THE M: A MUSEUM OF CHANGE

It’s a new day at the M

The Minnesota Museum of American Art (the M) is a museum of change, energy, challenge, and excitement. When you encounter the M in person, virtually, or simply in conversation, you see new perspectives and are invited to wonder how museums can shift their roles in communities.

In its 127-year history, the M has changed a lot. What was once a school, a gallery, a small space, a big space, and a new idea, is now the M. While seasons of change can be challenging, the M is coming into focus and finding out what’s possible.

The M knows that communities in St. Paul, the Twin Cities, and Minnesota deserve a museum that reflects the identities and lives of those who live here. That’s why exhibitions like Outer Experiences: Black Life in Rural and Suburban Minnesota and Many Waters: A Minnesota Biennial were met with excitement and connection. When people see themselves and their stories in art and artists, it creates a sense of belonging and care. By intentionally adding to the permanent collection, the M continuously stitches art and programming together, reflecting who we are and who we are becoming.

This year of change ended with excitement and optimism. The appointment of local changemaker Dr. Kate Beane as the M’s Executive Director has ushered in a new era. Dr. Beane (Flandreau Santee Sioux Dakota and Muskogee Creek) holds a B.A. in American Indian Studies and a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Previously the director of Native American Initiatives at Minnesota Historical Society, Dr. Beane is keenly capable of connecting communities through dialogue, inspiration, and deep engagement.
“I envision the M as a place where everyone feels welcome, where everyone recognizes themselves as part of a shared story that is explored through art.” Dr. Beane embodies an optimism characteristic of the M’s vision that, from its perch in the middle of the country and at the heart of a diverse city, we can inspire understanding and our common humanity through the power of art, artists, and community.

It’s a new day at the M. In the midst of substantive, deep-rooted, and positive change, the M continues to value both art and artists. With Dr. Beane at the helm as the M’s tenth Executive Director, the future of a new and bold museum is ever-brighter. Join us!

Join Dr. Kate Beane in conversation with Curator of Exhibitions Dr. Laura Joseph for Care, Creativity, and Collaboration: A Fireside Chat on February 24, 2022, from 6:00—7:30 p.m. Click here to RSVP.

“...The diversity of artists on display reveals the great depth of talent that exists, and the important subject matter of the work requires the viewer to engage themselves. The M’s window galleries draw in a broader community who can now view and interact with the work from a distance.”

—Herman Milligan, former M board member
In seeking authentic relationships, the M builds participation and strengthens connections in the community. The M aims to empower people and artists to share stories, experiences, and truths.

Welcoming Dr. Kate Beane, the M’s Tenth Executive Director

In December 2021, Dr. Kate Beane became the M’s new Executive Director, poised to lead the M into a new era.

“Dr. Kate Beane is an experienced museum professional, and a strong, visionary leader who is the perfect person to lead the M at this important juncture in the organization’s development. The path forward requires a timely push to complete the capital campaign; to complete construction on the M’s facility; to re-open the facility; and to create an elevated platform for advancing the M’s programming model based on co-curation and community collaboration,” said M Board Chair Ann Ruhr Pifer.

With new leadership and a new year ahead, the M is renewed in its commitment to being the museum that Minnesota deserves—one that reflects the diverse perspectives, identities, and lives of the community.

“Dr. Beane brings together a powerful connection with all our communities and a well-established leadership experience that will reinvigorate an important asset for Saint Paul.”

—Eric Jolly, President and CEO, Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation
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The Board of Trustees and staff of the M are grateful to these individuals, corporations, and foundations. This list reflects gifts received between July 1, 2020, and December 15, 2021. We believe that every gift is significant, and all acts of generosity help support the work we do at the M. Every effort has been made to produce an accurate and complete list of contributors. If an error or omission has been made, please email Kate Tucker in the development office at ktucker@mmaa.org.

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Empowerment, activism, and growth: A conversation between Laura Joseph and Curatorial Fellow Kylie Linh Hoang

In June of 2021, Kylie Linh Hoang (KLH) joined the M as curatorial fellow, an appointment that is an extension of her Heritage Studies and Public History graduate studies program at the University of Minnesota. Kylie quickly became a key member of the M’s small team, jumping in to support many projects. Among her accomplishments so far, she curated Transformation: Art from the Inside, an exhibition organized in collaboration with the local organization Art from the Inside and featuring artwork by incarcerated artists. Kylie brings joy, passion, and deep commitment to her work, and I took the coming of the end of the year as an opportunity to touch base with her about how her experience at the M has informed her curatorial practice and perspective.
Laura Joseph (LJ), Curator of Exhibitions

LJ:
Hi KLH! I had to dig back through email to confirm when you started your fellowship at the M. Even though you just joined us this summer, it feels like you have been a part of the team for a long time. Would you share some information about the graduate program that brought you to Minnesota and some background about your work in particular?

