

AKG,

2016-2026
STRATEGIC PLAN
2022 UPDATE



BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM

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PREFACE

Most strategic plans look forward five or six years. Our 2016 process produced a ten-year plan, because we quickly grasped the need to envision our future as the Buffalo AKG Art Museum. The 2016 plan's analysis of program and operational needs and aspirations on the expanded campus crucially informed the architectural design and continues to guide the creation of the new museum. Five years in, however, it is time to review and refine the plan, as well as assess our progress in light of changing circumstances.

An extensive review process in 2021 drew upon the Strategic Planning Task Force, the Education and Community Engagement Committee, and the Inclusive Culture Team. These groups considered the following questions:

- What remains to be accomplished in order to realize our vision for the Buffalo AKG?
- How do today's realities demand a reassessment of priorities and affect the allocation of resources?
- Does the 2016 Strategic Plan need to be supplemented in areas that may be critical to the museum's success in the next five years?

Our review showed that 70% of the 2016 objectives and initiatives are either completed or progressing, and 6.7% have been determined to be no longer relevant or appropriate. Many refinements and several additions have been made.

Foremost among the additions is the museum's commitment to the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA). Our IDEA efforts will be integrated throughout operations in a holistic manner that engages every department, staff member, Board member, and visitor. The revised Strategic Plan reflects this vigorous commitment to IDEA as the museum reopens as a welcoming, accessible, and vibrant hub of artistic and creative energies for our region and the world.

We are pleased to share that the remarkable generosity of donors to our Capital Campaign means that the museum's new campus will surpass the aspirations set forth in the 2016 Strategic Plan.

We are grateful to the Board members, staff, and volunteers who have contributed to this refresh of the Strategic Plan. Their work, along with the commitment of the membership and the diverse communities of Western New York, has been invaluable as we gear up to realize the vision of the Buffalo AKG Art Museum.



Janne Sirén, PhD
Peggy Pierce Elfvín Director



Alice Jacobs
Board President

VISION, MISSION, VALUES, IDEA

Vision

To flourish as an exceptional hub of artistic and creative energies that enriches and transforms people's lives in our community, our nation, and the world.

Mission

- Present exhibitions, performances, and programs that challenge and inspire.
- Seek tomorrow's masterpieces while developing our world-renowned collection of modern and contemporary art.
- Create education programs for lifelong learning and discovery.
- Engage and empower widening, inclusive audiences.
- Inspire open dialogue and common understanding.

Values

We strive for excellence, innovation, and sustainability in everything we do.

IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility)

The Buffalo AKG Art Museum will strive to incorporate the principles set forth in our Unity of Purpose Statement (reproduced in full beginning on page 19) in the architectural fabric of the museum's campus, as well as at every level of museum operations. The Buffalo AKG will prioritize inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility in all aspects of its identity, outreach, and community engagement.

