THE FORWARD EDGE: FOUR FRONTIERS
MISSION STATEMENT

The Katonah Museum of Art, through innovative exhibition and education programs, promotes the understanding and enjoyment of the visual arts for diverse audiences. The Museum presents exhibitions that explore ideas about art, culture and society – past and present.
his strategic plan, written in the first quarter of the new millennium, marks a moment in time and a vision for the future of the Katonah Museum of Art (KMA). Crafted with the participation of a devoted steering committee through countless meetings, public gatherings, one-on-one engagements and Board brainstorming sessions, the plan both charts a forward edge and embraces the celebrated history of an institution that has been a vibrant arts provider and beloved community asset for over sixty years.

Throughout the process of creating this plan, we heard time and again how our stakeholders value the intimacy of the KMA in the age of the mega-museum, embrace the importance of early arts exposure for children, and share a desire to enhance the national profile of the organization with increasingly dynamic and relevant programs. All of these values live in this plan, and much, much more…. We are committed to the Museum serving as a destination for art as well as for the expansion of the mind.

This plan represents a bold move forward and a strong articulation of priorities. Behind each section of the plan (outlined below) exists a timeline and budget that is tracked by staff and reported upon to the Board at regular intervals. We hope, at the end of the four-to-five years it will take to execute this plan, the natural beauty on the KMA grounds will be emboldened and the artistic program will be even more widely recognized for its innovation and originality. Over these years, the Museum will seize upon the creative force of art to inspire the extraordinary literary, creative, and entrepreneurial talent of our area and to grow new audiences beyond our region.

Four ambitious “frontiers” constitute the core of the strategic plan. They are as follows:

Engaging the community defines the **Audience Frontier**, which outlines a strategy for creating a welcoming, social environment. It also provides tactics for broadening our audience.

In the **Program Frontier**, we focus on the KMA as a leading destination for art and ideas, growing the intellectual scope of our program from its educational core.

The **Platform Frontier** expands how we conceive of our footprint, taking into account the building, campus and online capabilities.

And finally, the **Organizational Frontier** outlines ways we can fortify the KMA’s future with a strong Board, staff, and financial model.

Though this plan was devised to anchor the future of a single organization, it is written with an eye towards some of the radical shifts impacting museums of all scales and orientations. Organizations are constantly evolving in response to the world around them, and the KMA is no exception. It will be a natural course of the plan that sections shift over time, as goals are met and external realities morph and change. As such this is a living document. Yet the building blocks remain the same and will serve to guide us as we make decisions, seek opportunities, and provide new services to our community in the years to come.

We look forward to realizing the vision and energy of this plan with you and embarking on this exciting chapter for the KMA.

**Darsie Alexander**  
*Executive Director*  
*June 2016*

**Tara Coniaris**  
*President, Board of Trustees*  
*2013 – 2016*

**Steering Committee**

**Board Members**  
Jeanne Markel  
Deborah Mullin  
Jorge Pedraza

**Staff Members**  
Margaret Adasko  
Darsie Alexander  
Elizabeth Rooklidge

Produced with Organizational Performance Group, New Haven, Laura Freebairn-Smith, Principal
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**MaDora Frey, #6250, 2016, Courtesy of the Artist, OnSite Katonah 2016**
Alexander Calder, 1974

Betty Himmel, Mimi Osycka, and Inge Brouard prepare for *Multiples* show, July 1972

Isamu Noguchi and sculpture in Katonah Gallery Sculpture Garden, August 1975
HISTORY OF THE KMA

The Katonah Museum of Art was founded by Inge Brouard Brown as a Gallery in 1954. Initially located in a small attic room over the Katonah Village Library, the Gallery was committed to presenting visual art in exhibitions that spanned a wide spectrum of artistic, historical, and cultural periods. To achieve maximum flexibility and diversity in its exhibition schedule, the Gallery was developed as a volunteer-run non-collecting institution with a special emphasis on education, including lectures, art tours, workshops, and art rental services.