KLH:
Hi LJ! Happy to share a little more about my program and practice. As an undergraduate history student, I was interested in the historical legacy of museums as colonial projects and sites of trauma. Through my studies I came to realize that while there are flaws, in both their inception as well as within contemporary practices, museums are also some of the most visceral sites for history-making and truth-telling that exist in our society. I found exhibitions to be far more accessible and immersive than traditional academic papers, and I was excited about the prospect of using the public’s established trust in museums to create shows that empower and elevate marginalized community members. When I started looking at graduate programs, I knew I wanted a program with
faculty that were invested in me not only as a student but also as a person. It was also important to me that the program was developed with a social justice framework and aimed to do locally relevant work derived from the community’s needs and desires. With these stipulations in mind, my undergraduate advisor suggested I apply to the Heritage Studies and Public History Master’s program at the University of Minnesota, and there really wasn’t a comparable program in the country. As I prepare to begin my last semester of the program, I’ve reflected a lot on the value of working and studying in the Twin Cities and am so grateful to have been afforded this opportunity.

LJ: One important component of the program is that it combines course work with fieldwork, right? What led you to want to pursue a fellowship at the M?

KLH: Yes! Experiential learning is at the core of the program, and my internships have brought about some of the most memorable parts of my time at the University. As a public historian, I’ve become especially interested in printmaking as an art form of the people. Previously, I’ve worked with poster collections in the Bay Area, and was absolutely enamored with Piotr Szyhalski’s Labor Camp Report display at the M. When it was time to decide on a fellowship the next summer, I approached the M with a tentative plan and was lucky enough that the team welcomed me aboard without a second thought.

LJ: You joined the team at a time of transition, while we were conducting the search for the M’s new Executive Director, and have been activating street-facing spaces while the M’s interior galleries are closed for construction. Have these unique circumstances resulted in you having an experience at the M that has been different than your experience working at other museums?

KLH: The fluidity of the M’s team and practice has allowed me to aspire to much more than I ever previously thought possible. Most of the other museums I’ve worked with have teams two to three times the size of the M’s, and I never felt comfortable asking for more responsibility. Perhaps I’ve just grown in my professional practice, but the whole staff’s active encouragement has made me feel empowered and capable of taking on difficult tasks. I was really intrigued by the prospect of curating in very a public space, and M staff encouraged me to explore that feeling. Museums can often feel intimidating to a more casual audience, and activating the street-facing spaces allows us to chip away at that barrier with every passerby. I believe that museums should aspire to be essential to the communities they reside within. I think that the M in particular is positioned to cultivate relationships in a way that harbors mutual respect and gratitude. The first major step of that endeavor is to make the community feel valued and welcomed in our physical spaces, and the street-level shows are an excellent first step.
LJ:
When we shared some of the projects on the horizon you were especially enthusiastic about supporting the development of the M’s partnership with the Art from the Inside, which ultimately led to you curating the exhibition—installed, as of this exchange, on 4th Street in downtown St. Paul. Why did this project in particular resonate with you?

KLH:
The M’s partnership with Art from the Inside was still developing when I joined the team, and I was excited to get involved at an early stage with this project. I also thought it was especially powerful to develop a show with exclusively incarcerated artists in a space that directly faces a federal courthouse—which was an explicit choice made by the Art from the Inside team. Jessica and Antonio Espinosa were incredibly gracious and patient with me as I developed my practice, and I’m so appreciative for their partnership.

LJ:
You put so much heart, thought, and care into the curation of Transformation. Would you share a bit about your process? What do you hope people who see the show will experience?

KLH:
While curating Transformation, I really valued the diversity of forms and experiences present in the works submitted. I wanted the selected pieces to inspire a conversation about the multitude of identities each artist holds. The goal was to challenge the dominant framing of the artists’ current circumstance, and identify them as parents, siblings, loved ones, and valuable community members who happen to be incarcerated. I think the general public often can’t see past the bars that confine incarcerated people’s physical selves and diminish their contributions as a debt they owed to society. I hope Transformation provides an opportunity for all of us to reflect on the deeply unjust nature of the criminal justice system in America and inspires a belief in redemption and personal growth for all.

LJ:
You came to this collaboration with Art from the Inside already appreciative of how the confining and depraving experience of being in the American prison system can result in beautiful and powerful creative expressions of humanity and resilience. Even still, did the process result in any shifts of mind/heart for you?

KLH:
Working with the Art from the Inside team and developing the M’s iteration of the Transformation exhibition renewed my desire to advocate for change in the criminal justice system and strengthened my conviction that curation should be a practice based in activism. I feel incredibly privileged to be working in the cultural heritage sector and this experience has been a reminder for me to approach every partnership as an opportunity to support just and equitable practices—both in the field and beyond.
While you have been working at the M you have also been managing a heavy course load, supporting the Lake Street Project, flying back to Illinois to give a speech for your delayed (due to COVID-19) commencement at Knox College, to name a few of the things on your plate. Which is to say, you’ve been busy! How do you support all this work simultaneously? What do you do to recharge?

