

# 2021 Annual Report



Ten years ago, The Union for Contemporary Art was founded on the belief that artists play an essential role in shaping the cultural and civic landscape of Omaha. While these ten years have held so many unpredictable moments – joys and challenges, grief and healing – they’ve only strengthened our faith in the power of art to manifest new possibilities. Illuminating the ways we create our community and world together.

Part of what makes The Union’s work unique is our commitment to supporting artists at all stages of their practice. From the Fellowship and Co-Op Studios programs, to Exhibition, Populus Fund, Youth Engagement, and Performing Arts we are continually putting power, access, and resources in the hands of artists.

Best Regards,



Brigitte McQueen  
Founder + Executive Director

# 10 Years By the Numbers

**56 - Artist Fellows**

**40 - Gallery Exhibitions**

**11,000+ Hours of Youth  
Arts Engagement**

**670 - Co-Op Members**

**3,500 - Pounds of Food  
Grown + Shared**

**5 - Murals Created**

# Youth

In 2021, our Youth Engagement program continued to innovate our approach to connecting with the young people we serve in creative and safe ways as COVID-19 continued to impact our community. We offered virtual creative engagements and workshops for Omaha youth covering topics ranging from culinary arts, drawing, meditation, the art of film, and more.

We also gathered in-person – safely outdoors – on several occasions this year. We partnered with Heartland B-Cycle to create Art Bikes used around the city and hosted more than 200 North Omaha youth at open creative events at the Fair Deal Farmers Market and our Harvest Hollow: Craft + Crave event in the fall.

Finally, we continued the distribution of our Art + Life Kits to the families of youth enrolled in Union programming. In all, we shared 479 kits filled with free creative activities and food over the course of the year.

**238 Hours of total youth engagement**

“Thank you so much for helping to nourish the creative and artistic minds of my children!”  
- Parent of Art Club Participant



# Exhibition



In the summer of 2021, while still practicing COVID distancing, The Union's Exhibition program presented several weeks of virtual Pride programming, beginning with the Queer Cliff Notes reading series – held and facilitated by four BIPOC LGBTQIA+ thought leaders in our community.

We also supported the development of photographer Joshua Foo's expansive portraiture project *As You Are* which served to expand the conversation about life at the intersection of being BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ in Omaha. The project (supported by Omaha Community Foundation's Equality Fund) amplified the vibrancy and beauty of LGBTQIA+ life within our community.

Finally, after more than a year of COVID distancing, we were thrilled to re-open the doors of our Wanda D. Ewing Gallery in September and host the astounding collection *Conjure* by Delita Martin. It felt only fitting that in our 10th year, we commemorate the reopening of the gallery named in Wanda Ewing's honor with the work of a printmaker who, like Wanda, is exploring the beauty of the Black female form while conjuring new possibilities for identity and narrative for women of color.

# Performing Arts

In 2021, the Performing Arts program continued to nurture the creative development of performing artists and theatre practitioners rooted in North Omaha. While our physical theater space remained dark to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, we focused energy on the development of two new theatrical works *Fry Daddies* by Eric Lawson and *Belle Terre* by Justin Payne.

In the summer, we presented *Pursuing Legacy*, a brand new, experimental immersive theatre experience. This unique storytelling approach combined the mediums of immersive theatre and alternate reality games. The production brought theatre literally to the streets, as audience members explored monuments placed around North Omaha, uncovering a deeper narrative and mystery all along the way. The story explored the history of North Omaha and the lingering legacy of the recent past.



# Co-Op Studios



This year the Co-Op Studios continued to provide access to resources and skill-building opportunities to Omaha-area artists of many disciplines. During the first half of the year, while still practicing social distancing, the Co-Op Distanced Membership program gave artists working at home the opportunity to fire ceramics in our kiln and burn screenprint screens in the Co-Op.

Our participation in the Catalyzing Creative Aging program gave us an opportunity to bring artmaking experiences to North Omaha seniors, and our several Co-Op community engagements provided first-hand experiences with ceramics and printmaking while working safely outdoors.

In September, the Studios reopened for in-person artmaking. Our new scheduling process for reserving time in the Studios helped limit exposure risks while making the resources available to all.

# Inside/Outside Fellowship



The Inside/Outside Fellowship marked The Union's 10th anniversary by welcoming back our first ever reunion cohort of artist Fellows. Each of this year's Fellows has previously participated in the artist residency program in an earlier year. To mark the anniversary, The Union extended a return Fellowship invitation to each of the Black women artists who have participated in the Fellowship program since its inception in 2012.

Of all those who expressed interest, we held a drawing, yielding the amazing collective of artists, educators, and beautiful souls we were THRILLED to welcome back in 2021.

