

UNION



**2022
Annual
Report**

Investing in Artists & Community



2022 at The Union for Contemporary Art has been another year of vibrant growth and connections. As we moved through our eleventh year of empowering artists and the communities they inspire, we also took some bold steps toward the future. We broke ground on the Shirley Tyree Theater – the future home of The Union’s Performing Arts program! Projects like this reflect our dual commitments to fostering the development of new creative work and creating space for our North Omaha community to gather in dialogue and fellowship.

In our Co-Op Studios, we continued to offer accessible tools, training, and resources for Omaha-area artists. We grew nearly 700 pounds of fresh produce in our Abundance Garden and shared it for free with our neighbors. Our Fellowship and Youth Engagement programs continued to develop creative talent and engaged citizenship among artists at all stages of their development. And in our Exhibition program, we presented five powerful collections, including work by our gallery’s namesake Wanda Ewing.

Of course, NONE of this would be possible without the ongoing investment of friends like you.

THANK YOU!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brigitte".

Brigitte McQueen
Union Founder + Executive Director

Youth and families engaged with our program 623 times across 109 events, workshops, and activities for a total of 1304 hours of engagement.

In 2022, our Youth Engagement program expanded its reach, serving North Omaha youth in new settings and broadening our development support for teenage creatives. Art Club – our flagship youth program, continued to offer arts and cultural enrichment for youth ages 7-10 years. Art Club hosted a weekly group of young artists each Saturday through the school year, discussing exhibitions, visiting cultural institutions, meeting working artists, and gaining experience in both culinary and studio arts.

Our weekly Action Brigade program, designed for slightly older youth ages 11-14, incorporated social engagement with creative practice, providing youth with tools and strategies to address topics and issues in their communities.

New in 2022 was the Mentoring Young Artists (MYA) program. This new initiative provided Omaha-area creatives, ages 15-18, with the opportunity to gain leadership and professional development experience, while earning a wage for mentoring the younger artists in other Youth programs.

Finally, our Outdoor Art Adventures happened weekly through the summer in North Omaha parks, engaging children and families in creative play.

Youth



Exhibition



2022 in the WandaD. Ewing Gallery was the year of full circles. We began the season with the long-awaited exhibition of the legendary printmaker Mavis Pusey. Noted by the New York Times as a “leading abstractionist” of the 20th Century – this rare solo exhibition of work from Pusey was delayed from opening by COVID back in 2020. It was a thrill to finally host the work this year.

Through the spring we hosted the sprawling and inspiring retrospect of work from Jim Duignan’s *Stockyard Institute*. In May, Lydia Cheshewalla brought the warmth and verdant greenery of summer into the building with her multi-sensory meditation on place and the legacies we leave: *Body Speaking to Body*. Heather Hart brought us into the fall with the sprawling, immersive work *The Texture of the Weave*.

Finally, in the final months of the year, the fullest of full circles: Wanda Ewing graced the walls of the gallery named in her honor for the very first time. *Growing Up Black Growing Up Wanda* was the perfect, beautiful cap on the year. For the Exhibition program, 2022 felt like a homecoming in so many ways as the building was again filled with life, after years of COVID quiet. It was a joy to have Wanda here with us for it!

Performing Arts

As construction of the Shirley Tyree Theater was in full swing in 2022, our Performing Arts program continued work in the development and workshopping of new works by Omaha playwrights. *Belle Terre* by Justin Payne was performed twice at The Union and once at the Charles Washington Branch of the Omaha Public Library, with over 120 people attending! *Frydaddies* – a new play with music by Eric Lawson – did a three show run in September with about 85 people in attendance over the three day run. We can't wait to see these, and other new works we've invested in, grow into full productions in 2024!



Co-Op Studios



In 2022, the Co-Op Studios continued to offer accessible art-making space, tools, and training for Omaha-area artists. This year we also launched the new Artist-In-Studio Residency program*, providing residency space at The Union to regional artists who came to stay with us in our visiting artist apartment, engage with community, and create new work in the Co-Op!

