

# KC STUDIO

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

**No other arts organization impacts the arts in our region more than *KC Studio***



**Celebrating 15 years stimulating audience development and support for the arts**

You know our flagship magazine featuring informed authoritative coverage of the best art, dance, music, theater, film and literary arts in Kansas City. But that's not all.

We also have a robust presence on **social media**, **monthly arts reviews** on [kcstudio.org](https://kcstudio.org) and a partnership with **Google Arts & Culture** featuring over 150 images in an ongoing virtual exhibition.



20 E. Gregory Blvd. | Kansas City, MO 64114 | 816-361-0616 | [aefkc.org](https://aefkc.org)

**THE ARTS ENGAGEMENT FOUNDATION OF KANSAS CITY BOARD MEMBERS:**

**Officers:** H. Guyon Townsend III, *Chairman*; Dalene Bradford, *Vice-President*; Linda Lyon, *Treasurer*; Jim Blair, *Secretary*

**Board of Directors:** Mo Dickens, Danielle Doerhoff Hill, Joan Horan, Sly James, Kathy Liao, Cesar Lopez, Susan Schmelzer Ph.D.

**Executive Director:** Heidi Nast; **Advisor:** Pete Browne, *Kissick Construction Company*; **Founding Vice-Chairman:** C. Stephen Metzler †, *Director Emeritus*

## FROM KC STUDIO'S CO-FOUNDERS

*KC Studio* was formed 15 years ago to fill the gap left by a sharp decline in arts journalism in Kansas City and the region. In 2011, *Review Magazine* folded. In 2015, the *Kansas City Star* ended its dedicated arts coverage and laid off staff dedicated to arts coverage. In 2018 KCMetropolis, a source of online reviews, closed.

**Today, *KC Studio* is the only source of professional arts journalism for Kansas City audiences, artists, and arts organizations.**

*KC Studio* goes beyond covering the mainstream arts and cultural organizations. **There is an intentional focus on diversity and inclusion in our coverage.** Since 2020, 73% of our feature stories have been on artists from the African American, Hispanic, Asian and LGBTQ+ communities. 71% of our covers have featured artists from diverse backgrounds. If artists are going to make Kansas City their home and continue to make this a thriving arts community – they need to be known. Our features and reviews build audiences and customers for artists and arts organizations.

*KC Studio* is published by the Arts Engagement Foundation of Kansas City, a 501c3 dedicated to building audiences and increasing participation in the arts through education and promotion of the region's cultural offerings. **Our board** is as diverse as the artists and arts organizations we cover.

Professional arts journalism is critical to the growth of the arts community. Kansas City arts organizations are struggling to rebuild audiences post COVID-19. Objective reviews and critical arts coverage help arts organizations demonstrate quality, build audiences, and secure funding from national arts funders. Arts journalism can increase accessibility to the arts and amplify important works of performing and visual art, including those addressing rising social challenges. These constituents consistently report that *KC Studio* has a dramatic and positive impact on the arts community.

Over 14,000 households subscribe to *KC Studio* and thousands more visit our website. The community is hungry for arts information, in fact, 71% of our readers in a recent survey March 2023 said they use *KC Studio* to make their arts participation plans.

*KC Studio's* key accomplishments include providing exposure in our pages to more than 14,484 arts organizations and individual artists since our inception; driving the arts economy (61% of our readers spend money on arts purchases), launching a comprehensive, digital marketing platform to broaden our reach to younger and online arts audiences; and establishing *KC Studio* as the go-to publication for audiences making decisions about arts activities.

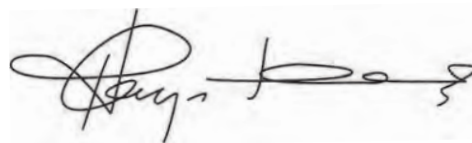
Contributed support from our donors has played a significant role in providing general operating support to allow us to pay for writers and photographers to bring the arts alive, allowing us to serve arts organizations and artists.

General operating support is more critical than ever as we have experienced an unprecedented increase in production costs, and we are still struggling to bring earned revenue back to pre-COVID levels.