It’s been a long, eventful year, and I am humbled when I think about all of the kindness I’ve been shown and the opportunities I’ve been given. With every achievement, I remind myself that I am the embodiment of my family’s wildest dreams and it is the result of their love, guidance, and sacrifice that I have been able to pursue an education and career that inspires me. Although we’re fairly far apart in distance, they’re always close at heart and share their warmth through calls, texts, and letters. I am also a huge advocate for boundary setting and protecting energy. Intentionally dedicating time to exist in leisure allows me to be a better, fuller self and gives me the energy to bring authenticity and vulnerability to my practice. I recognize there is privilege in being able to recharge in these ways, but I encourage everyone to consider what makes them feel like their best selves and to pursue those paths whenever possible.

As we approach the end of the year, I hope it holds some time for you to rest. Thanks for sharing, KLH. Grateful to work with you!

I’m so thankful for your mentorship, LJ!
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The M has an art collection of regional and national significance. The quality of the collection is strengthened by the thoughtful acquisition of new works that build on meaningful stories that the collection tells. At the M, the artists are valuable alongside their artworks—their stories, goals, and histories create something bigger than the art itself.

Minnesota State Fair:
A Decade (plus) of Collecting

The M has purchased artwork from the annual Minnesota State Fair fine arts exhibition for eleven consecutive years. This practice is one example of how the M has committed to supporting living Minnesota artists, sending the important message that art made here is valuable, treasured, and unique. As you browse through these State Fair acquisitions, you'll notice the variety of pieces represented, further proof of the M’s mission to “Explore American identities and experiences through art and creativity.”
All Purchases from the Acquisition Fund, Minnesota State Fair Purchase Award
Acquisitions

July 2020—June 2021

These recent acquisitions have added depth to the M’s permanent collection, providing opportunities to tell stories, learn more about the world we live in, and to add fresh perspectives on art, history, and different cultures. The M has added an important new practice to its collection policy: at least one artwork from each exhibition at the M will be accessioned into the permanent collection.

Kyle Fokken (b. 1966), Class Act (Piggy Bank Series), 2020, wood, fabric, leather, found gun parts, plywood, paint, taxidermied deer, 28 x 48 x 10 inches, Purchase, Acquisition Fund 2020.04.01

Meg Lionel Murphy (b. 1986), This is War, 2019, gouache on Arches paper, 51 x 38 inches, Purchase, Acquisition Fund, 2020.05.01

Nicola Ginzel (b. 1968), Transitional Fragment: Utz Composite with Embroidered Frottage from Moroccan Soap Box, wrapper, thread, frottage, fabric, pencil, oil pastel, and ink, Gift of Mary and Bob Mersky, 2020.06.01

Jules Olitski (b. 1922, d. 2007), Spirit Splendor, 1994, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 36 inches, Gift of Mary and Bob Mersky, 2020.06.02

Judy Onofrio (b. 1939), Habitat, 2010, mixed media, 20 ½ x 11 ½ x 9 inches, Gift, Public Art St. Paul, 2020.07.01

Jeffery Gibson (b. 1972), If I Ruled the World, 2019, digital print, silkscreen, collage, gloss varnish, custom color frame, 36 x 34 inches, Gift of Mary and Bob Mersky, 2020.08.01
Alec Soth (b. 1969), *Misty*, 2005, chromogenic print, 40 x 32 inches, Gift of Mary and Bob Mersky, 2020.08.02

Kit White (b. 1951), *Open Field*, 2019, phototransfer and oil on wood panel, 23 x 27 inches, Gift of Mary and Bob Mersky, 2020.08.03

Kat Eng (b. 1991), *Backwaters I*, 2020, archival pigment print, 42 x 53 ¼ inches, Purchase, Acquisition Fund, 2020.09.01

Kat Eng (b. 1991), *Backwaters II*, 2020, archival pigment print, 42 x 53 ¼ inches, Purchase, Acquisition Fund, 2020.09.02

Various Artists, *MPLSART Sketchbooks A, B, C, D, E*, 2020, mixed media, 10 x 7.5 x 1 inches, Purchase, Acquisition Fund, 2021.01.01-05

Areca Roe (b. 1978), *Self Care*, 2020, archival pigment print, 37 1/8 x 31 1/8 inches, Purchase, Acquisition Fund, 2021.02.01

Ann Deprey (b. 1927), *Rider*, 1976, oil on canvas, 30 x 20 inches, Gift of Ann Deprey, 2021.03.02

Tia-Simone Gardner (b. 1983), *Salt Water*, 2019, archival inkjet print on dibond, 39 ½ x 26 inches, Purchase, Acquisition Fund, 2021.04.01

Tia-Simone Gardner (b. 1983), *Shipmate/ Shipment I*, 2019, graphite and acrylic on panel, 12 ½ x 10 ½ inches, Purchase, Acquisition Fund, 2021.04.02

Ann Deprey (b. 1927), *Faith’s Antiques, Still Life*, 1972, oil on canvas, 23 ½ x 27 ½ inches, Gift of Ann Deprey, 2021.03.01
“I can’t think of a better place for [the MPLSART Sketchbook Project 2020] to be. [The M] has so much focus and emphasis on Twin Cities artists that it seems very fitting.”

