



Albright-Knox
Art Gallery

Connecting
and
Art,
Ideas,
People

2016–2026

Strategic Plan



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Elfvin Director and President
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Letter from the

Peggy Pierce Elfvig Director

and

President of the Board

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Fellow Buffalonians,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Albright-Knox we are pleased to share our Strategic Plan 2016–2026 that was inspired by and embodies our belief in the transformative power of art. As part of our everyday work and also in our long-term strategic vision, we channel this conviction into a range of endeavors and projects aimed at inspiring and empowering people from all walks of life. We approach our various institutional pursuits through a prism of practical idealism, keeping our minds focused on aspirational objectives and our feet planted firmly on the ground. We are committed not only to preserving the material histories of human ingenuity as revealed through the Albright-Knox’s collection, but also to fostering its foundation—creativity—among the diverse audiences we serve. Ultimately, by connecting art, ideas, and people we seek to preserve and shed new light on the important legacies of the past and to catalyze positive change in our community and in society at large.

As an organization we are many things: the nation’s sixth oldest art museum and, as *The New York Times* recently wrote, home to “one of the strongest modern and contemporary art collections in the United States”; a global beacon of Buffalo’s remarkable cultural ecosystem and a hub where people and ideas converge; and a place of introspection and innovation, discovery and learning. We are also a team that strives for excellence in everything we do. Most of all, however, we are an organization that exists—like the very community of which we are a part—in a constant state of becoming, seeking to look beyond the next hill as we embrace lessons from the path traversed.

Over the past few years, the Board of Directors and staff of the Albright-Knox have spent a substantial amount of time thinking together about the institution’s strategic priorities—of the past, the present, and the future. Our Strategic Plan 2016–2026 is the culmination of a creative, interactive, and iterative process. It lays the foundation for how we aim to deploy our institutional energies in the years to come and provides an important bridge between our history as the Albright-Knox Art Gallery and our future as the new Buffalo Albright-Knox-Gundlach Art Museum. The Strategic Plan is a living document that will continue to evolve as we reach milestones, as both a museum and a community.

One of the cornerstones of this Strategic Plan is AK360, our Campus Development and Expansion Project. AK360 aspires to transform the museum into a more welcoming environment and social space while elegantly ushering our aging facilities into the twenty-first century. The project will also introduce an entirely new component to the campus, a state-of-the-art building that we and our architectural partner, OMA/Shohei Shigematsu, hope will contribute to Buffalo's extraordinary architectural legacy. A new building and a transformed campus are integral to the museum we seek to become. However, above and beyond all of our practical needs, the most important question that our strategic planning process has prompted us to ask Shohei Shigematsu and his design team to resolve architecturally is this: How can we become a more inclusive museum that is physically and philosophically accessible to all members of our community?

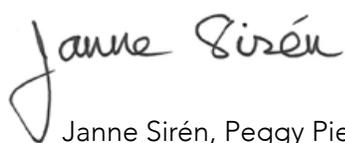
As a museum we stand on the shoulders of giants, pioneering artists, and visionary benefactors such as John J. Albright, A. Conger Goodyear, and Seymour H. Knox, Jr. Our identity as an institution has been shaped by them as it continues to be shaped by the people who so generously support our efforts today.

As we look with anticipation toward our future as the Buffalo Albright-Knox-Gundlach Art Museum, we also salute the past. In December 2017, our longtime benefactor and Chairman of the AK360 Capital Campaign Committee, Bob Wilmers, passed away. This Strategic Plan bears witness to Bob's dedication to education, community engagement, social justice, and collaboration between different organizations and the public and private sectors. As CEO and Chairman of M&T Bank, Bob understood that all organizations, whether publicly traded corporations or art museums, grow and succeed not because of their internal dynamics or quarterly results, but because of their complementary and symbiotic relationships with a range of different organizations and people from all walks of life.

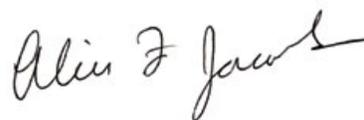
Many of the priorities, specific goals, and projects laid out in this Strategic Plan are within our reach today thanks to one individual, Jeffrey Gundlach. A visionary business leader, polymath, and strong believer in Buffalo's bright future, Mr. Gundlach's generosity and foresight have within a few short years catapulted our ideas and aspirations from the realm of dreams into reality. For this we are forever grateful, and we are honored and privileged to become Buffalo's AKG Art Museum.