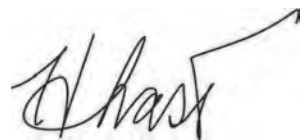
Our hope is that the information provided demonstrates why your annual support is vital for *KC Studio* moving forward. We thank you for your long-time support of our efforts to ensure that Kansas City remains a vibrant arts community.

We are most grateful for this opportunity, and we thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



H. Guyon Townsend III  
**President & Publisher**



Heidi Nast  
**Executive Director**

## FROM THE EDITOR

PHOTO BY MARK BERNDT



Alice Thorson, Editor, *KC Studio*

As we conclude our 15th anniversary year, *KC Studio* continues to build on our record of energized and insightful coverage of all sectors of Kansas City's diverse and multitalented arts community.

In the past year several stories looked at different facets of the year's biggest local arts project: the creation of public art for the new terminal at Kansas City International Airport.

In-depth profiles introduced our readers to topics and talents including Steve Snell, an "adventure artist" who made art as he canoed all 2,341 miles of the Missouri River; a new project by eminent American artist Janine Antoni in Lawrence, where she created a Walking Labyrinth at the KU Field Station, and Luna Flare, a practitioner of the art of Cosplay.

Other stories have covered the activities and contributions of artists including musician Enrique Chi, founder of Art as Mentorship and front man for the band Making Movies; actor and playwright Lewis Morrow, author of a trilogy of intense family dramas about Black life; and nonbinary fashion designer Dustin Loveland.

In every issue we showcase the commitment and creativity of KC artists and institutions in our Honors and Artist to Watch columns as well as our Artist Pages, which this year included a major spread on an exhibit of art by Asian and Asian American artists in Kansas City at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, and an 8-page section of E. G. Schempf's glorious photographs of Southwestern Native American Jewelry from the Nerman Museum Collection accompanied by an informative essay.

Our writers produced fascinating articles about such intriguing and relevant shows as a digital exhibit produced by the National WWI Museum and Memorial exploring German propaganda targeting Muslims, the award-winning "Redlining" exhibit at the Johnson County Museum, and "Rooted Among the Ashes," an exhibit of haunting photographs of A-bombed trees in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by Kansas City native Katy McCormick at the Truman Library and Museum.

Last year, we launched two new series: "The Art of Blackness," by Harold Smith, in which the author delves deep into the creative dimensions of such important cultural manifestations as Gospel music, soul food and Black preaching. We were also pleased to have the opportunity to publish short personal essays from KC writer Andrew Johnson's "In Praise Of" series, on topics ranging from okra to owls.

In 2022-23 *KC Studio* continued to track important milestones at area cultural organizations, including the 25th anniversaries of the American Jazz Museum and the Mattie Rhodes Art Center, the Kansas City

Museum's announcement of Stage II of its ambitious restoration and the reopening of the renovated lower level of the World War I Museum and Memorial.

In print and online, we advance and review important performances and exhibits from the city's major arts organizations, including Lyric Opera KC, Kansas City Symphony, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance, KCRep, the National WWI Museum and Memorial, The Truman Library and Museum, the Kansas City Museum and Union Station. We also keep readers in the know about savvy and ambitious smaller ventures like The Black Creatures, Landlocked Opera, Opus 76, Ensemble Iberica and the KU Asian Classical Music Initiative.

We are fortunate to be able to share the ideas and insights of established columnists, including Julius Karash (Business and the Arts); Steve Paul (See Hear: Rambling around the Arts) and Libby Hanssen (Concert to Come), as well as specialists in their fields such as Harold Smith (African American art and culture), and Emily Spradling (LGBTQ+ cultural issues).