— Blaine Garrett, MPLSART.com
Acquisition Feature: MPLSART Sketchbook Project 2020

In June, the M announced the addition of the MPLSART Sketchbook Project 2020 to its permanent collection. Coordinated by the Twin Cities art organization MPLSART, these five sketchbooks provided an opportunity for Twin Cities-based artists to create and connect during a challenging and isolating year. Sixty-nine artists contributed 120 original artworks to a series of five sketchbooks that quietly passed from artist to artist, accumulating reflections on life in 2020—including the pandemic, racial reckoning and political division—along the way. What resulted is a collaboratively produced time capsule of a historically significant time in Minnesota, and around the world.
EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS

In the first full year of exclusively external programming, the M enlivened its public-facing spaces—windows, skyways, and public parks—with creative and engaging exhibitions. A showcase of curatorial and partner flexibility, 2021 connected an ever-expanding network of community members, partners, and artists to the M in new ways.

COVID-19: Labor Camp Report
July 7–September 1, 2020
4th Street Window Gallery

On March 24, 2020, artist and teacher Piotr Szyhalski found himself stuck at home, reflecting on the role of the artist in processing this dizzying reality. He discovered seven sheets of paper in his basement and was drawn back to memories of growing up during a time of political strife in Poland. Art supplies could not be squandered.

Each day for months, Szyhalski created a stark black-and-white drawing that attempts to unpack the impact of these extreme historical events on the fabric of our daily lives, in real time. The German word “Zeitzeuge” captures the essence of what Szyhalski understands his role as an artist to be. Sometimes translated as “contemporary witness” or “eyewitness,” the word has no equivalent in English to express its dual relationship to witnessing and time. If translated directly, we might call Szyhalski a “Time Witness.”

For five weeks during the summer of 2020, the M posted seven new posters weekly on the 4th Street windows.
It’s Okay to Laugh
August 1, 2020–February 20, 2022

With his installation **It’s Okay to Laugh**, Twin Cities-based artist **Jose Dominguez** fills the windows of the skyway above Robert Street with lively and colorful vinyl designs of imagined creatures. These characters capture the dynamism of the skyway system—a space people move through repeatedly, but where they always encounter new faces.

Dominguez aims to interrupt the daily ebb and flow of traffic through the skyway and on the streets below by influencing the space with a sense of play, as his exaggerated characters play hide-and-seek with the public. Taking their inspiration from classic children’s illustrations such as The Pink Panther, these joyful and unexpected creatures highlight the absurdity and humor of daily human interactions.

The M and Dominguez would like to thank the City of St. Paul’s Department of Public Works and Department of Safety and Inspections, Ward 2 Councilmember **Rebecca Noecker**, the CapitolRiver Council and its Skyway Governance Advisory Committee, and the Pioneer Endicott and First National Bank building owners for their support of this installation.
"I wanted to create a constant flow of energy moving in both directions, weaving in and out."

—Jose Dominguez, Artist
1.5: A Southeast Asian Diaspora Remix
September 24, 2020–January 31, 2021
Robert and 4th streets Window Galleries

The Southeast Asian Diaspora Project (SEAD) was proud to present 1.5: A Southeast Asian Diaspora Remix. The exhibition showcased work by Southeast Asian diaspora artists. As part of reimagining the 45th anniversary of the diaspora, SEAD gathered stories from the community and worked with artists to respond to stories with visual artworks.

Featured artists were based in the Twin Cities, nationally, and internationally, and included Kat Eng, Van Hai, Sisavanh Phouthavong, and Chantala Kommanivanh, with additional works by Xee Reiter, Leyen Trang, and Christina Vang. Curated by SEAD Project Founder and Executive Director Chanida Phaengdara Potter in collaboration with the M’s Curator of Exhibitions Laura Joseph and Curatorial Assistant Mia Laufer, 1.5 included art across media, including painting, sculpture, video, and interactive installation.

Related Programs
1.5: A Southeast Asian Diaspora Remix Virtual Kick-Off Thursday, September 24, 2020
Scattered Zine Drive-Through Giveaway Saturday, September 26, 2020
Reimaginings: A Collision Course in Time + Dual Pandemics Thursday, October 8, 2020
Pause & Pa Kwan Art Kit Pick-Up Sunday, October 25, 2020
1.5: Scattered Diasporas and the Critical Renewal Thursday, January 21, 2021
Outer Experiences: Black Life in Rural and Suburban Minnesota
February 25–June 20, 2021
Robert and 4th street Window Galleries

Outer Experiences: Black Life in Rural and Suburban Minnesota, curated by African American Interpretive Center of Minnesota (AAICM) Executive Director Jojo Bell, explored the experience of being Black outside of the Twin Cities. Drawing from AAICM’s archives and oral history project, it featured photographs by Chris McDuffie alongside excerpts from interviews with Black Minnesotans who had formative experiences in rural or suburban parts of the state. Outer Experiences amplifies the voices of Black Minnesotans and the underrepresented histories that connect them to their homes. The photographs and interviews explore the narrators’ family histories, their lives in small-town Minnesota, and their experiences of living on the margins of Black and white society.