In 1990, the Katonah Gallery became the Katonah Museum of Art and moved to its new building designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes on Route 22 at Jay Street. The Museum’s elegant new facility provided space for more comprehensive treatments of exhibitions, a wider range of participatory art education activities, and a greater variety and frequency of public programs. A new Learning Center was created in 1997. Over the years, the Museum has grown at an unprecedented rate. Attendance is now between 35,000 and 40,000 visitors a year and the number of regional schools participating in educational programs has grown yearly. Exhibitions, accompanied by scholarly catalogues, have strengthened and spread the organization’s presence.

The Museum’s reputation as a “kunsthalle” – a non-collecting institution that showcases work on a rotating basis and provides robust educational programs to its community – is one of its most striking and unique attributes. In this respect, the KMA possesses a sought-after flexibility that museums need in order to thrive in today’s dynamic social and technological climate. Nimble and responsive, the KMA can react swiftly to changing developments in the art field while proposing new directions that have not been seen elsewhere. Yet unlike other kunsthallen, the KMA does not focus exclusively on contemporary art. It embraces a diverse programmatic platform and capacity to appeal to wide audiences, a core principle of this plan.

The KMA currently employs fourteen people and is led by a Board of seventeen individuals from Westchester County and New York City.
MUSEUMS TODAY

The KMA is poised to respond to the evolving conditions of its environment. Much has changed since completing the last strategic plan, shaping the distinct context in which this one is written. Some of these changes can be summarized as follows:

**GROWTH OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARTICIPATION:**
The advancement of new social media platforms that encourage a constant exchange of ideas and opinion has buttressed a need for greater interactivity within the museum sphere. Visitors increasingly expect to interact and socialize during their museum experience, often through technological tools. Our strategic plan emphasizes the importance of a dynamic visitor experience and stresses multiple opportunities to make connections between people and art.

*See: The Audience Frontier*

**GLOBALIZATION OF CULTURE:**
The Internet has provided unfettered access to the farthest corners of the world, impacting the speed and frequency of information networks. Artists and artistic programs no longer work in isolation but in constant dialogue with a wide spectrum of peers from radically different orientations. Bringing these multiple perspectives to the KMA, both through programs and exhibitions, is a key feature of this plan. Under this new context, the KMA can be an ever more visible importer and exporter of content.

*See: The Program Frontier*

**CHANGEABLE ECONOMIC CLIMATE:**
Shifts in the economy since 2008 have resulted in a slow, and at times unpredictable, recovery and endowment performance. Close examination of income/expense relationships and the ability to respond swiftly to the changing conditions of the financial environment are valuable tools for museum leadership, as is the ability to calibrate this plan to realistic timelines and goals outlined to support institutional progress.

*See: The Organizational Frontier*

**SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS:**
Over the past decade, museums have sought to adjust to the nation’s evolving demographic landscape, including the significant rise of Hispanic/Latino populations. In addition, the millennials represent a new class of museum-goers, requiring museums to look at their hours, interactive offerings, and social experiences – needs fully embraced and incorporated into this plan.

*See: The Audience Frontier*
AUDIENCE FRONTIER

Foster Dynamic Engagement
We aim to deepen our encounters with our audiences to deliver a unique experience for all visitors, encouraging their connection to art and one another. Strategies of dynamic engagement will create places and opportunities for a more interactive audience experience that is driven by the belief that everyone has a voice at the KMA and the potential to impact each other in a positive way. Community partnerships will be marked by meaningful connection, generosity, and openness.

A. Energize the visitor experience with interactive opportunities for creative discovery
   I. Socialize the Museum with spirit of fun, surprise, and innovation
      • Rethink sanctity of gallery space with intervals of change and experimentation, particularly during “down time” or between exhibitions
      • Use the Spot Lounge for planned or impromptu gatherings including a Teen Caucus
      • Leverage outdoor spaces during summer months with food truck, drop-in events, or hammocks
      • Let the public vote on upcoming shows – an “I Like This Idea” or “Help Us Decide” box, positioned in a visible place
      • Ensure development of micro-programs with educational focus – book/knitting/lunch clubs, for example

B. Be sensitive to evolving ethnic, racial, and socio-economic constituencies among the local museum-going public
   I. Embolden outreach to unique cultural communities
      • Respond to growing Hispanic demographic by refining and expanding ArteJuntos
      • Explore funding opportunities that may advance specific programs for black and Asian populations in Westchester
      • Seek opportunities to provide bilingual educational materials and programs
      • Investigate fellowships to grow awareness of various audience needs through education program
      • Identify areas for programmatic growth to enhance access for those with cognitive, sensory, and/or physical challenges