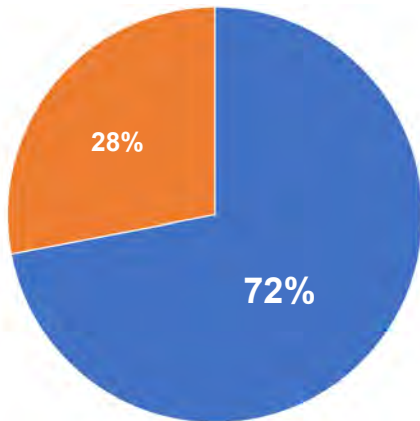
In the past year, *KC Studio* has continued to develop a robust online presence through our regular online reviews. In a 12-month span, we covered 26 visual art exhibitions and 65 theater, dance, and music performances at venues ranging from Kansas City, Kansas Community College Gallery to the Black Box in the West Bottoms and the Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art in St. Joseph.

— Alice Thorson, Editor, *KC Studio*

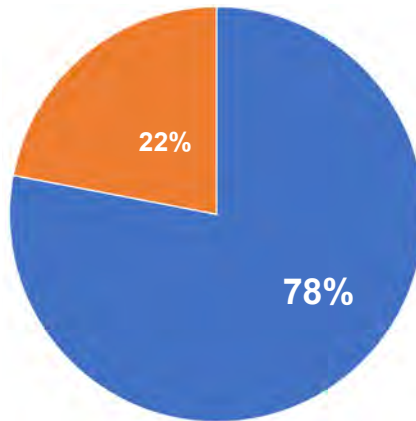
## AUDIENCE AND REACH

***KC Studio* readers are actively engaged in the arts and use our coverage to help make their choices of what to attend.**

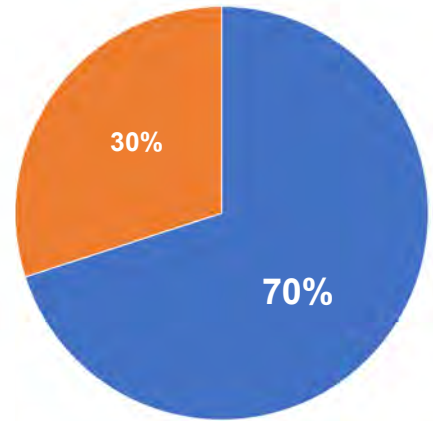
72% of surveyed readers regularly access *KC Studio*'s Calendar of Events versus other sources



78% of surveyed readers attend guest lectures at galleries or the public library



70% of surveyed readers have used *KC Studio* to make decisions about specific arts activities



*KC Studio* Readership Survey, October, 2022

## TESTIMONIALS FROM SATISFIED READERS

"Many thanks to *KC Studio* for your coverage of Belger Arts exhibitions and programs, and to Linda Lighton for the Lighton Fund's support of visual art reviews." — **Consuelo Cruz, Vice President Marketing and Community Engagement, Belger Cartage Service, Inc. and Affiliated Companies**



Kansas City is fortunate to have a magazine that is about the arts in our lively city as New York and Chicago. *KC Studio* is full of wonderful things with Alice Thorson as editor and many well-known outstanding writers of all the arts. I'm always excited when *KC Studio* arrives in my post box every other month of the year. Thank you for *KC Studio* for Kansas City, we love you." — **Jane Voorhees**

"*KC Studio* helps make the Entire Greater Kansas City community not only great...it also adds a degree of informed sophistication for all of us and for our visitors." — **Stanley Bushman**



Thanks for all you do to assess, highlight and champion the Arts in Kansas City and beyond! — **Robin Trafton, The Box Gallery**



"Our executive director, Michael Donovan, receives *KC Studio* in the mail, and he and I fell in love with the story about and the beautiful photos of Tuba Christmas. Thanks to your online magazine, we are able as of today to feature the story and the photos on our website homepage (plus our Facebook and Twitter cover photos). We credit and link to *KC Studio*, the Symphony and Mr. Barcus. We'll have the photos and the links up all month long." — **Barbara MacRobie, Public Information Coordinator, Missouri Arts Council**

