Letter from Vida Foubister, President and Craig Intinarelli, Vice President
(May 2022)

When the Museum’s doors reopened in July 2020 following our pandemic closure, Bisa Butler’s vivid quilt portraits of Black men, women, and children greeted us. Life-size and larger, their gazes met our eyes, the only feature of our faces visible as we walked wearing our masks through the galleries. Many of these portraits told stories of historical injustice, others celebrated marriage, friendship, and community, and some illustrated the energy, antics, and love of children and the strength and character of families. Bisa Butler: Portraits gave us a collective space in the aftermath of George Floyd’s death to reflect on the realities of racial inequity confronting Black and brown people in America today. The show was extended at the KMA and then traveled to the Art Institute of Chicago; it received national and international acclaim.

In the fall, the Museum launched The Rothko Room, a contemplative, chapel-like space to experience a work by the renowned 20th century master Mark Rothko. Untitled (1951), the first in an ongoing series, was followed in the spring by Untitled (1969) and Still Life with Clock and Vase (1958/39).

In October Hands & Earth: Perspectives on Japanese Contemporary Ceramics, our second major exhibition, took us to Japan. These ceramic objects, from the collection of Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz, drew us in with undulating, contrasting forms and colors. The show featured works by 35 Japanese ceramicists. Many have been recognized with prestigious awards and seven of these artists deemed Living National Treasures.

The Museum’s annual student show, Young Artists 2021, demonstrated the resiliency of youth during challenging times through works responding to the shared reality of remote learning and social isolation.

Still/Live, an exhibition in which artists embraced ‘alternate truths’ through new media, video, and photography that question notions of authorship, visibility, and perspective, concluded the year’s exhibition calendar. Our Spot Gallery and Learning Center presented installations by Tijay Mohammad and Beatrice Scaccia, and our grounds featured works by Ronald Bladen and Michele Oka Doner.

While in-person programming was limited to protect the health of our audiences, KMA staff, led by Executives Director Michael Gitlitz, pivoted to engage us remotely through artist conversations, director’s talks, and virtual exhibition tours. We became armchair culture enthusiasts as we connected with paintings, sculptures, and other forms of visual and performative arts from our homes. School and community programming also continued through distanced, outdoor, and remote formats, enabling the Museum to provide creative outlets at a time when few extracurricular activities were available for children and families.

At our virtual fall gala (Re)Vision 2020, we watched dancers engage with Butler’s portraits in our galleries, transcending time and space, and recognized the KMA as the event’s honoree. Our spring Himmel Award honored Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation, for his transformative work to address structural societal change.

Renewing our commitment to address social inequities across the arts, the Board of Trustees established an IDEA Committee focused on Inclusion, Diversity, Equality, and Accessibility. Its members worked with KMA staff to develop a Land Acknowledgment statement to recognize the displacement of Indigenous peoples, including the Ramapoo/Ramapough Tribal Nation, who originally inhabited the land the Museum now occupies.

At the fiscal year’s end, the Board offered its thanks to Gitlitz, who announced his resignation in June, for his enthusiastic leadership. We are grateful to him and to staff for their tireless dedication to the Museum, especially during this challenging pandemic year. We also acknowledge the commitment of our Trustees, Emeriti, and Advisory Board members, whose support was essential to our success as we launched our search for a new Executive Director to envision the future of the Museum in a new era. (As we write this letter, we are pleased to have announced Michelle Yun Mapplethorpe as our new Executive Director. She will begin her tenure on August 15, 2022.)

The world has changed in ways we could never have predicted. Yet these changes only renew our confidence in the KMA and its ability to transform itself to reach the periphery of this new reality and to flourish. We are, after all, a kunsthalte that is free to celebrate art of all times, places, and periods.
Despite the disruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020/21 the Museum mounted three major exhibitions, each of which explored complex relationships between past and present. After the KMA closed its doors in March 2020, the exhibition *Bisa Butler: Portraits*, the first solo museum exhibition of the artist’s work, hung unseen in the galleries for months. Thankfully, the exhibition opened in July, and visitors were finally able to see Butler’s vivid and larger-than-life quilts that capture African American history, identity, and culture. Programming for the show included two artist and scholar talks. The exhibition, which traveled to the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC), was organized by Associate Curator Michèle Wije and AIC Associate Curator of Textiles Erica Warren.