We wish to thank the museum's Board of Directors, the members of the Strategic Planning Committee, and the Albright-Knox staff team led by Deputy Director Joe Lin-Hill and Director of Communications Maria Morreale for their dedication and hard work that brought this Strategic Plan into being at a crucial juncture in our institutional history. And we thank you—our visitors, Members, and volunteers, our partners in the public and private sectors, the community of visionary corporations and foundations in and beyond Western New York that believes in and sustains our efforts, the growing family of AK360 donors, and our community as a whole—for your support and trust. The Albright-Knox is a cultural treasure thanks to you.

We look forward to seeing all of you soon at your museum!



Janne Sirén, Peggy Pierce Elfvin Director



Alice Jacobs, President, Board of Directors



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

1

Present exhibitions, performances, and programs that challenge and inspire.

2

Seek tomorrow's masterpieces while developing our world-renowned collection of modern and contemporary art.

3

Create education programs for lifelong learning and discovery.

4

Engage and empower widening inclusive audiences.

5

Inspire open dialogue and common understanding.

Values

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

2018

**The Albright-Knox
Art Gallery**



2021

**The Buffalo
Albright-Knox-Gundlach
Art Museum**

Art

- Celebrating and sharing an extraordinary collection of modern and contemporary art
- Foregrounding the care and conservation that will preserve the collection for future generations
- Further activating the AK Public Art Initiative to bring world-class art beyond the museum and into Buffalo and the entire Western New York region

Ideas

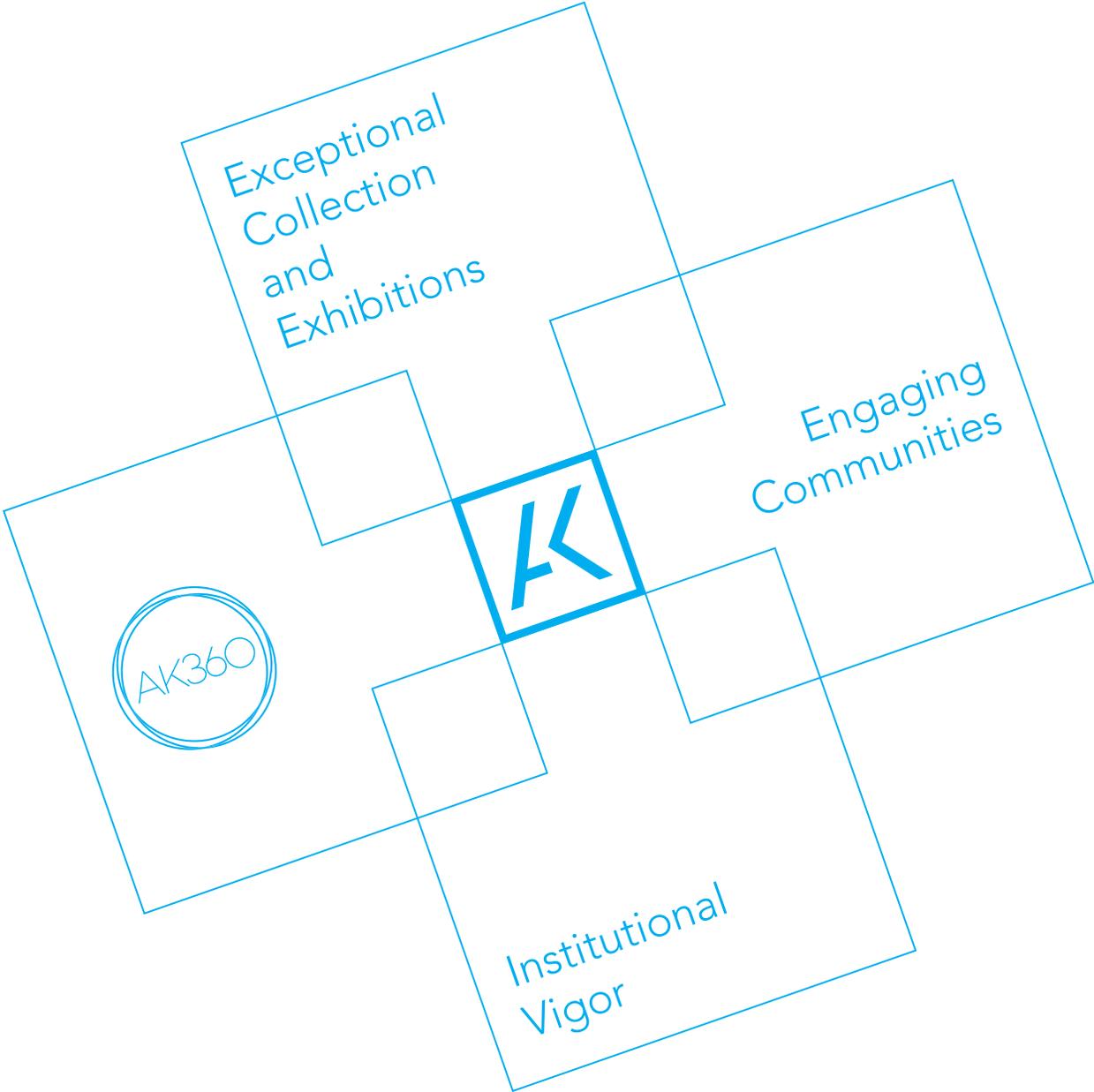
- Inspiring the cultural, creative, and civic life of Western New York
- Inviting visitors from all walks of life to engage with art, ideas, and one another
- Stimulating critical thought and sparking creativity