II. Invigorate guest experience through dynamic communication, personalization and inclusion/accommodation
   • Improve quality of data collection for all visitors – paid, group, docent, member, and schools, among others
   • Explore nighttime hours and/or closing Monday and Tuesday
   • Enhance access for guests with physical and/or cognitive disabilities
   • Provide more places to sit in gallery and atrium
   • Ensure physical and human aesthetics (apparel, furnishings, signage) match brand promise and articulated values
   • Improve hiring practices and trainings to inspire and develop guest services staff into effective ambassadors
   • Adopt an increasingly flexible approach to shifting needs of audience and demographic trends

Rachel Actis, Education Coordinator, Installation view, The Nest, an exhibition of art in nature, 2016
II. Determine feasibility of dynamic teen programs
  • Establish a Teen Caucus that serves as R&D unit for potential programs and opportunities
  • Begin to develop teen-specific moments such as art camp, docent/tour guide training, and social events
  • Investigate a new series and secure teen participation – e.g. Bring It On! (teens develop, select, and install works in galleries)
  • Explore a “Real Life in the Arts” series, where teens get to meet leading thinkers and creators to learn about their lives and career opportunities

III. Build upon and revitalize existing partnerships
  • Continue to leverage participation in Fairfield Westchester Museum Alliance to align exhibitions and promote collaboration
  • Bolster Cultural Katonah programs by encouraging a more diverse platform and expanded participation
  • Maintain special partnership with Caramoor Center for Music and Arts to take advantage of music expertise while exploring new models for music program
  • Fortify stronger film relationship with Bedford Playhouse and Jacob Burns; take advantage of new auditorium options
  • Deepen local school connections and identify opportunities for programmatic collaboration

IV. Identify and cultivate urban professionals with young families
  • Facilitate privately-hosted gathering opportunities that follow the salon model
  • Expand content related to leadership and innovation; leverage expertise and networks of local professionals
  • Visibly advertise along commuting routes
  • Consider longer weekend hours to accommodate overextended parents and create “date nights”
  • Refine “family fundraiser” model to engage parents in shared experiences with their kids (joint art-making, overnights, etc.)
Energize program with vibrant exchange of art and ideas

The Program is at the heart of what we do – the exhibitions we create, the events we host, and the learning opportunities we foster. Art is the prism through which our Program topics are seen and discovered, and the reference point for all of our choices. Under a new concept that places equal emphasis on art and ideas, the KMA acts as a convener for timely and original content undertaken in the spirit of collaboration. We bring knowledge, curiosity, and a willingness to experiment with an understanding of the needs of general audiences. The research behind our work will be rigorous but the outcome will be fun and rewarding.

A. Pursue multi-pronged opportunities for excellence and innovation to grow reputation locally and nationally

1. Introduce fresh and accessible exhibitions calibrated to enhance brand and regularize core programs

   • Balance cutting-edge contemporary exhibitions with accessible and content-rich historical shows
   • Ensure presence of high-investment gateway shows every three years (akin to Pop, Surrealism, etc.) with a publication
   • Leverage holdings of key American encyclopedic museums seeking visibility in NY metro area by marketing as “outpost” venue for collection-based shows
• Commit at least one exhibition slot per year to new scholarship and discovery (exciting chapter of art history, new artist, etc.)

• Evaluate character and timing of regular programs, including Tri-State Juried Exhibition and Young Artists, for targeted improvement and strategy

• Support strong presence of women artists in program to align with institutional history and audience demographic

• Shift to possible cycle of four exhibitions per year by FY 2018-2019

II. Identify opportunities for exhibition program to embody KMA spaces more holistically

• Identify artists for “immersive” installation that takes over building for upcoming summer slot (2017 or 2018)

• Seek opportunities to creatively reimagine lounge, bathrooms, and atrium for offbeat art encounters

• Introduce art through sound in entryway

• Hire artist/designer to rethink Learning Center to present fresh, creative look for optimal use of small space