AAICM’s oral history project was made possible by a grant from the Minnesota Historical Society. Outer Experiences: Black Life in Rural and Suburban Minnesota is generously sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota.

Related Programs
Outer Experiences Virtual Kickoff February 25, 2021
Conversation: Belonging March 25, 2021
Art Kit Pickup May 16, 2021
Wise, Gifted, and Black: Art by the Magnificent Golden Agers
June 27–July 17, 2021
Robert Street Window Gallery

As part of a seven-session residency led by teaching artists Nicole M. Smith and Lawrence El Grecco Waddell at Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, members of their group of women elders—known as the Magnificent Golden Agers—created powerful collages, written reflections, poetry, and photographs that reflect discussions around the themes of Black identity and the intersection of art and activism.

This was the second time the M and Hallie Q. have come together to host this engagement of the Golden Agers, who have come to embrace their identities as artists and creatives over the course of this project.

Exhibition video here.
“Because even in impossible weather, The Golden Agers ensure that whenever art is the task, storytelling and community are, too, crafted. Magnificently.”

—Cameron P. Downey, MPLSART.com
The Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) 2021 Honors Visual Art Exhibition once again celebrated the skills, creativity, and achievements of student artists from each SPPS high school. The works on view demonstrated a variety of pathways to artistic self-discovery—from technical to playful, from highly personal to globally-minded.

The Honors Visual Art Exhibition is a long-standing collaboration between the Saint Paul Public Schools, Minnesota Museum of American Art (the M), and Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. The program celebrates 30 years of extraordinary creative talent by more than 9,500 participating high school students. The events have included visual art exhibitions, vocal and instrumental performances, and spoken word poetry. Students are selected to participate through auditions and art submissions.

Exhibition video here.
Many Waters: A Minnesota Biennial
July 24–October 2, 2021
Robert and 4th street Window Galleries

Many Waters: A Minnesota Biennial was a look into some of the imaginative and dedicated ways that artists and culture bearers from across the state are engaging with water. The exhibition was informed by the M’s proximity to the complex and storied Mississippi River, which goes by many names. A number of featured artists work in close conversation with the watershed, exploring and bringing to greater public consciousness its critical histories.

The work in Many Waters fostered conversation, awareness, a sense of care, as well as new ways of thinking about water and water stories through many different lenses, including ecological, social, political, historical, spiritual, and creative.

The exhibition was juried by a panel that includes Matthew Fluharty, a visual artist, writer, and Executive Director of Art of the Rural; Dakota Hoska, Assistant Curator of Native Arts at the Denver Art Museum; Laura Joseph, Curator of Exhibitions at the M; and Jovan C. Speller, a visual artist, curator, and Program Director at Metro Regional Arts Council.

Related Programs
Opening Reception July 31, 2021
We Are Water: Family Day September 12, 2021
UnVessel and Listening to the Mississippi September 4 and October 30, 2021
“Bringing the museum to the banks of the Mississippi River brought Saint Paul residents a new way to know their water—through dynamic arts and culture.”

— Angie Tillges, Great River Passage Fellow
The M is proud to present **Sutures**, an exhibition that brings together an emerging generation of artists who challenge straightforward ways of looking—at a photograph, a video, a loved one, a collective history, a memory, or oneself—through layered, multimedia artistic practices. Artists *Cheryl Mukherji, Prune Phi, Sopheak Sam,* and *Daniella Thach* use screen printing, projection, neon, and collage to explore the complexities of seemingly “fixed” images, identities, and ideas.

*Sutures* was curated by *Michael Khuth* as a culmination of his fellowship with the Emerging Curators Institute, a Twin Cities organization that supports the professional development of curators from diverse backgrounds. The show also reflects Khuth’s interest in the unique opportunities presented by the M’s street-facing exhibition spaces, which visitors can experience from the sidewalk, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

**Related Programs**

*Seeing New Potentialities November 13, 2021*
Transformation: Art from the Inside
October 30, 2021–January 29, 2022
4th Street Window Gallery

Transformation: Art from the Inside is an exhibition featuring works by incarcerated artists that reflects their personal transformation and restoration through visual expression. Founded by retired Stillwater correctional officer Antonio Espinosa, Art from the Inside is an organization that empowers incarcerated people to use art as an outlet for emotions while creating a platform for dialog about the complexities of our criminal justice system through exhibitions of their work.