People

- Embracing a broad audience that reflects our diverse community
- Creating a philosophically and physically accessible campus that is welcoming to all
- Engaging broad community support and leadership to create a sustainable, vital museum for future generations



The Four Pillars of the Strategic Plan







**Strategic
Priority**



1 Exceptional Collection and Exhibitions

Since the founding of The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy in 1862, the institution has collected iconic works by pioneering artists. The result is a globally recognized, unparalleled collection of masterworks dating from the early modern period of art history to the present day. These masterworks are a cornerstone of Western New York's cherished cultural heritage.

We aspire to extend this legacy far into the future by acquiring and displaying cutting-edge work in the context of an ever-expanding field of global contemporary art, while also ensuring our ability to provide a panoramic view of artistic innovation and creativity to the diverse communities we serve.

We must also ensure that our collection is impeccably preserved for future generations, prioritizing the conservation of artworks in keeping with the highest standards in the museum field. The Albright-Knox aspires to enhance the region's civic and cultural life by providing access to artworks and exhibitions that are sources of wonder, enlightenment, and inspiration for generations to come.



The Fine Art Collection

- Organize exhibitions of artworks from the museum's collection that highlight important themes and trends in the chronology of modern and contemporary art and the bold collecting decisions that positioned the Albright-Knox to serve as a haven for pathbreaking artwork.
- Invest in expanding and broadening accessibility of digital content, enabling students, scholars, and the general public to benefit from research around our collection.

Exhibitions

- Ensure that modern and contemporary art remain at the core of the Albright-Knox's exhibition program, actively engaging the viewer in exploring and understanding the evolution of creative expression in our time. Tell the story of modern art through accompanying educational materials that reach beyond the traditional period-specific art history approach.
- Extend the range of contemporary art forms presented by the Albright-Knox and the dynamic presence of the museum throughout Erie County through the Public Art Initiative. Recognize the Public Art Initiative as an intrinsic means of engaging the art of our time and continue to develop public art projects based on collaborative social practice.

Publications and Scholarship

- Develop and distribute publications, including a new collection handbook, to consolidate research on the Albright-Knox's holdings and enhance the museum's reputation among scholars, curators, collectors, and the general public.

Conservation and Preservation

- Continue to prioritize conservation as a core function of the museum's standard operating activities.
- Optimize the off-site Collection Center as a secure state-of-the-art environment to preserve and provide efficient access to art holdings.



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Strategic Priority



Engaging Communities

As one of Buffalo's premier civic institutions, the Albright-Knox aspires to thrive as a vibrant cultural center and committed partner in the region's educational, social, and economic life. Moving beyond a museum's traditional role as a repository for artworks and a showcase for their display, the museum will forge connections with diverse constituencies that are reflective of our changing community. We will strive to connect audiences with exceptional artworks and groundbreaking ideas as the region evolves and prospers.



Vibrant Educational Programming

- Expand and enhance service to students throughout the region and especially in the Buffalo Public Schools. Work with educational leaders to gain greater understanding of needs, challenges, and opportunities, leading to improved student outcomes through new or enhanced programs. Develop after-school programs that augment educational opportunities for Buffalo Public Schools students.
- Utilize multiple channels within the museum to provide open, participatory, and creative educational experiences accessible to diverse audiences. Expand opportunities for in-gallery experiences that are accessible across linguistic barriers.
- Present a rich menu of classes, events, and programming to enhance understanding of art and diverse histories of art. Foster dialogue, encourage creativity and artmaking, and entertain and inspire diverse audiences, including adults and families.