David Brooks, Repositioned Core, 2014, Courtesy of the artist, SupraEnvironmental 2015-16
III. Strategically rebuild KMA’s publications platform
- Develop focused approach that publishes with major exhibitions and where significant contributions to scholarship are evident
- Seek models that engage co-publishers and distributors like D.A.P. to ensure proper exposure and revenue from books
- Pair publications initiatives with touring exhibitions to bolster access and circulation
- Explore existing archives for compelling topics to mine and research

B. Advance KMA’s role as an active incubator of new ideas, talent, and services
   I. Leverage educational resources in region to engage students and scholars in the KMA’s research and content profile
- Introduce funded fellow position to support curators and educators while gaining valuable professional experience

   II. Create an idea network by inviting leading thinkers, creators, and educators to curate big ideas for KMA
- Work with graduate programs (Bard, Williams, Hunter, etc.) to create curatorial opportunities for promising students
- Bring forward-thinking curators to the KMA for specific programs to broaden base of knowledge and networks
- Explore model of exporting cutting-edge scholarship to a larger organization capable of partnership and joint implementation

PROGRAM FRONTIER continued
• Enhance presence of KMA in NYC with programs and events that capitalize on urban themes and relationships; partner with academic institutions
• Initiate KMA residencies for thought leaders across disciplines

**III. Express and disseminate the research and discovery process**
• Enhance transparency of exhibition creation via active KMA channels, including website, social media and in-gallery materials
• Ensure the staff is gaining exposure in the field, particularly through a public presence at conferences and symposia where they can share their discovery process
• Expose docents to the logistics and complexities of exhibition production to deepen their understanding and further engage them in the artistic process
• Enhance video presence on website that offers behind-the-scenes encounters for large-scale shows

**IV. Capitalize on existing KMA archives to accent institutional history and expose audiences to our story**
• Improve documentation of events, facility, and personnel with highly quality video and photography
• Expertly record and store existing archival materials and prune redundancies
• Selectively transfer key data to online platform or database once systems are updated
• Consider future outlets and publications of the KMA’s history of exhibitions, papers, talks, events, and artist-engagements

*Magdalena Abakanowicz, Backward Seated Figures, 1992-93, Marilyn M. Simpson Sculpture Garden 2004-05*
Create a Cultural Commons

Platforms are our outlets – the places where artists and the community go to express themselves. These include, but are not limited to, physical spaces and facilities that are in need of creative refurbishment and artistic treatment. The KMA will also find opportunities to extend into other public domains. The KMA seeks to move beyond its institutional walls to become a generous host, connector, and civic destination. The creation of a park-like model is a crucial aspect of this initiative.

A. Create a vibrant public gathering space for artistic experimentation, social engagement and community events

i. Utilize all parts of outdoor campus to provide artists with the opportunity to create catalytic, site-specific new works
   - Begin building visibility for outdoor program (new commissions and iconic loans) to foreshadow campus plans; identify semi-permanent artwork to announce Museum at driveway
   - Immediately activate sculpture garden and assure visibility of art during warmer months
   - Embrace performance potential of outdoors to bring a variety of spoken word, movement, and sonic experiences to space
   - Enhance programming position with seasonal films, concerts, and garden parties

ii. Open up Lower Campus as major public access point and public park
   - Embark on plan to green Lower Campus for public engagement and art placement
   - Revisit comprehensive Weiss-Manfredi proposals
   - Address perceived barrier of wall, front and back
   - Explore Reservoir Road access and amenities for joggers and walkers
   - Develop plan for bridging Upper and Lower campus with stairs, water feature, or another solution
   - Communicate and engage feedback from neighbors as plans unfold

iii. Work with Town Board and Supervisor to identify shared objectives for outdoor initiatives and community art
   - Harness the support of local officials and stakeholders around public art projects on KMA grounds and ensure steady flow of communication as campus plan develops
   - Engage community in identifying and working with artists for site-specific installations, including bridge over I-684, that visibly impact community
• Address all compliance issues, including necessary permits, as campus plans evolve to bring public art to the environs of KMA
• Leverage other civically-minded cultural initiatives in Bedford and Katonah aimed at enhancing culture in the community
• Explore “pop-up” sites in neighboring towns and businesses for short-term installations and projects