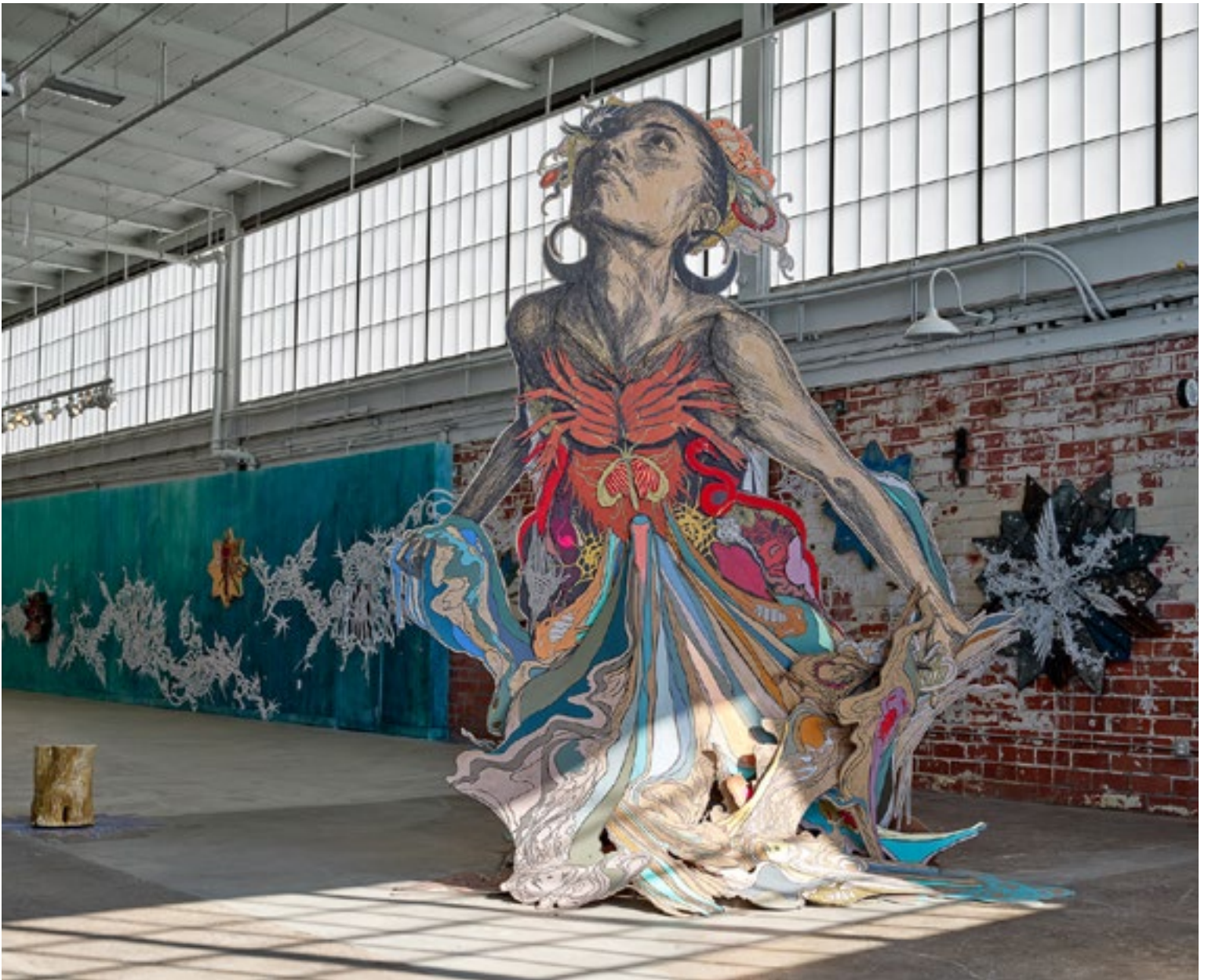
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: EXCEPTIONAL COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

The Strategic Plan comprises four Strategic Priorities, each of which is divided into several areas of focus. The bullet points within each area of focus are the specific objectives through the completion of which the museum plans to realize its aspirations.

Modern and contemporary art have been the focus of the Buffalo AKG Art Museum since its inception. For more than a century and a half the museum has acquired the work of artists at the forefront of creative endeavor. The result is a collection of iconic masterworks dating from the early modern period to the present day that makes the Buffalo AKG one of Western New York's most cherished, globally recognized cultural assets.

Like culture itself, the collection is constantly evolving and expanding. The museum continues to identify and acquire works of the highest aesthetic quality that we hope will be recognized as masterworks of our time. The museum's pioneering tradition of looking forward demands that collecting horizons expand to embrace the range of new voices and forms that proliferate throughout an increasingly global art world, while also acknowledging and addressing gaps in the collection.

Through the Buffalo AKG's collection and exhibition programming, we aspire to enhance the region's civic and cultural life by providing access to artworks and exhibitions that inspire, enlighten, and stimulate vibrant, productive discourse.



The Fine Art Collection

- Mount rotating displays from the collections to enable audiences to appreciate individual masterworks while gaining an understanding of the varied narratives that have shaped modern and contemporary art.
- Embrace the global expansion of contemporary art in developing the collection.
- Renew commitment to works on paper.
- Develop in-house expertise in new media.
- Invest in the organization and expansion of digital content and working methods, integrating collection information and image databases.