*Artist-In-Studio is generously funded by Mid-America Arts Alliance, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the state arts agencies of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Inside/Outside Fellowship

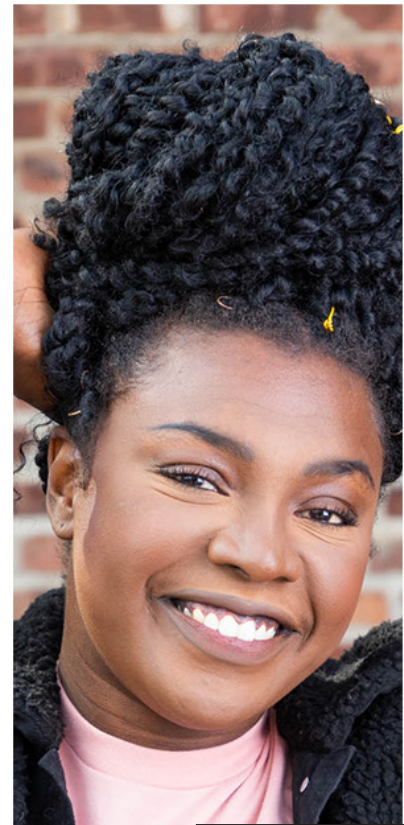
MaKayla Harrie
Performance Artist

Doriette Jordan
Actress, Playwright, and
Director

Prentiss Matthews
Actor, Playwright,
Director, and
Teaching Artist

Carina DuMarce
Theatre Creator and
Teaching Artist

Jus.B
Singer/Songwriter
and Actor



In 2022, the Inside/Outside Fellowship and Performing Arts programs combined efforts and focused on supporting the development of Omaha theatre practitioners of multiple disciplines. This unique Fellowship year embodied the collaborative spirit of the two programs, creating a space for new, emerging, and established talents to create and grow together.

This interdisciplinary Fellowship year was an opportunity for theatre artists to develop creatively and professionally within a multi-track creative experience, designed to grow their individual and collaborative artistic practices.

All five artists selected for the 2022 Fellowship received a free private studio at The Union; a \$3,000 honorarium; \$500 in professional development funds; and ongoing development support through the Fellowship year.

Abundance Garden

A photograph of three women standing in a garden. The woman on the left is wearing a colorful tank top and holding a blue basket of strawberries. The woman in the middle is holding a large bunch of radishes and another bunch of radishes. The woman on the right is wearing a dark shirt and has a small white flower in her hair. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a garden with various plants and a fence.

More than 1,500 pounds of free fruits and vegetables shared directly with members of our North Omaha community

2022 was our most fruitful year yet in the Abundance Garden! We grew and distributed nearly 700 pounds of free produce. Our Saturday produce stands were busier than ever this year, with many familiar faces from the neighborhood coming through each week, sharing stories of what they cooked up with the produce from the week before.

We're also thankful to our great community partners – Big Garden, City Sprouts, Free Farm Syndicate, and Pop-Up Oasis – who shared the bounty from their gardens with us as well. In total we were able to distribute more than 1,500 pounds of free fruits and vegetables directly to members of our North Omaha community in 2022.

The Shirley Tyree Theater

A photograph of a construction site for the Shirley Tyree Theater. Three workers in high-visibility clothing and hard hats are working with a large concrete pump hose. One worker in a blue shirt and blue hard hat is guiding the hose into a rebar-reinforced concrete form. Another worker in a yellow shirt and white hard hat is holding a surveying level. A third worker in a yellow shirt and white hard hat is in the background. The site is a deep excavation with dirt walls and rebar structures. In the background, there are brick buildings and a chain-link fence.

Raised in 2022: \$3,041,790
Total Raised: \$4,169,290

In June of 2022 we broke ground on the Shirley Tyree Theater - the future home of our Performing Arts program! After years of planning, this was a huge step toward realizing the dream of this new space for performance, gathering, and storytelling in North Omaha.

Renovation of the historic F.J. Carey Block building will provide expanded opportunities for The Union's Performing Arts program and breathe new life into a building which has served the North Omaha community for generations. Included in the building renovation plans are spaces for a 90-seat theater, lobby and ticketing area, set-design workshop, and an open-format rehearsal/gathering space.

Populus Fund

Photo by Devon Coulson

2022 Project Grantees

Fortuna (Allegra Hangen and Enero y Abril)
Project: Fortuna in Residence

Mary Lawson (aka Mesonjixx)
Project: Everyday Performances

David Manzanares
Project: Sculpture for Mayan Community Garden

Alajia McKizia
Project: Sunday Soul

Oria Simonini
Project: Desde que Me Fui/ Desde que Te Fuiste: Communities in movement tracing the shapes of their journeys

Tugboat Gallery (Keith Buswell, Peggy Gomez, Nolan Tredway, and Toan Vuong)
Project: Porch-Art-Palooza