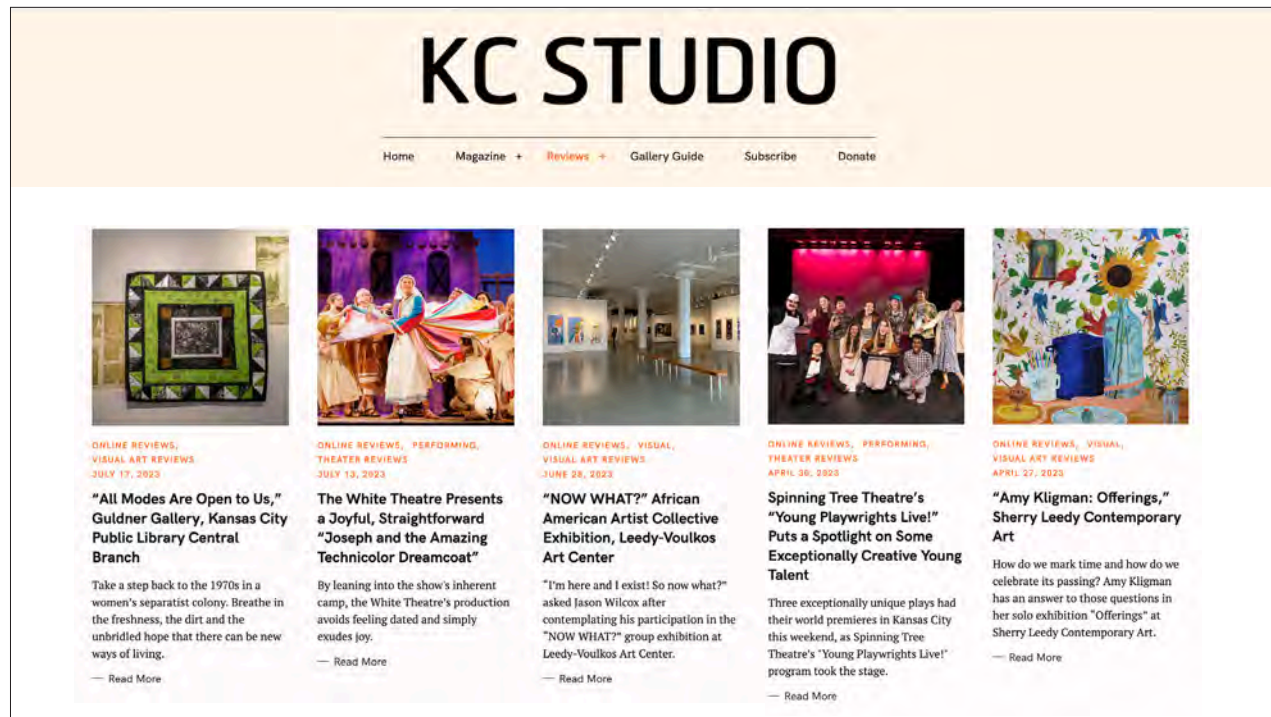




## ONLINE PRESENCE

### KCSTUDIO.ORG POSTS ONLINE REVIEWS EVERY WEEK

Readers can find new reviews every week of the best in visual arts, theater, Performing and Classical Music and Dance on *KC Studio*'s website. Calendar year 2022–2023 all organizations are notified about the review to share on their website and with constituents the day of release. These reviews are shared on our Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly know as Twitter), LinkedIn, and in our biweekly review's newsletter. From the opening season September 2022 through August 2023, *KC Studio* has reviewed 65 performing/Classical Music & Dance organizations performances and 26 visual art exhibitions.



### ONLINE REVIEWS TESTIMONIALS

"Thanks for keeping classical music journalism alive in KC!"  
— **Deborah Sandler, General Director and CEO, Lyric Opera of Kansas City**



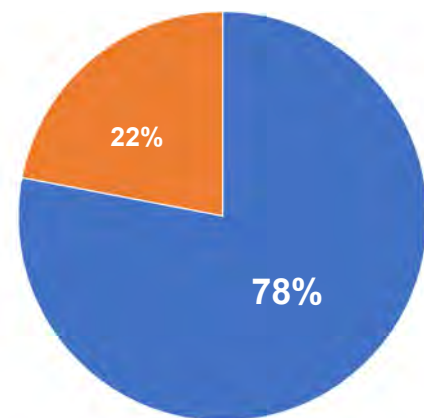
"Thank you for the exposure and the link. We'll be sure to share. Our best . . ." — **Jeff Barker, Director of Marketing, Kansas City Symphony**