Inclusive Outreach

- Lower barriers to access to enable more visitors from Western New York to visit and find meaningful experiences at the museum.
- Create opportunities for engagement and positive impact in surrounding communities.

Community Leadership and Collaboration

- Continue to collaborate with partners in the Elmwood Avenue Cultural District.
- Further develop the Innovation Lab as a unique and pioneering program that deploys the resources of the Albright-Knox as a catalyst for high-impact collaborations, facilitating interdisciplinary partnerships, social integration, and economic development in diverse sectors of the regional community.





**Strategic
Priority**





AK360 is the comprehensive Campus Development and Expansion Project that will transform our museum for future generations. The name AK360 reflects the fact that this will be the third time the museum has grown in the course of its 156-year history, each time at an interval of approximately sixty years. The name also manifests the museum’s embrace of feedback from the community, which asked that the Buffalo AKG look beyond its operational needs and take a 360-degree view of its position within Olmsted’s Delaware Park, as a celebrated cultural anchor in our region, and as a vital contributor to Western New York’s resurgence.

AK360 will expand and refurbish the museum’s indoor and outdoor spaces to create dynamic and welcoming environments in which visitors experience a larger portion of the collection—more than twice the number of masterpieces currently on display—as well as special exhibitions and educational programs in welcoming, aesthetically pleasing settings that encourage meaningful encounters with artworks and are conducive to social interaction and community engagement. The project will also integrate the museum’s campus with Frederick Law Olmsted’s Delaware Park, thereby transforming the museum into a place of convergence for visitors from across the region, nation, and abroad. AK360 seeks to embrace the unique role that a twenty-first-century museum can play in the resurgence of Buffalo and Western New York, serving as a vibrant community hub where people from all walks of life connect with ideas and with one another.