Archives

- Complete the assessment, cataloguing, and organization of the Buffalo AKG Archives.
- Record oral testimony from living artists whose works are represented in the collection.

Exhibitions

- Mount exhibitions that actively engage the viewer in understanding the evolution of creative expression in our time, exploring connections between the past and present to underline continuities and ruptures in the chronicles of modern and contemporary art.
- Devise monographic and thematic exhibitions and installations that will attract and engage new audiences.
- Continue to build collaborative relationships with leading peer institutions in the United States and abroad.
- Deploy the Public Art program to extend the range of contemporary art forms presented by the Buffalo AKG and the dynamic presence of the Buffalo AKG throughout Erie County.





Publications and Scholarship

- Develop and produce publications to deepen and expand research on the Buffalo AKG holdings.
- Expand distribution of Buffalo AKG publications.
- Develop and execute a prioritized process to digitize museum assets.

Conservation and Preservation

- Prioritize conservation as a core function of the museum's standard operating activities.
- Optimize the off-site storage facility as a secure, state-of-the-art environment to preserve and provide efficient access to art holdings.
- Develop a long-term plan for retaining the conservation expertise needed to preserve the collection.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

The Buffalo AKG Art Museum is of and for all of the communities that make Western New York a dynamic, vital region. The museum is committed to being a partner in the region's educational, social, and economic life. As a vibrant cultural center, the Buffalo AKG seeks to become an ever-stronger contributor to positive change throughout Western New York and beyond.

Our dedication to the principles of inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility will continue to deepen and evolve in the years following the opening of the Buffalo AKG. The museum will focus on discovering innovative ways to engage broader audiences and developing meaningful partnerships and collaborations. Community engagement and outreach, fortified through active listening and learning, will remain at the heart of the Buffalo AKG's institutional operations and strategic planning.

Vibrant Educational Programming

- Expand and enhance service to students, especially in the Buffalo Public Schools.
- Utilize multiple channels within the museum to provide open, participatory, and creative educational experiences accessible to diverse audiences.
- Develop a rich menu of classes, events, and programs to enhance the understanding of art and art history, foster dialogue, encourage creativity and artmaking, and entertain and inspire diverse audiences.
- Continue to promote the benefits of visual literacy to enable children and adults of all backgrounds to develop visual analytical skills applicable to a wide array of vocations and disciplines.

Inclusive Outreach

- Commit to the advancement of IDEA in all aspects of museum operations.
- Lower barriers to museum admission to increase accessibility to all potential visitors, regardless of financial capacity or level of ability.



- Develop the Buffalo AKG’s role as a social and civic center by creating innovative programming and interpretive content that is relevant and accessible to broader sectors of the community.
- Offer a variety of public programs that enhance the Buffalo AKG’s function as a social destination and an active participant in the Western New York community.
- Engage communities throughout the region by extending the museum’s service beyond the Elmwood campus.

