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
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
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.
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.
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.
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 Geralds - Textiles Artist
- Mariah Person - Dancer
- Zedeka Poindexter - Poet
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
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.

Total Raised: $1,127,500
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.

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

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts
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**
- Erin Cihal — Chair
- Shaun Ilahi — Vice Chair
- Alison Maloy — Treasurer
- Jessica McKay — Secretary
- Jeff Beck
- Karen Borchert
- Alexis Bromley
- Adrian Duran
- Dr. Monica Green
- Ashley Kuhn
- Amy Nelson
- Jen Pavkov
- Carol Russell
- Susan Stroesser
- Wendy Townley
- Shavonne Washington-Krauth
Supporters & Friends

$20,000+

Anonymous
The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts
Douglas County Visitor Improvement Fund
Fred and Eve Simon Charitable Foundation
Holland Foundation
Kevin McCarthy
The National Endowment for the Arts
Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment
Peter Kiewit Foundation
Richard Brooke Foundation
The Sherwood Foundation
Annette and Paul Smith
VIA | Wagner Incubator Grant Fund
Roger and Kate Weitz
Drew and Meredith Weitz
Weitz Family Foundation
William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation

$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 Schrager Foundation
Katie Weitz and Tim Wilson

$9,999 - $2,500

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

$2,499 - $1,000
Anonymous
Gregory A
Robin Pierson Barber
Sue Behr
Bluestem Prairie Foundation
Karen and Taylor Borchert
Cindy Lee Christensen
Karen and Robert Duncan
Emspace
Max and Beth Engel
Vic Gutman & Associates
Amy Haney
Heider Family Foundation
Humanities Nebraska
Susan and Mike Lebens
Michaela White and Albert Macchietto
Emily McElroy
Amy Nelson & Lary Kukuk Jr.
Murray and Sharee Newman
Don and Rita Otis
Phil Schaffart and Brett Jaros
Sue and Mary Stroesser
UNO Maverick Philanthropy

$999 - $500
Stephanie Adams
Nick Allmaker
Jeff and Lindsay Beck
Anne and Jim Carroll
Congregation of Temple Israel
Amy Dorton
Adrian Duran and Alexandra Cardon
Gary Ensz
First United Methodist Church
Carol Gilbert
Randy and Bev Greer
Marni and Joe Heydt
Ellen Jeffries
Andrea Kathol
Andrea Kinnan
Jim and Karen Linder
Othello and Tulani Meadows
R.J. and Liz Neary
OpenSky Policy Institute
Judy Pearl Lee
Hobson and Denise Powell
Krystal Rice
Debra Romberger
Jeffrey Schrager and Anne York
Todd and Betiana Simon
Connie and Rick Spellman
Mary and Kirby Zicafoose

$499 - $100
Anonymous**
Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture
Emily Anderson
Sarah Barr
Penny Bay
Laura Berman
Kate Bodmann
Krystal Boose
Catherine Bosley
Alexis Bromley
Laura Burhenn
Celeste Butler
Jessica Chavez Thompson
Sacred Heart Church
Erin Cihal
Katherine Clanton
Sonya Clark
Tiffiny Clifton
Susan Collins
Tanya Cook
Anna Cramer
Celann LaGreca and Tim Crowley
Dana Damewood and Brian Hansen
Drew and Elisa Davies
Molly Deacon
Supporters & Friends

$499 - $100

Julie DeWitt
Mary Donahue
Gregory Dubinsky
Angela Elkenberry
Demetra and Elias Eliopoulos
Rick and Tancy Ellis
Chad Graff and Joanna Falkenburg
Mary Ferdig
Terry and Catherine Ferguson
Casey Fictum
Cynthia Gehrie
Emily Gerhardt
Nancy Gilliland
Whitney and Dave Goldner
Donald Goldstein
Kathy Gonzales
Jennifer Green
Dan Crane and Megan Green
Mike and Kathy Gross
Rachel Grossman
Brian Guehring
Jaime Hackbart
Jill Hanson
Sarah Newman and David Harding
Ann and Gary Henningsen

Susan Hiley
Shari Hofschire
Dara Hogan
Bill and Stacia Hoover
Sean Horton Kay A Horwath
Senator Sara Howard
Amanda Huckins
Thomas Huert
Gloria Jensen
David and Carol Johnson
Daniel Johnson
Matthew Karasek
Sonia Keffer
Justin and Katie Kemerling
Margaret Kirkeby
Tom and Susan Knight
Sarah Ann and John Kotchian
Mike Krainak and Janet Farber
Debbie and Steve Krambeck
Megan Lassek
Dwight Johnson and Julie Livingston
Patricia Lontor
Laura Loughran
Julie and Philip Lund
Megan Lutz
Meredith Fuller and James Luyten
Julie Luzarraga
Jessica Mogis
Frances and Willa McEvoy
Pete and Carolyn Miller

Virginia Miller
Jessica Mills
Cary and Syed Mohiuddin
Ben and Diane Nelson
Ryan Newton
Nancy Novotny
Kerri O’Connell
Matthew Omojiola
Jonathan Orozco
Sally Otis
Diana Palmerton-Fisher
Marghee and Doug Paterson
Ryan Pelster
Barbara and Bob Peters
Patti Peterson
Karen Berry and John Pollack
Leanne Prewitt and Ryan Sorensen
Eric Purcell
Jennifer and Ken Reed-Bouley
Rachel Rentschler
Jay Rich and Doug Boyd
Cheryle Manasil and Todd Robinson
Joseph Rohleder
Amy Rouse
Lee Running
Rick and Carol Russell
Megan Ryan

Patricia Schaefer and Brian Montgomery
Aviva Segall
Sumana Sermchief and Caleb Seavey
Lynda Shafer
Helen Shew
Brenda Siffring
Stewart and Susie Smoler
State of Nebraska
Jean Stillmock
Erik Sukraw
Melissa and Benjamin Teply
Susan Thomas and Steve Hutchinson
Duane and Monte Thompson
Aileen and BJ Tobin
United Way
Christina Renfer Vogel
Andrea Walker
Kim Walker
Mary Wells
Douglas and Debra Wesselmann
Maret Wibel
Kathy Wilson
Christina Wolfgang
Gregory Woodin
Scott Working
Kale Zicafoose and Tyler Palin