"Wow, I am so pleased to hear that SOMEONE will be doing performance reviews since our Kansas City Star decided that they are unimportant. Thank you!" — **Don Loncasty, Kansas City Choral**



### CRITICAL ART REVIEWS ARE IMPORTANT TO 78% OF SURVEYED *KC STUDIO* READERS



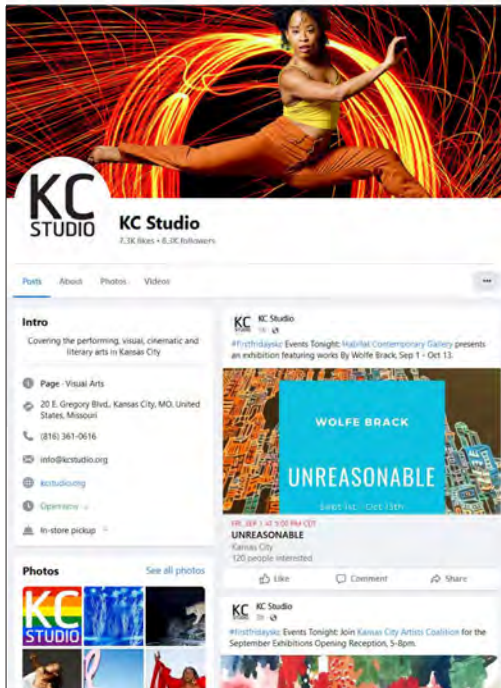
■ Consider Art Reviews Important  
■ Other

## SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

Reaching younger people and connecting them to KC's vital arts scene is essential to building our city's future art audience. *KC Studio* appeals to younger readers by posting content on popular platforms.



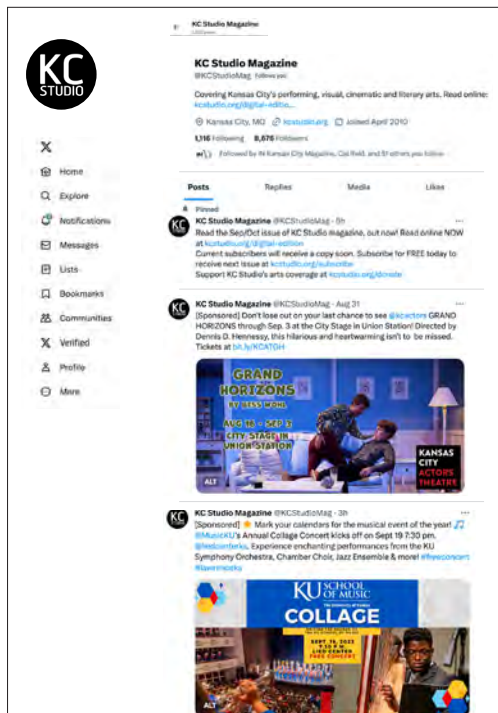
Facebook: 8.2k Followers



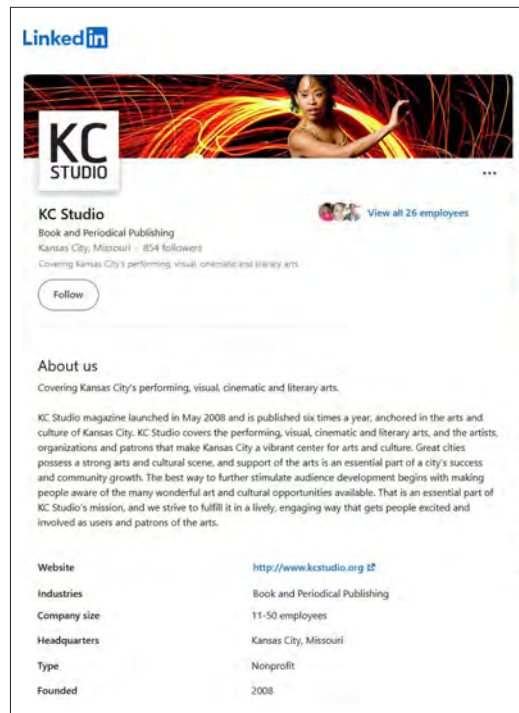
Instagram: 3,594 Followers  
Gender: 64% Women / 36% Men