Community Leadership and Collaboration

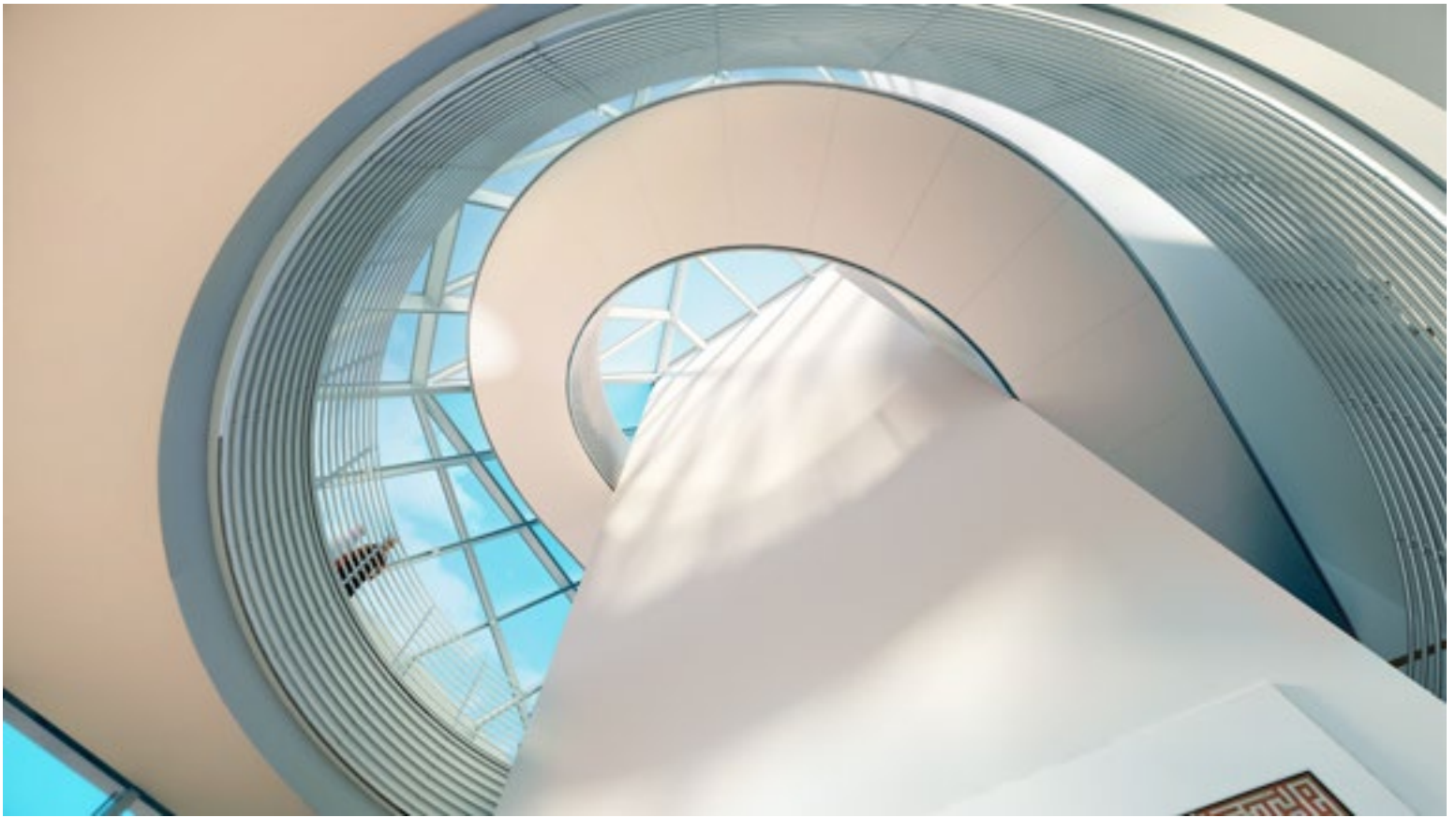
- Contribute to the development of the Elmwood Avenue Cultural District as a community of institutions that promotes cross-disciplinary cultural programming, civic engagement, audience diversity, and the economic renaissance of the region.
- Promote and advocate for the adoption of IDEA as a guide for all community collaborations, with the goal of establishing high-impact partnerships.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM

Driven to radically expand its accessibility and inspired by the world-class caliber of its collection, in November 2019 the museum broke ground on the most significant campus expansion and development project in its 160-year history. This project was initially known as AK360 in recognition of the fact that it is the third major construction project in the course of the museum's history, each of which occurred at an interval of roughly 60 years. The name also expressed the museum's embrace of feedback from the community, which asked that the Buffalo AKG look beyond its pressing operational needs and take a 360-degree view of its position within Frederick Law Olmsted's Delaware Park, as a celebrated cultural anchor in our region, and as a vital contributor to Western New York's resurgence.