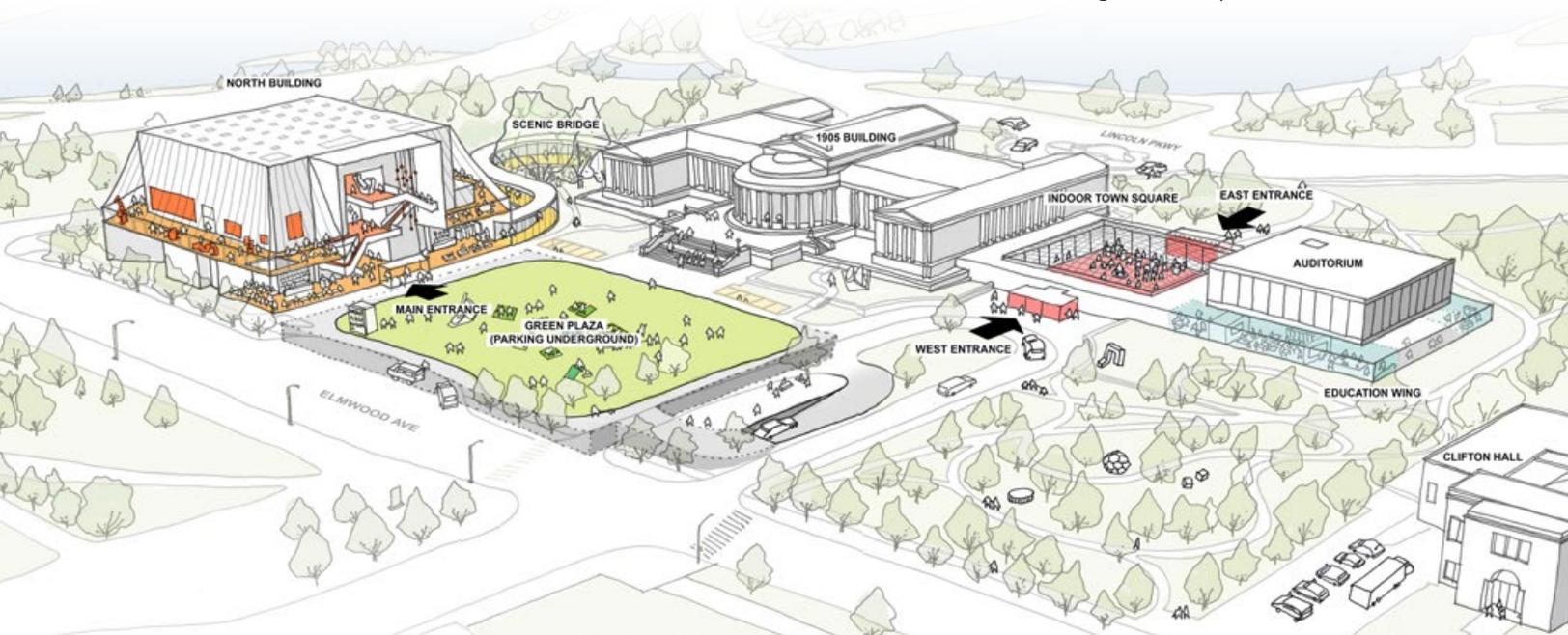


AK360 Campus Development and Expansion Project

- Achieve a total of 48,000 square feet of state-of-the-art exhibition space through renovating existing buildings and adding a new building.
- Develop a dedicated Education Wing with classrooms and artmaking spaces that enables the museum to broaden the scope of its educational programming, engaging new and broader audiences.
- Create an indoor town square that will serve as a multifunctional and inspiring civic events space, connecting guests with art, architecture, and innovative programs.

Connecting the Campus with the Surrounding Neighborhood

- Integrate artwork into the campus design as a means of beautifying the neighborhood, proclaiming the aesthetic function of the museum, and enticing passersby to visit the galleries.
- Ensure that the campus can accommodate social and cultural activities in all seasons, enlivening the grounds year-round and strengthening the museum's reputation and function as a social and civic space.
- Introduce as much green space on campus as possible, connect the public space of the surrounding Olmsted Parks System with the Albright-Knox campus, and introduce new vistas from within the museum to the surrounding landscape.







Strategic Priority



4 Institutional Vigor

In order for the Albright-Knox to achieve the goals set forth in the three preceding Strategic Priorities of our Strategic Plan, we must embrace principles of healthy growth, vitality, strength, and sustainability in all aspects of our operations. Intellectual strength, empowerment to act, and diversity of viewpoints among staff, volunteers, Members, supporters, and audiences will ensure the central role and relevance of the Albright-Knox in and beyond Western New York. Sound management and governance will provide the base on which the museum is able to grow and support its collections and exhibitions, community engagement activities, and the AK360 Campus Development and Expansion Project. The completion of the AK360 Capital Campaign will require vigor in every sense from the museum's leadership, staff, Members, and diverse constituencies. 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 revitalization of Western New York and for the generation of pioneering museum practices nationally and globally.

Activate and Inspire a Broader Base of Community Support

- Develop a long-term plan to increase the breadth and depth of the Albright-Knox's membership and the infrastructure of financial support.
- Conceptualize and implement new avenues for engaging future leaders of the Albright-Knox and expand current programs for younger generations of patrons.
- Collect and analyze data to better understand existing and potential audiences and to enhance the visitor experience for all audiences.
- Seek new sponsorships and collaborations that strengthen the role of the Albright-Knox as an inclusive hub of creative activities that engage broader and diverse audiences.

Foster Stewardship and Sustainability

- Achieve the goals of the AK360 Capital Campaign, securing full funding for the AK360 Campus Development and Expansion Project and committing 15% to 20% percent of the total campaign proceeds to the museum's operating endowment, thereby ensuring vitality of future operations.
- Adopt and regularly update a long-term financial model that is responsive to the priorities established by the Strategic Plan and other external factors.

Strengthen and Diversify Human Capital

- The Albright-Knox has an institutional commitment to diversity in all respects, including among its staff. Establish an annual review to ensure that the museum remains an equal opportunity employer for passionate, talented, and innovative individuals who represent a diverse array of racial, ethnic, and gender identities.
- Align recruitment processes with the goal of increasing the diversity of staff and volunteers, including members of the Board of Directors, so that the museum as an assembly of people reflects the diversity of communities it serves and evokes the principles expressed in its mission and vision.

Support and Promote the Albright-Knox as a Catalyst of Creativity

- Expand collaborations with partners in Buffalo and beyond that address the needs of the community and advance the museum's mission.
- Advance and develop the Public Art Initiative to further engage the community and stimulate interest in creative expression and other forms of creativity.





Small black informational plaque on the wall.



Contributors

The following people have devoted years of hard work to create this Strategic Plan that will guide the Albright-Knox on its path to becoming a new museum for a new era, the Buffalo AKG Art Museum. We name them here with gratitude and appreciation for their passion and commitment.