B. Upgrade and improve current building and grounds

I. Develop a plan to solve longstanding space limitations
• Identify measures to add catering, beverage and café options
• Explore long-term feasibility of moving or consolidating staff spaces; opening second floor as flex-use, gallery or meeting space
• Upgrade technological capacity and power sources
• Address cell phone limitations with booster or alternate means
• Stabilize parking lot surface, drainage and lighting

II. Enliven existing facility spaces with a more attractive and inviting public appearance
• Ensure vigilance around tidiness of natural environs, including hedges, parking area, and external portal
• Maintain immaculate upkeep of internal rest and work areas, including lounge, bathrooms and office suite
• Examine options to clean and/or resurface building in high-visibility sections

III. Evaluate and revitalize Learning Center as 21st century engagement hub
• Clean and streamline space for multi-purpose use – upgrade technological elements
• Adjust seating to accommodate parents as well as children, and economize storage for maximum use of open areas
• Address projection capacity and screen quality
• Refresh or eliminate “nook” to expand workable areas
• Investigate funding for a spatial makeover
Support Institutional Progress

We seek a solid foundation from which to launch the future embodied in this plan. Institutions are about the people who envision, manage, and support the forward momentum. Each group – staff, Board, community, partners and donors – must be sensitively engaged and cultivated towards these shared objectives with an understanding of the resources needed to realize them. We embrace the KMA’s volunteer history and celebrate the participation of vital constituencies, both internal and external, to the success and longevity of the organization.

Installation view The Nest, an exhibition of art in nature 2016
A. Instill a shared vision amongst staff, Board, and key stakeholders

I. Staff:
- Clarify roles to align with new strategic objectives
- Fully implement the merger of education and curatorial functions
- Rotate leadership of weekly staff meeting to focus on creative exchange and collaboration
- Continue robust performance review process
- Provide professional development opportunities for staff
- Improve KMA’s learning and assessment capabilities
- Regularly introduce staff at Board meetings to exchange ideas
- Introduce outside consultancy as needed for team building
- Investigate software and other technology platforms to improve efficiency and record keeping

II. Board:
- Utilize quarterly meetings of Exhibitions Committee to galvanize support, test ideas, explore funding, and discuss timing
- Increase board capacity to 25 by 2019; actively seek candidates who add cultural diversity and relevant expertise
- Engage in yearly evaluation process to gauge functionality and cohesion of Board
- Re-examine committees to ensure alignment with strategic objectives
- Provide content-rich agendas for Board meetings that spark discussion and enhance bonding
- Regularly assess and share national trends to better situate KMA within field
- Chart quarterly and yearly financial goals with Board, Finance and Investment Committees

III. Stakeholders:

Docents and volunteers
- Activate volunteer network to engineer programs, provide administrative support, and work with education
- Identify team leader and volunteer liaison to create plan with staff
- Review options to manage docents/volunteers internally

Board of Overseers and Creative Council
- Appoint dynamic leaders to both groups, and evaluate names and value propositions for each group
- Build robust annual schedule of studio visits, tours, and trips to forge connections and build awareness
- Ensure annual time with Executive Director for elite membership categories

Katonah Museum Artists’ Association (KMAA)
- Identify presentation opportunities in lounge and other sites/times for participating members
- Continue one-on-one sessions with Executive Director and/or Curator
- Identify annual event-moment when members are welcomed and engaged
- Add links to KMAA on KMA website

Parent and child from ArteJuntos program visit the KMA
III. Evaluate and refresh fundraiser models to better reflect the interests and patterns of stakeholders

- Examine five-year profit-and-loss cycle of KMA galas to identify ways to maximize financial gain and enhance that experience
- Introduce at least one additional fundraiser that will not compete with other community events
- Refine auction format to identify optimal blend of live, online, and paddle raise scenarios
- Conduct market research on other museums' fundraising events including local and national peers

ORGANIZATIONAL FRONTIER continued

B. Fortify the financial future of the organization through aggressive Development initiatives that drive earned and contributed revenue

1. Actively advance members up the ladder through incentives, special events, and targeted fundraising that grow endowment