The previous version of the Strategic Plan enumerated the museum’s goals for this project. Today, the Buffalo AKG is actively being built, and what were previously aspirations are now in the process of becoming physical realities. Upon completion, the Buffalo AKG will comprise more than 50,000 square feet of exhibition space, an interior community gathering space, and more than half an acre of new public green space. The campus’s main structures will be the new Jeffrey E. Gundlach Building and John J. Albright Bridge designed by Shohei Shigematsu; the Robert and Elisabeth Wilmers Building designed by E. B. Green and constructed in 1905; and the Seymour H. Knox Building designed by Gordon Bunshaft and constructed in 1962. The courtyard of the Knox Building will be covered with *Common sky*, a new artwork by Olafur Eliasson and Sebastian Behmann of Studio Other Spaces, and will feature five new state-of-the-art classrooms. The entire Knox Building will be free of admission charges. The project reflects the museum’s core beliefs—that encounters with art help us thrive as individuals and as a community, that the Buffalo AKG is a unique place where artistic innovation and education lead to the joy of discovery, and that a strategic investment in the present will enhance our region’s future for generations to come.







STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: INSTITUTIONAL VIGOR

Healthy growth, vitality, strength, sustainability—all of these conditions are crucial for the Buffalo AKG Art Museum to achieve the institutional goals set forth in the preceding three pillars of the 2016–2026 Strategic Plan. Inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility for all staff, volunteers, members, supporters, and visitors will ensure that the museum continues to serve and engage its communities. Sound management and governance will provide the base upon which the museum is able to grow and support its collections and exhibitions, community engagement, and campus expansion. And finally, thinking and working creatively to understand the challenges and opportunities of the future will enable the museum to serve as a catalyst for the resurgence of Western New York and to pioneer museum practices for the world.

Deepen Commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility

- Ensure ongoing, dedicated engagement with the museum’s IDEA Framework and Plan (see pages 19–20) by the staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, docents, and the museum’s other constituent groups.

Activate and Inspire a Broader Base of Engaged Communities

- Engage broader audiences, both around the world and especially in Western New York.
- Increase the breadth and depth of Buffalo AKG membership and support.
- Maximize the accessibility of all public-facing programming, exhibitions, and events using digital technologies, while ensuring that the museum’s digital offerings are strategic, purposeful, and cost-effective.
- Expand and amplify arts advocacy for the critical place of the arts in healthy, forward-looking communities.

Foster Stewardship and Sustainability

- Complete the final phase of the Capital Campaign.
- Explore strategies to increase and diversify contributed revenue.
- Ensure Strategic Plan implementation and follow-up.
- Adopt and regularly update a long-term financial plan.

Strengthen and Diversify Personnel

- Align recruitment processes with the goal of increasing the diversity of the staff, docents, and volunteers.
- Establish a review process to ensure that the Buffalo AKG is an employer of choice for passionate, talented, and innovative individuals pursuing careers in the museum field.
- Align governance and recruitment processes with the goal of increasing the diversity of members of the Board of Directors.

Support and Promote the Buffalo AKG as a Catalyst of Creativity

- Expand collaborations with partners in Buffalo and beyond that address the needs of the community and further the mission of the museum.
- Utilize the Public Art Initiative to engage the community and stimulate interest in creative expression and other forms of creativity.
- Support Community Engagement and Learning and Creativity programs and projects in order to enliven the Buffalo AKG as a hub of creativity in Western New York.
- Activate the Town Square and Creative Commons as dynamic spaces for community engagement, experiential learning, and novel approaches to interacting with art and creativity.



UNITY OF PURPOSE— THE BUFFALO AKG IDEA FRAMEWORK

The Buffalo AKG Art Museum is committed at every level of our institution to building the physical, philosophical, and ethical foundations to ensure that the Buffalo AKG is a vital and dynamic museum for everyone.

Beyond our world-renowned collection and expanded and refurbished facilities, we recognize that our strength lies in people—the staff, volunteers, Board, and members who contribute their time and talents to the institution; and the broad, diverse array of individuals and families whom our community comprises. Ensuring that we are welcoming and inclusive of diverse experiences and points of view throughout every level of our organization is integral to sustaining institutional vitality and flourishing in the future as the Buffalo AKG. At the same time, ensuring that the museum is welcoming and inclusive of the diversity of individuals in our community is our responsibility as a community asset, as well as being vital to successfully achieving our goal of helping to build a stronger, revitalized Western New York region. Throughout the last decade, we have heeded the call to move the institution in this direction by pursuing numerous programmatic and organizational efforts and changes. Though many of these have been successful, it is clear that a formal, transparent, and strategic approach is required to affect the wide-ranging, holistic changes we believe are necessary for the future of the Buffalo AKG.