Leadership Team

Melissa Arena, Chief Financial Officer
Cathleen Chaffee, Chief Curator
Jennifer Foley, Director of Education and Community Engagement
Bryan Gawronski, Director of Operations
Jillian Jones, Director of Advancement
Joe Lin-Hill, Deputy Director
Maria Morreale, Director of Communications
Janne Sirén, Peggy Pierce Elfvin Director

Strategic Planning Committee

Board of Directors

Monica Angle
Susan O'Connor Baird
Robert T. Brady
Pamela Dinsmore
Roscoe Henderson III
Thomas R. Hyde
Alice F. Jacobs, Chair
Northrup R. Knox, Jr.
Frederick G. Pierce II

Non-Directors

Victoria Beck Newman, Former Board Member
Karen Lee Spaulding, Former Deputy Director
Nancy Stevens, Former Ex-Officio Board Member

Staff Representatives

Russell Davidson, Innovation Lab and Special Projects Manager
Joe Lin-Hill, Deputy Director
Janne Sirén, Peggy Pierce Elfvin Director

Strategic Plan Task Force

Melissa Arena, Chief Financial Officer
Jennifer Foley, Director of Education and Community Engagement
Pamela Hatley, Head of Publications
Joe Lin-Hill, Deputy Director
Maria Morreale, Director of Communications

Images

Inside front cover: The 1905 and 1962 Buildings of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. Photograph by MK Photo.

Page 3: Visitors explore the exhibition *Out of Sight! Art of the Senses* (November 4, 2017–January 28, 2018). Photograph by MK Photo.

Page 7: Visitors explore the exhibition *Takashi Murakami: The Deep End of the Universe* (November 4, 2017–January 28, 2018). Photograph by MK Photo.

Pages 9–10: Visitors explore the exhibition *Picasso: The Artist and His Models* (November 5, 2016–February 19, 2017). Photograph by Tom Loonan.

Page 11: Visitor with Jackson Pollock's *Convergence*, 1952. Oil on canvas, 93 1/2 x 155 inches (237.5 x 393.7 cm). Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Gift of Seymour H. Knox, Jr., 1956 (K1956:7). © Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photograph by MK Photo.

Page 13: A visitor explores the exhibition *Out of Sight! Art of the Senses*. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, "Untitled" (*Water*), 1995 © Felix Gonzalez-Torres. Photograph by MK Photo.

Pages 15–16: Artist Shantell Martin performs a live drawing at the museum as part of her exhibition *Shantell Martin: Someday We Can* (March 11–June 25, 2017). Photograph by Tom Loonan.

Page 17: Naila Ansari performs during Radical Women's Night Out on April 19, 2018. Photograph by Tom Loonan.

Page 19: Society for the Advancement of Construction-Related Arts students at Assembly House 150. Photograph by Tom Loonan.

Pages 21–22: Families work on an art activity during M&T FIRST FRIDAY @ THE GALLERY. Photograph by MK Photo.

Pages 23: View from Elmwood Avenue toward campus looking northeast.

Page 25: North building, second-floor promenade looking west toward Elmwood Avenue. From left: Mickalene Thomas's *Interior: Monet's Blue Foyer*, 2012. Sarah Norton Goodyear Fund, 2013 (2013:3a-e). © Mickalene Thomas / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Roy Lichtenstein's *Picture and Pitcher*, 1977 (cast executed 1978). Edmund Hayes and Charles Clifton Funds, 1978 (1978:22). © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein; David Smith's *Tanktotem IV*, 1953. Gift of Seymour H. Knox, Jr., 1957 (K1957:15). © Estate of David Smith / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. All Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York.

Page 26: AK360 Campus Development and Expansion Project: architectural overview.

Pages 27–28: View from Elmwood Avenue toward campus looking northeast.

Page 29: The 1905 Building of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. Photograph by Tom Loonan.

Pages 33–34: A school group tours *Shade: Clyfford Still / Mark Bradford* (May 26–October 2, 2016). Pictured from left are Bradford's *Opulence*, 2016 (Mixed media on canvas, 144 1/4 x 102 1/4 inches (366.4 x 259.7 cm); Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth) and *Legendary*, 2016 (Mixed media on canvas; two parts: 60 x 72 inches (152.4 x 182.9 cm) each, 60 x 144 inches (152.4 x 365.8 cm) overall; Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth). Photograph by Tom Loonan.



Albright-Knox
Art Gallery

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