In the fall, the KMA hosted the traveling exhibition *Hands & Earth: Perspectives on Japanese Contemporary Ceramics*. The works on display provided a comprehensive survey of Japan’s ceramic tradition over the past 80 years, and explored how 35 of the most critically lauded ceramists practicing in Japan today balance tradition and innovation. The ceramics were brought to life through programming that included hands-on clay workshops in partnership with the Clay Art Center, a panel featuring several artists featured in the exhibition, and an installment of the KMA’s popular Picture and Prose program with author Leila Philip.
Still/Live
March 16 – June 27, 2021
Like Hands & Earth, which examined the intersection of the historical and the cutting-edge, the KMA’s spring exhibition Still/Live investigated how contemporary artists are reimagining the still life tradition. Rather than working in paint, the artists represented in Still/Live use new media, video, and photography to make the millennia-old still life tradition newly relevant today. They demonstrate that, rather than an historical artifact, the still life is a dynamic and enduring medium of expression. The exhibition was accompanied by a full program of events, including a conversation between Emily Handlin, the KMA’s Associate Curator of Exhibitions and Programs, and two of the exhibiting artists, as well as a series of workshops in the sculpture garden.

In addition to the KMA’s three major exhibitions, the museum also presented several smaller installations. In the summer and fall, the museum presented two exhibitions in the Spot Gallery as part of the Featured Artist program in collaboration with the KMAA. In the spring, the Spot Gallery was transformed for Beatrice Scaccia’s exhibition My Hope Chest, which included a stop-motion animation and site-specific wall drawing.

The Rothko Room
October 4 2020 – January 24, 2021
March 16 – June 27, 2021
The fall also saw the inaugural installation of the KMA’s The Rothko Room. Untitled (1951) was the first in an ongoing series of works by Mark Rothko presented by the KMA. Rothko envisioned the creation of spiritual “chapels” along the sides of highways where weary travelers could stop and contemplate one of his paintings. This vision inspired the KMA’s The Rothko Room, which offers the rare opportunity to spiritually re-charge in the presence of a single masterpiece, as Rothko intended. The second installation, which coincided with Still/Live, expanded to two works: Untitled (1969) and Still Life with Clock and Vase (1938/39). Programming has also allowed for a deeper understanding of Rothko and his work. The artist’s son, Christopher Rothko, gave a virtual lecture from the The Rothko Room, and the Museum hosted a panel discussion about Rothko Chapel: An Oasis for Reflection by Pamela Smart and Stephen Fox, published by Rizzoli.

Outdoors, Ronald Bladen’s Flying Fortress (1974-1978) and Host of the Ellipse (Mid-Scale) (1981), as well as Michele Oka Doner’s sculptures Primal Self Portrait (2008) and Mana (2015), were on view. The sound installation Go Where Light Is (Installation Version) (2016-2019) by Evidence (Stephan Moore and Scott Smallwood) was also installed in the Museum’s vestibule.
The Museum once again offered extensive programming to complement our exhibitions and strengthen the connection between the KMA and our members and other visitors. Early in the year, events were virtual, as social distancing and capacity restrictions continued to limit in-person activities. Finally, in the spring, in-person workshops and discussions in the Museum’s Marilyn M. Simpson Sculpture Garden recommenced, while we also continued to offer virtual events.

ARTIST AND SCHOLAR TALKS AND PANELS
In this series, the KMA invited artists to discuss their work, and scholars to expand upon the larger context of the exhibitions. During Bisa Butler: Portraits, artist Bisa Butler engaged in two virtual conversations with KMA Executive Director Michael Gitlitz about her work and influences as well as how narrative and identity inform her work. All proceeds from these conversations were donated to Black Lives Matter.

