

**Knoxville Museum of Art
Fiscal Year 2020
Annual Report**

This annual report from the Year of the Great Pandemic has taken longer than most, but that's a good thing. If I had been more diligent, this would have been a depressing read. By waiting to report on that eventful year, I can write with the comforting knowledge that the KMA came through just fine. Indeed, lots of terrific things happened before the shut down in March 2020, including:

- The acquisition of Knoxville native Joseph Delaney's [*Vine and Central, Knoxville, Tennessee*](#) (1940), a scene drawn from his childhood memories of the lively and diverse neighborhood in the area now known as the Old City. There is a satisfying historical symmetry in the fact that this celebration of Knoxville's bustling African American entertainment and business district came to the KMA in 2019, exactly 100 years after the Race Riots of 1919 started the cycle of decline and erasure that nearly obliterated the physical traces of a flourishing minority community. *Vine and Central's* homecoming is just a small step in what we hope will be an accelerating effort to reclaim all of Knoxville's creative history.
- The repurposing of the Regal Auditorium into several useful new spaces, thanks to major gifts from June & Rob Heller and Ann & Steve Bailey. The former auditorium space has been divided into: Regal Commons, a large multi-purpose room adjacent and connected to Bailey Hall; two dedicated, fully equipped art studios; an ADA-compliant restroom; and additional storage for equipment and supplies. Construction started in December and was completed just in time for the shutdown, but these great new spaces stand ready for events and classes for years to come. At the request of the donors, the new studios were named in honor of Director of Education Rozz Martin, who has done so much in her 27-year tenure to sustain and grow the KMA's educational outreach and amplify our impact throughout the community.
- The installation of an exquisitely beautiful new work by American sculptor Karen LaMonte, the gift of Nancy & Stephen Land. [*Nocturne*](#) is the latest addition to the Land Family Sculpture Garden, designated to recognize the Lands' generous support of the KMA's 25th Anniversary Campaign.
- A big celebration for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the [*KMA Guild's*](#) Holiday Homes Tour in December, with the biggest sponsorship dollar total ever for this much-loved fundraising event.
- [*Art House*](#), the museum's under-50 auxiliary group, continued its work of successfully engaging a new generation of museum leaders and stakeholders with creative educations and social events.

By far the biggest event of the year was the opening in February of [*Beauford Delaney: Through the Unusual Door*](#). This groundbreaking exhibition, organized by the KMA, examined the 35-year relationship between Beauford and writer and social activist James Baldwin and the ways their ongoing intellectual exchange shaped one another's creative output and worldview. *Through the Unusual Door* provided the first opportunity to share with the world our extraordinary holdings of works by Beauford Delaney, probably the most important artist Knoxville has produced, attracted funding from the Henry Luce Foundation, the Art Dealers Association of America Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. It drew on the KMA's extensive Delaney holdings, loans from collections around the country, and never-before-seen archival material to identify and disentangle the skein of influences that grew over and around a rich, complex lifetime relationship. Each used his own personal gifts, creative means, and individual agendas to attack multiple barriers and move toward freedom, light, and truth. It's a message of inclusion and acceptance more relevant than ever.

Through the Unusual Door was the centerpiece of a community-wide celebration of Knoxville's famous native son. The Delaney Project, an informal consortium of cultural organizations producing Delaney-related events, installed street banners around downtown Knoxville to promote the Delaney activities happening around town. Soon after the exhibition opening, Marble City Opera premiered a new chamber opera based on Delaney's life and art, and the University of Tennessee Humanities Center presented an international symposium on Delaney and Baldwin. The Beck Cultural Exchange Center, Knoxville's African American history museum, is raising funds to restore and repurpose the Delaney family home on Dandridge Avenue, and many more projects are in the works. The Delaney Project has the potential to open doors and chip away at some of the social, cultural, and racial barriers that separate segments of our community, and we think it will have widespread and long-lasting positive impact. It's something we need very much right now.

All this excitement and positive energy came to a screeching halt when the KMA (and most of the world) shut down in mid-March, miraculously only days after a wildly successful [*L'Amour du Vin*](#), one of the great food and wine events in the Southeast and the KMA's largest single source of revenue (whew!). All staff were paid through end of April, whether they had job duties or not; only a small number had to be furloughed. Salaried staff worked from home, demonstrating impressive creativity as they pivoted to new ways of doing their jobs and engaging museum audiences. With the building temporarily closed, we scrambled to push out content on variety of platforms, with considerable success. In just the one month from mid-March to mid-April, there were nearly 60,000 user interactions with KMA social media on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We'd been working slowly for a long time to increase our digital footprint; the pandemic greatly accelerated those efforts, which will have lasting benefits. Another upside of the pandemic: lenders to *Through the Unusual Door* generously extended the exhibition beyond its original closing date on May 10, to late October. Consequently, thousands more got to see the exhibition when we reopened (with limited hours and strict public health protocols) on June 24. It was a thrill to once again welcome (masked) visitors to the galleries, and a hopeful note on which to begin the new fiscal year on July 1.

Other good news from fiscal 2020: Director of Development Lori Calvert started at the KMA in August 2019. Lori came to us with extensive development experience and a deep knowledge of the community. Natalie McLaurin started in January as Exhibitions Manager a new position. We welcome her extensive experience and expertise in organizing and installing exhibitions. Also in January, Assistant Director of Education DeLena Feliciano attended the Jekyll Island Museum Institute, a competitive program organized by the Southeastern Museums Conference that provides an eight-day, total immersion environment for professionals to learn more about general administration and operations.

There was no way we could be certain at the end of the 2020 fiscal year that the KMA would emerge from the trials and uncertainties of the pandemic a stronger and better for organization. Even in those dark, early days, however, I was pretty sure we would ultimately be okay, because I knew what great assets we enjoy as an organization: steady and committed leadership by the KMA board, a talented resourceful staff, a corps of capable, dedicated volunteers, and hundreds of generous donors (board, staff, and donors are listed below). It wasn't even a fair fight.

David Butler
Executive Director

FY 2020 At A Glance

Total number of visitors 45,720
Membership retention rate 64%
Number of membership households 1,063
Private gifts \$901,018
Earned income \$211,466
Endowment corpus \$5,538,895
Total operating revenue \$2,208,115
Total operating expenses \$1,994,564

KNOXVILLE MUSEUM OF ART ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Gifts of \$1,000 and above received between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2021

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(\$100,000 and above)**

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Clayton Family Foundation—
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