(Formerly known as Twitter)



LinkedIn





## COMMENTS FROM KC ARTS INFLUENCERS

PHOTO BY MARK BERNDT



**JOSÉ FAUS**

"The latest copy of *KC Studio* arrives at the house. In its pages, I recognize friends and makers, and others whose names have dropped in conversations. Critical reviews, interviews and profiles fill the pages. Upcoming shows and exhibitions set the calendar, while memorials honor the passing of key figures in the arts firmament. With every issue, this project becomes the chronicle of a metropolis in the process of embracing the mantle of a cultured city."

— **José Faus**



**PETE BROWNE**

"Kansas City is fortunate to have this highly regarded journal celebrating the thriving literary, visual, and performing arts in our midst. *KC Studio* uniquely pairs extensive digital content with a beautiful print publication, immersing the reader in its well curated pages and inspiring a desire to explore more in person. I consider *KC Studio* critical infrastructure in our growing arts economy and count the publication as essential to an engaged community." — **Pete Browne/President of the Board; Kansas City Public Library**



**LISA MERRILL HICKOK**

As Kansas City's only all-inclusive guide to the arts, *KC Studio* has become an indispensable partner for Park International Center for Music. We count on the publication to connect us directly with our audiences, as they provide the most highly targeted messaging to potential ICM concert ticket buyers and patrons available in the Midwest. Before joining the Park University team, I was a devoted subscriber for many years. And, the *KC Studio* staff is AMAZING, too! — **Lisa Merrill Hickok, Executive Director, Park University ICM**



**GORDON KAUFFMAN AND ANNE MARIE KAUFFMAN**

"More than a magazine, *KC Studio* showcases the uplifting spirit and events of our community. That takes talent, and we know it when we see it. It also takes the right resources: leadership with a purpose, a capable staff of people who care, local support, and a strong network of contributors — and of course, the ability to put it all together into a quality publication. Kansas City is fortunate to have this in a single journalistic periodical. True to the creativity of the Arts, *KC Studio* continues to reinvent itself. Every issue brings a fresh new look. Thanks, and Kudos!" — **Gordon Kauffman, The Kauffman and Wise Family**

**ALLAN A. KING**

"*KC Studio* magazine is as essential to the KC art scene as the Nelson-Atkins, Kemper Museum, KCAI, and all the other art venues in the metropolitan area. Contributors are topical experts, and their writings are professional and in depth. Alice Thorson's editorials are insightful and informative, and, when necessary, she challenges institutional policy and decisions (as it should be). If you really want to know what's happening with art in KC, this is the go-to publication. I LOVE this magazine!"

— **Allan A. King**



## COMMENTS FROM KC ARTS INFLUENCERS *(Continued)*



PHOTO BY MISHA KLIGMAN

### AMY KLIGMAN

"KC Studio's exclusive focus on the Kansas City art scene, with an emphasis on being a platform for visibility for Kansas City's artists, is a key contributor to the arts ecosystem. KC Studio helps foster feedback and audience, both of which are key needs for artists trying to build their career."

— **Amy Kligman, Executive/Artistic Director, Charlotte Street Foundation**



### SUE AND LEWIS NERMAN

"The arts are fundamental to our humanity. They inspire us —fostering beauty, creativity, empathy, and curiosity. Kansas City is strengthened by our vibrant arts community which makes it a great place to live, work and thrive."

