Complete American Alliance of Museums reaccreditation process.
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Brenda Child, Northrop Professor and Chair, Department of American Studies, University of Minnesota

Christine Durand, Director of Advancement, Minnesota Museum of American Art

Hawona Sullivan Janzen, Gallery Curator and Special Projects Coordinator, Urban Research and Outreach Engagement Center (UROC), University of Minnesota

Kristin Makholm, Executive Director, Minnesota Museum of American Art

Paul Mellblom, AIA, LEED, AP, Principal and Architect, MSR Design

Ann Ruhr Pifer, Executive Director, Adopt-a-Classroom

Diane Pozdolski, Former Vice President, Compensation Benefits and HRIS, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota

Rosa Smith, Visitor Services and Volunteers Manager, Minnesota Museum of American Art

This strategic plan was facilitated by Jocelyn Hale, MillerHale Associates.
Mary Shaffer, Woll Box ’96, 1996, glass and bronze in a laminated wood wall box, 29 x 29 x 7 inches
Gift of Mary and Bob Mersky, 2017