During Hands & Earth: Perspectives on Japanese Contemporary Ceramics, KMA Associate Curator Emily Handlin was joined by Clay Art Center Programs: Adults and General Audience teaching artists Keiko Ashida and Jeanne Carreau for a virtual tour of the exhibition followed by a demonstration of techniques and methods used by artists in the show. Dr. Handlin also moderated a panel comprised of collectors Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz, Hands & Earth artists Futamura Yoshimi and Takiguchi Kazuo, and gallerist and specialist in Japanese art Joan B. Mirviss. In this conversation, the panelists shared their passion for ceramics and their personal perspectives as artists and collectors. They also delved into the complex relationship between contemporary clay art and Japan’s rich ceramics tradition.

In April, Christopher Rothko discussed an often overlooked aspect of his father Mark Rothko’s work: the primary importance of form. This virtual event celebrated and enriched the ongoing series of works by Rothko presented by the KMA in The Rothko Room. Later the same month, Spot Gallery artist Beatrice Scaccia discussed her experience and creative process with a virtual audience. She enlightened listeners about the process behind the making of My Hope Chest, which combined stop-motion animation and site-specific drawing in a personal meditation on traditional gender roles. Viewers were also treated to a sneak peek at her current works in progress.

The final panel for the year was a discussion between Still/Live artists Claudia Hart and Will Pappenheimer, moderated by KMA Associate Curator Emily Handlin. Through her digital creations, Hart simulates moments and images, making still lifes come alive, playing with the fantasy of breathing life into the static. Pappenheimer is a Brooklyn-based artist with an interest in spatial interventions. His work explores the confluence of and tension between the virtual and physical worlds.

CONVERSATIONS WITH CULTURAL LEADERS
The Museum continued its tradition of inviting guests to salon-style conversations with the Museum’s executive director and cultural leaders in the arts, in a virtual format during this year.

The first guest in the series was Stephanie Wiles, Henry J. Heinz II Director of the Yale University Art Gallery. Executive Director Michael Gitlitz and Dr. Wiles discussed the Yale University Art Gallery and the driving forces affecting museums today.

The KMA also offered a conversation with Courtney J. Martin, Director of the Yale Center for British Art, and esteemed scholar of historical and contemporary art. Dr. Martin discussed her experience at the Dia Art Foundation and Yale and her thoughts about the future of museums.

To close out the series, curator Akili Tommasino joined Mr. Gitlitz for a discussion of the changing landscape of museums and their future. Mr. Tommasino is the Associate Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and an art historian and expert in 20th Century avant-garde art movements.
In January, the Museum presented a traditional tea ceremony. During the event, guests discovered the history and significance of a traditional Japanese Chado (The Way of Tea), tea ceremony. The intimate tea ceremony involved a live tea demonstration and lecture led by Marybeth Welch, an expert on the Urasenke Tea Ceremony, along with her associate Aya Takamosto, who comes from a family of tea practitioners whose work dates back to the 15th century.

On three Wednesdays in May, KMA Board Member and artist Marilyn Glass presented an adult drawing workshop in the Marilyn M. Simpson Sculpture Garden. These workshops explored how to sketch the personal and meaningful in your surroundings. Glass is a mixed media artist who studied at the Pratt Institute, The Art Students League, and the Silvermine Arts Center. She has taught collage to adults and children and has worked as an interior designer and a design editor for Bride’s Magazine and The Ladies Home Journal.

JEWELRY SHOW
Wearable works of art were offered in an online shopping experience just in time for the winter holidays. The virtual show encompassed a diverse array of contemporary jewelry from a curated selection of artisans. Representing 16 international artists, the pieces featured a variety of materials and techniques, including gold, silver, acrylic, glass, steel, porcelain, and diamonds. Participating artists Mia Hebib and Nirit Dekel also treated the KMA audience to virtual tours of their studios and discussed their process for creating wearable art. The 2020 KMA Jewelry Show was curated by Donna Schneider.