— **Sue and Lewis Nerman**



PHOTO BY TINT

### PETRA KRALICKOVA

"KC Studio is a key partner for The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures in our work to connect with the community and fuel the art of imagination. From highlighting upcoming exhibits to placing a spotlight on fine-scale miniatures and antique toys, we're grateful to have the support of KC Studio to help tell our story."

— **Petra Kralickova, Executive Director, The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures**

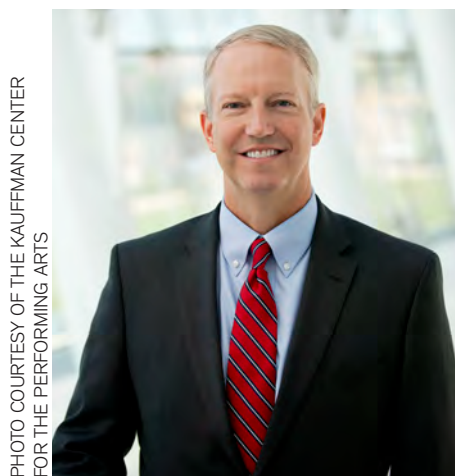


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE KAUFFMAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

### PAUL SCHOFER

"The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts is proud to support KC Studio for its excellent work in providing greater awareness in the wonderful arts offered throughout the Kansas City community. Their arts coverage is exceptionally thorough and regularly spotlights stories not often available elsewhere. We at the Kauffman Center are honored to have been featured in many of them." — **Paul Schofer, President and Chief Executive Officer, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts**



PHOTO BY BOB GREENSPAN

### JULIÁN ZUGAZAGOITIA

"I feel that it is very important to support an arts publication in our robust arts community. I served as an advisor in the creation of KC Studio's Arts Consortium and believe in their publication. I grew up gaining my own passion for the arts through the pages in magazines that led me to where I am today."

— **Julián Zugazagoitia, CEO, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art**



### The Arts Engagement Foundation of Kansas City

Financial Commentary for Annual Report

September 18, 2023

This fiscal year has continued to be a challenge as Arts Organizations are still recovering and our revenue earned has not rebounded to pre-covid levels. The good news is, while we are projecting a loss of \$62,000 it is a 17% improvement over last year and there is a conservative budget in place to restore the Foundation to profitability.

#### Observations:

**Earned Revenue:** revenue earned is flat to last year. Print advertising is down 15% but our new digital offerings, introduced over the last year, are UP 65%. These new digital services were added over the last year because of the consultant we engaged to develop a long-term strategic plan for revenue earned.

We have budgeted an increase in revenue of \$92,000. \$55,000 of that is the Art City Special Project. When looking at the budget – the “discounts” are actually already considered in the revenue goals the salespeople have been given. So budgeted revenue is net of discounts.

**Contributed Revenue:** Looking at the profit and loss it would appear that fundraising is flat; however, if you remove two ONE TIME projects from the previous fiscal year (Charlotte Street \$45,000 and the Volland \$9100) , our base fundraising is up \$56,208. That is a very encouraging sign that our readers and local foundations continue to value the contribution we are making to the arts community. To be conservative we have budgeted contributed revenue to be fairly flat. I am sure we will outperform the budget as our new Grant Writer is exploring new sources of contributed revenue. But Hall Family Foundation has stopped their support, which amounted to \$20,000.

**Expenses:** Despite major increases in production costs and postage, we have been able to hold these costs by controlling page counts and keeping other costs under control. They are anticipated to increase for the budgeted year.

The increase in salaries is due to the addition of a web/online staff position added this fiscal year. The individual had been working for Townsend but was spending 100% of her time on *KC Studio*. So, Townsend reduced the management fee and transferred her to be an employee of the Foundation. This has had several benefits – mainly this longtime staffer is now closely connected to the Foundation / *KC Studio* team. With our evolving focus on digital offerings, it is important that this individual feels close alignment with the team, and it has had a big impact on communications and new product development.

The administration fee was reduced for the web person. In addition, The Foundation has not been able to keep up with its share of overhead expenses and in addition to the web person Townsend looked at the bare bones expenses that the Foundation needed to cover. For example, even though the accounting team spends over 60% of its time on the Foundation, we decided if the foundation went away, we would not reduce accounting staff – so we eliminated that charge.