Transformation reflects how art can help people imagine new ways of being and recognize our power to change. To learn more about Art from the Inside check out a documentary video on view in the M’s second-floor skyway EcoLab entrance, which you can access from Robert Street.

The exhibition was curated by Kylie Linh Hoang as part of her curatorial fellowship at the M, a position partially funded by the Minnesota Historical Society. Kylie is a public historian and curator, and she believes in the transformational power of storytelling and placemaking through exhibition.
“I value the M because it inspires me. I have found courageous leaders with noble intentions who are building sustained partnerships in the community. The M makes me feel proud to be a Minnesotan in the arts at this place and time.”

—Jennifer Hammer, University of Minnesota, Master of Arts and Cultural Leadership
PARTNERS

Building a participatory, open, and responsive museum means creating complex and thoughtful relationships with partners whose goals align with the M’s mission of exploring American identities through art and creativity. At the M, partnerships are central to making each exhibition and program come boldly to life; curation turns into an act of mutual support and deliberate teamwork.

Art Kit Round-Up

Each exhibition brings new partnerships and artists together to collaborate on a unique all-ages art kit

Because of the M’s transition to exterior exhibitions, Family Days have looked a bit different for recent exhibitions. For each exhibition, Nancy Ariza, curator of learning and engagement, works with a range of artists and partners to assemble an all-ages art kit that relates to the exhibition and provides new ways of thinking about the art, artists, and stories involved.

Art kits have been enjoyed by M fans all across the Twin Cities and beyond! Many were taken home from public M events, and many more were distributed by Creators Space, Saint Paul Public Schools, Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, Saint Paul Public Library, Arlington Hills Community Center, Dayton’s Bluff Community Center, The SEAD Project, Friends of the Mississippi River, Lower Phalen Creek’s Pollinator Festival, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Creative Healing Space, Worthington International Fair, Hazel Park Recreation Center, Brooklyn Center Elementary School, and more!
1.5: A Southeast Asian Diaspora Remix

This colorful art kit included materials and instructions to make a mini Pa Kwan, a zine and map of the exhibition, and the first 50 visitors got a special treat—A Map into the World by Kao Kalia Yang! Also included were screen printed sketchbooks, colored pencils, a SEA Roots Lao Deck, and a SEAMAGINATION activity book.

Outer Experiences: Black Life in Rural and Suburban Minnesota

For the Outer Experiences art kit, artist Leeya Rose Jackson designed a custom coloring book that featured participants whose portraits were in the exhibition as well as prominent figures in Black Minnesota history! Download a printable version of the coloring book here. The book included a native flower seed packet and colored pencils.

Many Waters: A Minnesota Biennial

The We Are Water Family Day was an amazing opportunity to share in creative activity with some of the Many Waters artists, and the art kit was a great extension of those activities. The tote itself was designed by Jessica Moore Harjo, and was packed with a matching We Are Water instructional poetry card deck with prompts from 21 Many Waters artists. Tomas Araya designed a Go with the Flow watercolor kit, Mississippi Park Connection and the National Park Service included a river exploration journal, and Lower Phalen Creek added daylighting cards!
“Thank you for everything you’ve done to make this exhibition happen! I have never felt so supported by an institution showing my work. I am very grateful for this experience.”

—Ian Hanesworth, Many Waters Artist
The Honors Visual Art Exhibition returned to the M this summer for the 30th year, the product of a long partnership between the M, Ordway Center, and Saint Paul Public Schools. With support from a Minnesota State Arts Board grant, the M and Wet Paint helped make art supplies accessible to students at home during distance learning by supplying materials requested by their teachers.
Emerging Curators Institute

Each year, the M co-presents a talk with Emerging Curators Institute to continue expanding the conversations around curation and museum culture. This year, curators Sally Frater and Dr. Kelli Morgan explored their careers to-date as museum professionals who have worked to make institutions more equitable.

HOW CURATION REVEALED ITSELF TO MICHAEL KHUTH

And how this emerging curator thinks about their own artistic path

Each year, an ECI fellow presents an exhibition at the M, and this year Michael Khuth curated Sutures in the M’s Robert Street windows. In late 2021, Communications Specialist Meredith Heneghan talked to Michael one afternoon to get a better sense of who this engaging, thoughtful, curious, and gentle emerging curator is, and how his time with ECI served as a pathway forward.

MH: It’s cool to see that you’ve now integrated curation into something you’re comfortable claiming as your identity simply because of the way you’re able to see it in other things. There’s clearly a sense of ownership in that role now.

MK: It feels good to feel comfortable claiming that title. Early on in ECI Fellowship, I was always just like “I’m just a silly clown attempting to curate!” I still have a little bit of apprehension about it, but I’m getting there and I think you’ve pinpointed a really big shift: being able to acknowledge that curation is not something I’m trying to claim, it’s just part of who I am. A lot of that too is literally seeing people that look like me in these spaces. Getting the opportunity to meet other Southeast Asian curators like Lumi Tan and Tricia Heuring during my time at ECI affirmed that this is a path and a title I can follow too.