With that in mind, we have committed to the intentional advancement of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) in all aspects of our institution's operations. Becoming the Buffalo AKG is not only an architectural transformation but also an institutional one, and one that upholds welcoming and belonging as principal values.

We define inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility in alignment with the American Alliance of Museums as follows:

Inclusion: For the Buffalo AKG, this means committing to ongoing work and conversations with all of the many communities we serve—and among the staff, Board, volunteers, and members whom our institution comprises—to ensure our revitalized museum is a welcoming resource that belongs to all, regardless of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or level of ability.

Diversity: For the Buffalo AKG, this means committing to including a diversity of experience, viewpoints, and skills, as we build and sustain our staff, Board, volunteers, membership, and audience.

Equity: For the Buffalo AKG, this means committing to genuine listening, thoughtful reflection, and purposeful action that will increase equity in our staff, Board, volunteers, membership, business practices, programming, and community engagement.

Accessibility: For the Buffalo AKG, this means sustaining and enhancing our efforts to share art with the diverse communities of Western New York while identifying and addressing physical, economic, and sociocultural barriers to participation.

Our commitment to IDEA reflects and is predicated on our commitment to people. As we work to build a culture of inclusion and community-informed practices we will also create avenues for internal and external feedback and dialogue that are necessary to hold the institution accountable.

We are united in our purpose and vision of becoming the Buffalo AKG, and we look forward to working together to build a museum that Western New York communities want and deserve—one in which all can take pride of ownership and belonging.

IMAGES

Cover

View of the Jeffrey E. Gundlach Building from the portico of the Robert and Elisabeth Wilmers Building.

Page 6

Installation view of Swoon's *Thalassa*, 2011, in *Swoon: Seven Contemplations* (September 26, 2020–January 10, 2021) at Albright-Knox Northland. Photo: Brenda Bieger

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Visitors with Camille Pissarro's *Paysans dans les champs, Éragny* (*Peasants in the Fields, Éragny*), 1890, in *Humble and Human: An Exhibition in Honor of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.* (February 2–May 26, 2019). Collection Buffalo AKG Art Museum; Gift of A. Conger Goodyear, 1940 (1940:20). Photo: MK Photo

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A visitor explores *Htein Lin: A Show of Hands* (February 16–April 28, 2019). Photo: MK Photo

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Students work on ceramic sculptures during an art class at Albright-Knox Northland. Photo: Jeff Mace

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Top: Kids participate in an artmaking activity with Art Truck Program Coordinator Vicente Rondon at the Northland Harvest Festival in October 2019. Photo: Tom Loonan

Bottom: Visitors participate in an artmaking activity in *Hervé Tullet: Shape and Color* (June 26, 2021–September 12, 2021) at Albright-Knox Northland. Photo: Jeff Mace

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The Jeffrey E. Gundlach Building (left) and Robert and Elisabeth Wilmers Building viewed from Elmwood Avenue.

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The spiral staircase that connects all three floors and the basement of the Jeffrey E. Gundlach Building, viewed from the first floor.

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Top: The John J. Albright Bridge.

Bottom: An aerial rendering of the site plan of the Buffalo AKG Art Museum.

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Top: The entry from the subsurface parking lot into the basement level of the Jeffrey E. Gundlach Building, with Miriam Bäckström's *Others Will Know* installed on the wall.

Bottom: The north side of the Sculpture Terrace.

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Top: The Robert and Elisabeth Wilmers Building with the restored west staircase, viewed from the Great Lawn.

Bottom: The Jeffrey E. Gundlach Building viewed from the restored west staircase of the Robert and Elisabeth Wilmers Building.

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Common sky, designed by Olafur Eliasson and Sebastian Behmann of Studio Other Spaces, installed in the Town Square. © Studio Other Spaces

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