The reduction of contract services reflects the ending of our sales consultant’s contract.

The budget calls for a lot of expenses remaining flat – we need to really watch expenses to get back into a profitable position.

**The Arts Engagement Foundation of Kansas City  
Profit and Loss**

	2022-2023	2021-2022	2023-2024 Budget
<b>Income</b>			
Earned Revenue	385,142	386,668	477,815
Contributed Support	264,562	268,451	274,720
Lighton Program	85,000	10,000	85,000
Miscellaneous Revenue	300	106	
Total Other Types of Income	300	106	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>735,004</b>	<b>665,225</b>	<b>837,535</b>
<b>Total Cost of Goods Sold</b>	<b>187,592</b>	<b>179,221</b>	<b>208,642</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>547,412</b>	<b>486,004</b>	<b>619,654</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Salary and Wages	378,611	327,411	379,568
Benefits	26,366	16,671	26,366
Outside Labor	5,400	5,400	5,400
Sales Expense	4,664	4,396	4,885
Adv and Promotion	2,856	839	2,856
Administrative Expense	83,204	142,951	56,800
Lighton Program Expenses	63,063	30,022	63,063
Freelance Writer Special Project		14,750	
Miscl Exp	-	26	
Contract Services	17,895	56,940	12,877
Equip Rental	1,838	600	1,838
Operational Expenses	-	2,449	
Insurance and Bank Charges	3,736	7,566	3,736
Reviews	18,935	7,857	18,935
Promotion and networking	99	1,352	
QuickBooks Payments Fees	3,056	239	3,056
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>609,724</b>	<b>619,471</b>	<b>578,876</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>(62,312)</b>	<b>(133,467)</b>	<b>50,016</b>
<b>Other Income</b>			
Non-taxable loan forgiveness		57,860	
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>57,860</b>	
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>57,860</b>	
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(62,312)</b>	<b>(75,607)</b>	<b>50,016</b>

# KC STUDIO

COVERING KANSAS CITY'S PERFORMING, VISUAL, CINEMATIC AND LITERARY ARTS

KC Studio Magazine is published by The Arts Engagement Foundation of Kansas City, a 501(c)(3) philanthropic organization dedicated to promote engagement and increase participation in the arts in Kansas City. We would like to thank the following Foundations, organizations and individuals for their generous support.

*U.S. Trust, Bank of America, N.A., as Trustee, Louis & Elizabeth Nave / Flarsheim Charitable Foundation*  
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*Estelle S. and Robert A. Long Ellis Foundation*  
*Ever Glades Fund*  
*J. Scott Francis / Francis Family Discretionary Fund*  
*James M. and Gretchen B. Gearin Fund*  
*Hall Family Foundation*

*Jedel Family Foundation*  
*Lighton Fund*  
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ARTS CONSORTIUM	ARTS PARTNERS	COMMUNITY PARTNERS
Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art, The Arts and Recreation Foundation of Overland Park, Harriman-Jewell Series, Kansas City Actors Theatre, Kansas City Museum, Kansas City Public Library, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, Midwest Trust Center at Johnson County Community College, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Park University International Center for Music, Powell Gardens, Theater League	Metropolitan Ensemble Theatre, National WWI Museum and Memorial, Olathe Public Library	Greater Kansas City Japan Festival, Gladstone Area Chamber of Commerce

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 Jane Voorhees  
 Emily and Todd Voth  
*In Memory of Roch Herrick,*  
*In Honor of Mary O'Dell Swett*

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*In Memory of my brother Ford Ladd*  
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*In Honor of Guy Townsend*  
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 Cyprien Simchowicz and Jerry White  
*White-Simchowicz Family Charitable Fund*

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*In Memory of Liza Townsend*  
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard M. Anderson  
 Rick and Flo Ann Brehm  
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*In Memory of Liza Townsend and Ford Ladd*  
 Lynn Manos Page  
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