The 5 Fellows were each given a private studio in The Union, a materials stipend, and professional development support. They spent the year creating a broad diversity of work, ranging from spoken word performance to mixed-media sculpture and quilts.

## 2021 Fellows

Celeste Butler - Fiber Artist  
Pamela Conyers-Hinson - Sculptor  
Demetria Geraldts - Textiles Artist  
Mariah Person - Dancer  
Zedeka Poindexter - Poet

# Abundance Garden

It was a productive year in the garden! Following the success of our socially-distanced drive-thru produce stands in 2020, we expanded these weekly distributions, and with the help of community partners Pop Up Oasis, City Sprouts, Common Ground, and LFS Global Roots, were able to distribute more than 1,300 pounds of freshly grown produce in 2021!

We were also happy to reopen the garden to visitors, hosting a garden festival during Native Omaha Days and our Youth Engagement event Harvest Hollow in October. Those two events alone drew more than 200 people to the garden to enjoy the shade, flowers, and solace of the space.



**Free Produce Stand**  
**1,300+ pounds** - Free produce shared  
**1,031** - Community members served



# The Black Box Theater Project

Total Raised:  
\$1,127,500



**We're growing** to better support our local performing artists! In 2021 The Union announced that we've begun work on plans to restore and renovate the historic F.J. Carey Block building at 2401 North 24th Street (immediately next to our building) to be used as a community gathering space and theater.

Opening in late 2023, our new 90-seat theater will allow us to better honor and support local performing artists while assisting with the continued revitalization of the North 24th Street Corridor.

On July 15 we held our first public meeting to share the Black Box Theater project with neighbors and gather feedback.

# Populus Fund

**\$105,000 in emergency grants awarded to Omaha-area artists in need.**

**MONEY  
4  
ARTISTS**

**\$1000**  
unrestricted grants for artists

Apply now at:  
[www.u-ca.org/populusfund](http://www.u-ca.org/populusfund)

**POPULUS FUND**  
**UNION**

In 2021, due to the ongoing financial impacts of COVID-19, many artists were in need of critical financial support. Populus Fund's 2021 grants were designated as unrestricted emergency funds to support vital needs such as medical bills, rent, debts, and food. The fund awarded 105, thousand dollar grants using a weighted lottery system for a total of \$105,000 awarded to Omaha-area artists in need by the end of 2021.

*Populus Fund is a regranting initiative organized by The Union, through the generous support of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts in order to support innovative artist projects throughout Omaha-Lincoln metros.*

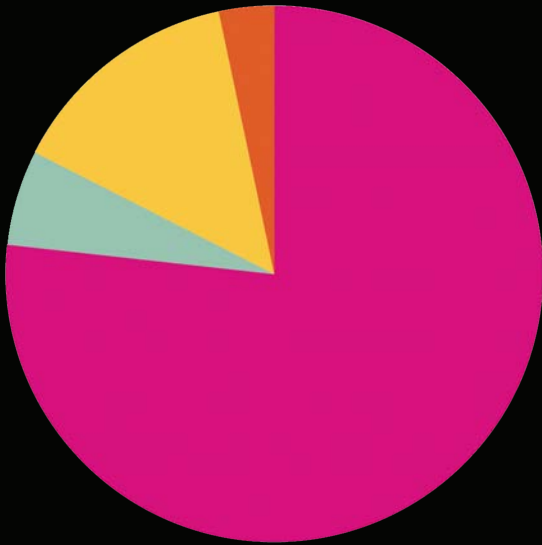


*Andy Warhol*

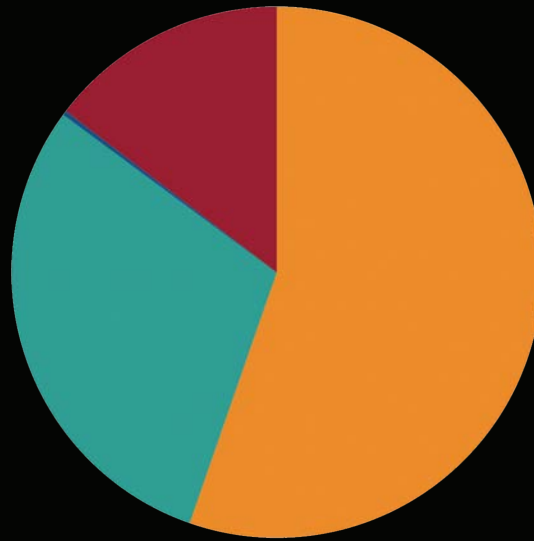
The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