Click here to read the full interview with Michael Khuth.
Arts Access: Hallie Q. Brown Community Center

Wise, Gifted, and Black: Art by the Magnificent Golden Agers
This is the second year of a creative partnership between Hallie Q. Brown Community Center’s Golden Agers and M, which has taken the form of a long-term residency led by teaching artists Nicole M. Smith and Lawrence El Grecco Waddell, themselves members of the Hallie community.

Five members of the Golden Agers—Shirley Barber, Janette Gray, Bettye Jackson, Gloria Massey, and Ruth Wilson—created the collages as an extension of conversations about art, activism, and Black identity that took the M’s 2020 exhibition A Choice of Weapons Honor and Dignity: the Visions of Gordon Parks and Jamel Shabazz as a source of initial inspiration. Like Gordon Parks—a self-taught artist who used his camera to empower and uplift Black communities—the Golden Agers have come to embrace their power as creators and transformers over the course of this project.

Radical healing artist and organizer Nicole M. Smith has experience and expertise in using artistic methods to address trauma, difficult experiences, and injustice, and to unravel dynamics of disempowerment, oppression, and systemic methods of control. Nicole has crafted her aesthetic by fusing Theatre of the Oppressed, Art of Hosting, mindfulness, Supportive Listening, and the Amplification of Muted Voice(s). She does this through lecture, performance, teachings, and workshop/residency design and partnership.

Lawrence El Grecco Waddell is an accomplished songwriter and musician who is a long-time member of St. Paul-based R&B band Mint Condition, which was nominated for a Grammy in 2016. He is also an experienced teacher who embraces learner-led education.
Youth Residency with Nicole M. Smith
With this 5-day residency, the M built on a past Arts Access project to deepen its relationship with Hallie Q. Brown Community Center by introducing an intergenerational component. Taking inspiration from the legacy, teachings, and mediums of the late artist Gordon Parks, Nicole M. Smith taught photography, collage, and improv to youth aged 5-11.

Golden Agers Residency with Nicole M. Smith
As the final engagement of the Arts Access grant, the Golden Agers spent November and December of 2021 exploring themes of mindfulness, meditation, and reflection. They did reflective writing and watercolor painting, and Tomas Araya led the group through two meditative watercolor experiences. As this particular group is just a subset of the Golden Agers, they collaborated to choose a new name: the Artisan Golden Girls. After a creative and engaging year together, they have come into their own as artists, all while learning new skills and building on already deep roots in their families and community.

“The leadership provided by Nicole M. Smith taught us how to discover our artistic abilities...we moved around our souls and our minds. The last session we learned the basics of using water coloring – quite the experience since most of us know nothing about water coloring we made it work for us. The tools we were given to work with were awesome..”

—Shirley Barber
MISSION
To explore American identities and experiences through art and creativity.

VISION
We believe the M, from its perch in the middle of the country and at the heart of a diverse city, can inspire understanding and 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.
Black Lives Matter

Demands for justice in the face of George Floyd’s murder are reverberating from the Twin Cities across the world. Museums are not neutral and must actively participate in the dismantling of deeply rooted systemic racism and racial violence in America. The M stands in solidarity with the Black community and allies showing up in the streets of Minneapolis and St. Paul—to protest, clean up, and support the tired, angry, and grieving. The many visionary Black and BIPOC artists in the mix are testifying to the power of art to confront white supremacy, to speak truth to power, to honor and resist forgetting, and to heal. We’re listening and reflecting on how the M can center and help sustain this anti-racist work.

Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that we are within the traditional territory of the Dakhóta, here in Imni Za Ska, now known as Saint Paul, a place name that refers to the white bluffs along the river. We recognize that, as a museum in the United States, we have a colonial history and are beneficiaries of this land and its resources. We support efforts toward truth-telling and addressing the harms that continue to impact all indigenous people. We thank the river, which flows just below us. We honor our shared home, our mother earth. Our relationship to this land and its indigenous people will inform the museum’s work now and into the future.

This acknowledgment is a living document and is intended to be accompanied by direct action toward equity. We thank the Dakota community members who advised on portions of this text.

“Acknowledgment is a simple, powerful way of showing respect and a step toward correcting the stories and practices that erase Indigenous people’s history and culture and toward inviting and honoring the truth.”

Equity and Inclusion
Statement

Minnesota Museum of American Art (the M) seeks to explore expansively 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.

1.5: A Southeast Asian Diaspora Remix | September 24, 2020–January 31, 2021
“Dr. Kate Beane is not afraid to take risks and do the hard work necessary for the greater good of the Twin Cities and beyond. This is precisely the sort of leader that the M needs at this critical time of growth and development. I’m excited to see how Dr. Beane’s leadership bridges the diverse communities that the M serves.”