HIMMEL AWARD AND LECTURE
The Katonah Museum of Art’s Himmel Award and Lecture is an annual award in recognition of creators, conceivers, radical thinkers, and risk-takers who provoke new thinking in art and design. The Award is named in honor of Betty Himmel, who has been instrumental in defining the direction and mission of the Katonah Museum of Art and continues to be an arts advocate and community leader. In 2021, the award was presented to Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation, a leading nonprofit grantmaking organization. Walker and KMA Executive Director Michael Gitlitz discussed Walker’s depth of experience in the non-profit world and his transformative work with the Ford Foundation to address structural societal changes during this period of social and political disruption. This virtual Himmel Award and Conversation 2021 was dedicated to the memory of Mary Lou Beitzel and David Beitzel and in honor of the long legacy of support the Museum has received from the Beitzel family.

KMA TRAVELS
In between travel restrictions and Covid-19 surges, the Museum offered one trip into Manhattan for intimate tours of two of the Upper East Side’s most prestigious galleries. Participants enjoyed a sneak peak of the exhibition Seen/Unseen: New Artworks by Akiyama Yo and Kitamura Junko with Joan B. Mirviss, who has specialized in Japanese fine art for over forty years, and a private tour of the Munchin Gallery’s exhibition Church & Rothko: Sublime, which explored the aesthetic force of two American artists who provoked the formal boundaries of the sublime. Lunch outdoors at The Mark Restaurant by Jean-Georges featured innovative classics inspired by global cuisine.

COMMUNITY EVENTS
The KMA was happy to be the kick-off stop for Katonah Art Walks. Visitors to the Arts Walks are encouraged to stop at the Museum for free admission from 4–5 PM to take in the current exhibition before hitting the town to view shows in the local galleries, enjoy some evening shopping, outdoor music and to grab a bite or drink from one of Katonah’s dining options.

The Museum proudly participated in Rainbow Pride Day of Visibility, inviting the community to come and “chalk the walk” with messages of support for members of the LGBTQIA community. In March, the Museum was thrilled to host the 12th Annual Chili Cook-off hosted by the Katonah Chamber of Commerce. This year’s event was held contactless pick-up style, with ticket holders receiving a reusable jute bag, 8 chili samples, toppings, bread from local favorite LMNOP Bakery, a sweet floral gift from Wild Fig Floral, and other sides from local sponsors.

Above: Marybeth Welch; Right: Marilyn Glass
Flexibility and responsiveness were the core principles that guided this year’s education programming. With Covid-19 as an underlying concern throughout the year, the education department was challenged to listen to our audiences, adjust our offerings, and find new ways of connecting with our community. With the re-opening of the Museum on July 26, the education team developed individual art activity packets that were distributed to over 200 visiting youth and families. In lieu of in-person tours, we continued the virtual tour series Docent Dialogues, which reached over 900 people, and prepared virtual school tours for the fall. Our first in-person workshop was held on August 10, 2020, with Learning Center installation artist Tijay Mohammed. The garden became an outdoor classroom space as we welcomed 20 participants who faced by teachers and schools, 32 high schools were involved in the program, with 32 graphic design students, 25 student installers, and 250 artworks included, going as far as driving to students’ homes to pick up artworks and deliver them to the Museum.

In the spring, the Learning Center was transformed into works of art. Visitors were invited to leave their artworks on a display shelf in the Learning Center exhibition, Nature & Design. This cheerful event on a lovely fall day included clay demonstrations by artisans from the Clay Art Center in Port Chester, NY, a paper sculpture activity, and family tours that were also offered virtually. In addition, we shifted to a weekly Docent Highlights program which gathered nearly 300 participants from around the globe.

We faced another challenge with the reconfiguring of the Young Artists 2021 program to fit within Covid safety protocols. Despite the many challenges faced by teachers and schools, 32 high schools were involved in the program, with 32 graphic design participants, 25 student installers, and 250 artworks on view. Teachers went above and beyond to have their students’ work included, going as far as driving to students’ homes to pick up artworks and deliver them to the Museum.