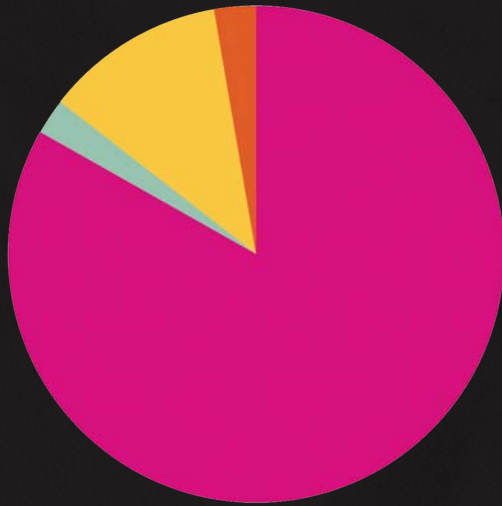


This year, Populus Fund entered a new stage, awarding a total of six \$10,000 grants to artists living within 80 miles of Omaha. Following an application process in the spring, six deserving artists and collectives received the funds needed to make their ambitious and innovative plans for visual arts projects a reality. The awarded projects were selected for their innovative approaches to connecting artists and communities.

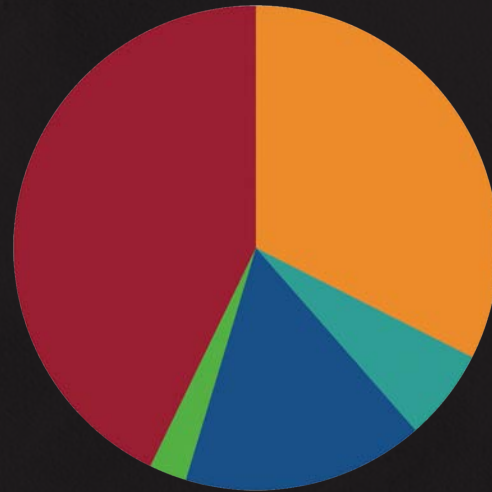
Populus Fund is a regranteeing initiative organized by The Union, through the generous support of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, supporting innovative artist projects throughout Omaha-Lincoln metros.

Income & Expenditures

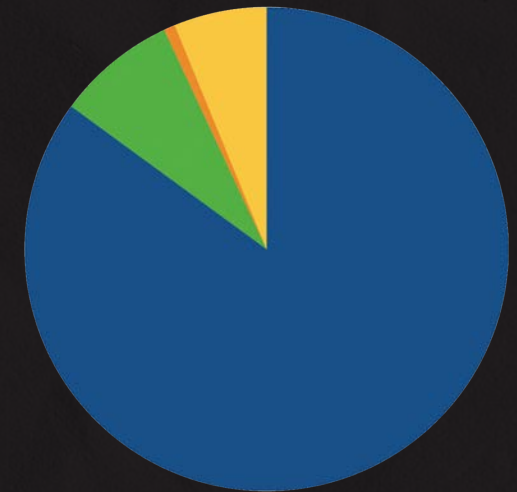
CONTRIBUTED SUPPORT



EARNED REVENUE



EXPENDITURES



● Foundations	\$1,389,250
● Government	\$38,899
● Individual	\$196,538
● Business	\$45,354
TOTAL	\$1,670,041

● Program Fees	\$17,142
● Membership	\$3,229
● Product Sales	\$8,516
● Rental Income	\$1,320
● Other	\$22,626
TOTAL	\$52,834

● Programs	\$1,396,563
● General / Overhead	\$131,347
● Fundraising	\$12,434
● Populus Fund	\$101,667

TO NET ASSETS: -\$80,863

TOTAL INCOME: \$1,722,875

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,642,012

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

People & Partners

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2022 Community Partners

Big Garden

City Sprouts

Civic Nebraska

Culxr House

Empowerment Network

Fabric Lab

Family of Things

Free Farm Syndicate

Great Plains Black History

Museum

Ital Vital

Juneteenth Joyfest

Junior League of Omaha

The House of Afros, Capes, &

Curls

Kiewit Luminarium

McMillan Middle School

Mullhall's

No More Empty Pots

Omaha By Design

Omaha North High School

Omaha Symphony

Opera Omaha

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UNO Service Learning Academy

Pop-Up Oasis

Rabble Mill

Spark CDI

Tierra Park

CO-OP Teaching Artists

Dirk Gillespie

Peter Scherr

Teri Coolidge

Megan Mcleay

Mentoring Young Artists Participants

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