# Income & Expenditures

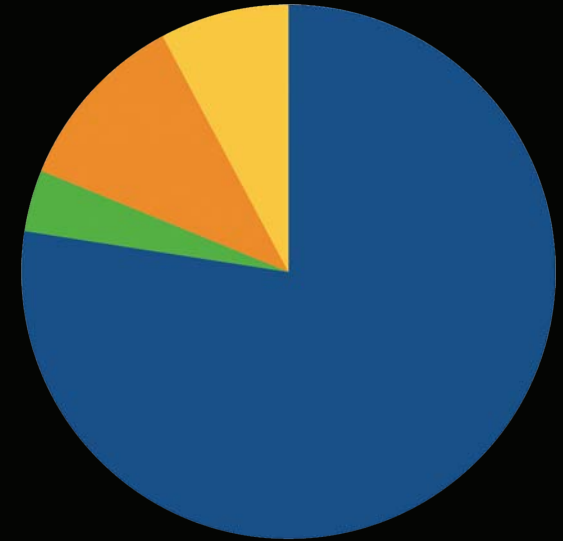
## CONTRIBUTED SUPPORT



## EARNED REVENUE



## EXPENDITURES



● Foundations	\$1,075,927
● Government	\$80,520
● Individual	\$198,818
● Business	\$46,499
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,401,763</b>

● Program Fees	\$4,070
● Membership	\$2,192
● Product Sales	\$20
● Discounts & Earned Interest	\$1,075
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,356</b>

● Programs	\$1,069,102
● General / Overhead	\$51,548
● Fundraising	\$152,089
● Populus Fund	\$107,684

**TO NET ASSETS: -\$28,691**

**TOTAL INCOME: \$1,380,425**

**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,380,425**

Financials reported in our annual report are calculated on a cash basis, reflecting income and expenses exchanged within the fiscal year.

# Union Staff and Board

## UNION STAFF

**Isabel Arevalo** | Weitz Fellow  
**Denise Chapman** | Producing Artistic Director, Theatre  
**Tia Dawson** | Administrative Assistant  
**Jessica Freeman** | Youth Studios Assistant  
**Dan Crane** | Print + Design Manager  
**Kat Fackler** | Events + Project Manager  
**Sarah Jones** | Co-Op Studios Manager  
**Megan King** | Manager of Foundation + Corporate Relations  
**Caitlin LaVelle** | Manager of Individual Giving + Stewardship  
**Mary Lawson** | Artist Support Manager  
**Joey Lynch** | Director of Facilities + Sustainability  
**Patrick Mainelli** | Communications Director  
**Harrison Martin** | Communications Assistant  
**Brigitte McQueen** | Founder + Executive Director  
**Paige Reitz** | Deputy Director  
**Jacqueline Smith** | Youth Studios Manager

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# Supporters & Friends

## \$20,000+

Anonymous  
The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts  
Douglas County Visitor Improvement Fund  
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The National Endowment for the Arts  
Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural  
Endowment  
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Roger and Kate Weitz  
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Weitz Family Foundation  
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## \$19,999 - \$10,000

Conagra Brands Foundation  
Lozier Foundation  
Mid-America Arts Alliance  
Mutual of Omaha Foundation  
The NBK Foundation  
North Omaha Turn-Back Tax Historical Grant  
Omaha Community Foundation  
The Phillip and Terri Schragger Foundation  
Katie Weitz and Tim Wilson

## \$9,999 - \$2,500

City of Omaha  
The Claire and Theodore Morse Foundation  
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Claire M Hubbard Foundation  
Michael and Nancy McCarthy  
National Guild for Community Arts Education  
Union Pacific Foundation  
Wells Fargo Foundation

# Supporters & Friends

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Phil Schaffart and Brett Jaros  
Sue and Mary Stroesser  
UNO Maverick Philanthropy

## \$999 - \$500

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Congregation of Temple Israel  
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Andrea Kinnan  
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Krystal Rice  
Debra Romberger  
Jeffrey Schragger and Anne York  
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Connie and Rick Spellman  
Mary and Kirby Zicafoose

## \$499 - \$100

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Krystal Boose  
Catherine Bosley  
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Laura Burhenn  
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Drew and Elisa Davies  
Molly Deacon

# Supporters & Friends

## \$499 - \$100

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Donald Goldstein  
Kathy Gonzales  
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Thomas Huerter  
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Sonia Keffer  
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Dwight Johnson and Julie  
Livingston  
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Laura Loughran  
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Megan Lutz  
Meredith Fuller and James  
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Jessica Mogis  
Frances and Willa McEvoy  
Pete and Carolyn Miller

Virginia Miller  
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Diana Palmerton-Fisher  
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Patti Peterson  
Karen Berry and John  
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Eric Purcell  
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Bouley  
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Palin



THE UNION FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

2423

MASKS REQUIRED FOR ENTRY

Conjure

**UNION**  
The Union for Contemporary Art