—Ginger Shulick Porcella, search committee member

For a comprehensive list of the M in the news mmaa.org/communityreport2021/#news
Instagram Highlights
@mnmuseum

Minnesota Museum of American Art

mnmuseum How excited are you to make this mini Pa Gaan?! Come to the M on Sunday between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. to pick up your kit and more!
#onepointfive
59w

theseadproject ❤️
59w Reply

View Insights

❤️ 0 0

Liked by xicasdaughter and 55 others
OCTOBER 13, 2020

Add a comment...

mnmuseum On Thursday, March 25 at 2:00 p.m., join in on a conversation about belonging and “Outer Experiences.” Link in bio!
Robynne Robinson will be facilitating this conversation with curator Jolio Bell and two of the “Outer Experiences” oral history storytellers, Cheniqua Johnson and Alex West Steinman. You can listen to their oral histories and more at aaicmn.org
#outersperiences #thefM #mmaa #mnmuseum #windowexhibition #virtualevent
39w

maybesiegel The best group of humans ever! ❤️

View Insights

❤️ 0 0

Liked by xicasdaughter and 99 others
MARCH 17

Add a comment...
"I am becoming... UNSTOPPABLE"
Minnesota Museum of American Art

Hallie Q. Brown Community Center's Magnificent Golden Agers graced the M with their presence, generosity, and spirit yesterday afternoon.

Their exhibition, Wise, Gifted, and Black is on view in the M's Robert Street Window Gallery through July 17, 2021. Come take in their art, reflections, and wisdom while you can!

Visit mmaa.org for more info. #wisegiftedandblack #hallieqbrown #magnificentgoldenagers

View Insights

Liked by minisodagirl and 55 others

JUNE 30

Add a comment...

You're invited!!

Celebrate the opening of MANY WATERS: A MINNESOTA BIENNALE with a reception at @newstudiosgallery on Saturday, July 31, 2021 from 5:00-8:00 p.m.

RSVP at the link in our bio and go to mmaa.org/many-waters for exhibition information and to sign up for updates from the M.

Show off your MANY WATERS postcard with the hashtag #manywaters2021. See you on July 31!

View Insights

Liked by mplsmuseum and 89 others

JUNE 22

Add a comment...

Some of the Many Waters artists joined the opening celebration last weekend. Here are a few of them with their artworks at NewStudio Gallery!

Jes Lee, Barbara Bend, Kelsey Bosch, Ben Moren, Holly Newton Swift, Niki Pico, Sarah Nassif, and Annie Hegy.

Head to mmaa.org/many-waters to view the digital gallery, read about the artists, and see who is at NewStudio Gallery and who is at the M!

#manywaters2021

View Insights

Liked by xicasdaughter and 166 others

AUGUST 4

Add a comment...
Sutures is an exhibition that brings together an emerging generation of artists who challenge straightforward ways of looking—at a photograph, a video, a loved one, a collective history, a memory, or oneself—through layered, multimedia artistic practices.

Artists Cheryl Mukherji, Prune Phi, Sopheak Sam, and Daniella Thach use screen printing, projection, neon, and collage to explore the complexities of seemingly “fixed” images, identities, and ideas.

Sutures was curated by Michael Khut as a culmination of his fellowship with the Emerging Curators Institute, a Twin Cities organization that supports the professional development of curators from diverse backgrounds. Come see the exhibition in the

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It was a beautiful day at Pickerel Lake for Tia-Simone Gardner’s UnWessel, Monica Moses Haller’s Listening to the Mississippi, and storytelling from Beverly Cottoman.

Plus, Sutures and Transformation: Art from the Inside are officially on view and looking fabulous in the M’s windows!

#mnmuseum #themM

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The United States Postal Service (USPS) is featuring Minnesota’s own renowned Ojibwe artist, George Morrison, on a new set of stamps due in the spring 2022 Forever Stamp release.

The M proudly holds many works by George Morrison in its permanent collection, including two of the five that made it onto the stamps.

You can read more about George Morrison and the stamps at the link in our bio!

George Morrison
Phenomena Against the Crimson Lake Superior Landscape, 1985
Acrylic on canvas
The M is unique, bold, and always up to something new! Check out these fun facts that you might not know about the M.

- 127 years since the M was established in St. Paul
- 1 camera obscura floating in Pickerel Lake
- 34 SPPS students whose artwork was shown in the 2021 Honors Visual Art Exhibition
- 11 artworks from the M’s collection lent to other arts and cultural institutions
- 3 poems read by Moheb Soliman at We Are Water: Family Day
- 3 staff babies seen in an all-staff meeting
- 50 copies of Kao Kalia Yang’s book A Map into the World given away at SEAD’s art kit event
- 1,500 total art kits distributed
- 184 frybread tacos from Trickster Tacos eaten at We Are Water: Family Day
- 207,914 square inches of windows used for exhibitions on Robert and 4th Streets
Audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2021

990 for fiscal year ending June 30, 2021–coming soon