- Promote relationships with specific individuals capable of significant support to key exhibitions, programs and special initiatives
- Advance outreach to areas identified in market research as prime for growth including Putnam and upper Westchester counties
- Revise semi-annual appeal model to maximize potential, especially around gateway exhibitions
- Evaluate benefits of members at all levels to ensure competitive edge
- Work with real estate agents to identify and welcome newcomers

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Installation view OnSite Katonah 2016; foreground Caitlin Masley, Neo-habitat (after the Modernists), 2016, Courtesy of the artist; background Jason Peters, Going forth with intention, 2016, Courtesy of the artist
III. Amplify earned revenue opportunities that support KMA’s mission and direction

- Aggressively pursue granting opportunities through foundations, private and national funders
- Provide short-term food service in summer to test market; introduce summer option in conjunction with campus refurbishments
- Define rental opportunities by exploring “gaps” in exhibition schedule for galleries to be used for events
- Evaluate opportunities for corporations to underwrite sections of the season, building, or program

C. Simplify and strengthen institutional message through enhanced marketing and communications strategy

I. Refresh KMA brand to produce consistent and compelling graphic identity that permeates signage, printed materials and website

- Identify a designer or firm to refresh graphic identity that began with Chermayeff and Geismar
- Streamline newsletter into standard template or transition to electronic platform
- Ensure visible signage along Route 22 that is refreshed with each exhibition with bold and legible graphics
- Develop strict protocols for exhibitions, letterhead, online communications, email, newsletter, and other printed materials
- Ensure quality documentation (photo-video) across all outlets

II. Develop compelling marketing strategy that promotes visibility and timeliness of programs

- Establish marketing guidelines with calendar and protocol for internal circulation and preparedness
- Publicize programs well in advance of opening with short- and long-term releases
- Deploy Board expertise on marketing and communications efforts
- Research and identify key advertising outlets to strategically reach targeted audience as part of wider “positioning” strategy
- Initiate and maintain personalized relationships with editors, reviewers, and critics for long-lead coverage and support
- Develop ways to reach different age groups: fliers in town, “backpack mail,” social media, and other outlets

III. Remodel and invigorate website as a visible national/international platform

- Develop and adhere to streamlined look that reinforces KMA brand
- Create a space for edited information, feedback, and in-depth content
- Introduce regular video feeds and/or blogs with artist interviews, tours, and related links
- Provide a link to all programs, past, current, and future
- Enhance ticket-purchasing and registration capacity
- Create a community “bulletin board”

Amy Brener, Pool, 2016, Courtesy of the artist, OnSite Katonah 2016
Success is important to us, and we seek to gauge the four key frontiers of this Plan with strategies that are both quantitative and qualitative. A baseline assessment of all areas is a critical first step to establishing how we are doing over the four-year horizon of these goals. Our metrics are designed to be specific, achievable, realistic and time-bound. Metrics will be sought in the following areas:

BRAND RECOGNITION AND BUZZ
• Field recognition for high-quality exhibition and educational programming both locally and nationally through visible partnerships, press, blogs and posts, word-of-mouth, staff achievement/recognition, and increased visitorship
• Awareness of the KMA and its activities must travel to New York and beyond
• An identifiable “look” that expresses our energy, ambition, and focus permeates all that we do

STRONG, DIVERSE AND LOYAL AUDIENCE
• Increase and nurture core audiences of families (youth and parents) and professional adults
• Grow audience in targeted areas, including teens and college-aged students, as well as more distant geographic groups from Putnam County and out-of-state
• Attendance numbers reflect gains as does online traffic and social media hits; loyalty is gauged by repeat visits

REVITALIZED CAMPUS AND ONLINE RESOURCES
• Visible change to the campus and facility through outdoor art placement, artists’ commissions, active use of the grounds by community
• Landscaping of Upper and Lower campus, including sculpture garden, frontage along Route 22, and Reservoir Road brings new attention and use to the Museum
• Update of the KMA web platform

SOUND FINANCIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CORE
• Staff, Board, donors and key stakeholders bring diversity, expertise and commitment over the sustained period of the plan and beyond
• Measured growth in numbers and dollars of grants and Board giving
• Size of Board increased to reflect excitement and connectivity
• Experienced, capable staff brings leadership to the execution of the strategic plan
• Staff, Board, and stakeholders can enthusiastically endorse the KMA and speak to its organizational solidity