In the spring, the Learning Center was transformed into a still life studio offering visitors an assortment of collected objects to design their own still life installations from which to create artworks. New activity packets and family gallery guides were distributed to over 200 families. Not So Still Life family day was held on May 18 and increased in scale, bringing in 120 participants. This multidisciplinary day included a partnership with Katonah Art Center teaching artists, our writer-in-resident, Pamela Hart teaching an “Ode to Object” activity, and dancer Milerka Rodriguez leading movement activities. Again, a beautiful day and extremely appreciative families made for a joyous community event.

Throughout the year our outreach and partnership programs were also accomplished successfully with modifications. Using the Bisa Butler: Portraits exhibition as inspiration for the fall season, ArteJuntos/Art Together reached over 320 families in partnership with 4 organizations: Mt. Kisco Head Start, Mt. Kisco Child Care Center, First Steps in Ossining, and Neighbors Link. In addition to creating bilingual packets for home-bound participants, facilitators Helena Vidal and Margaret Addax led some virtual sessions in the classroom. The program continued in the spring using still lifes as the theme. The season culminated with in-person Museum visits and additional families attending the Not So Still Life Family day. The excitement of having our outreach partners back in the Museum space was palpable to all. The highlight of the program was creating larger-than-life fruit and vegetable objects, which were then displayed in a still life arrangement in the final exhibition held at the school for parents to enjoy. The Thinking Through the Arts poetry program was also modified to take place on a virtual platform. Partner schools Thomas Cornell Academy and Katonah Elementary School participated in multi-session writing workshops. In addition, the anticipated launch of the new program Building Bridges: Prison Arts Initiative was at risk due to the Covid shutdown. However, in spring of 2021 our partner organization Rehabilitation Through the Arts (RTA), invited KMA’s writer-in-residence Pamela Hart to initiate her poetry curriculum over an email correspondence system. The results were a surprising success, leading to poetry prompts with over 25 participating men and women in 6 prison facilities, creating over 60 finished poems by the end of the year. The participants expressed deep gratitude for this program bringing much needed solace during a very difficult time. We are so grateful to our funders, supporters, volunteers, and participants who stuck with us throughout this challenging year and made these programs such a success.
Financials

The Katonah Museum of Art is a not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) museum chartered by the New York State Board of Regents as an education institution. Funding comes from grants, foundations, and corporations, individual contributions, membership, admission, benefits and events, and investment income.

REVENUE AND EXPENSES
July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

OPERATING REVENUE

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OPERATING EXPENSES

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<td>Education Expenses</td>
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<td>Management &amp; General Expenses</td>
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Operating Loss $(694,303)

Other Income $1,280,529

Investment Income, Net of Investment Fees Other Income $174,561

**Total Other Income** $1,455,090

Net Gain (Loss) per Financial Statements $760,787

Budgeted Endowment Draw $260,000

Event and Tour Volume

- In-Person Programs & Events for Adults
- In-Person Programs, Collaborations & Events for Youth & Families
- Virtual Programs & Events for Adults
- Virtual Programs, Collaborations & Events for Youth & Families

Visitorship by Region

- Westchester 51%
- New York City 20%
- Connecticut 13%
- New Jersey 4%
- Rockland & Long Island 5%
- Other 7%
- Putnam 2%
On Saturday, October 3, the KMA presented its first virtual gala. Playing off the theme for the pandemic-postponed gala Vision 2020, (Re)Vision 20/20 was dedicated to the KMA and those who sustained it during the months of quarantine through sharing art, community, and resilience. Chaired by Melissa and David Dilmaghani, (Re)Vision 2020 was virtually attended by over 225 supporters. While guests gathered around their screens at home to view the festivities, they enjoyed boxed dinners from Bedford Gourmet, goodies from an art tote with objects for the five senses, and followed along with a printed program which included hidden 3D images. The recorded portion of the evening offered video messages from the staff, board, and committee chair as well as a choreographed dance performance from Megan Williams Dance Projects highlighting Beat Butler: Portrait and the beauty of the museum itself. The live auction was conducted by Christy Williams Coombs of Sotheby’s and featured several works donated by the KMA’s own Artists’ Association members, a collection of rare wine, and a private yacht trip on Long Island Sound. One upside to the virtual format was the Museum was able to cut expenses in half and return even more of received donations to the KMA.

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