

detail from *With Signs Following*
by Abe Partridge, January 2023.

December 2023

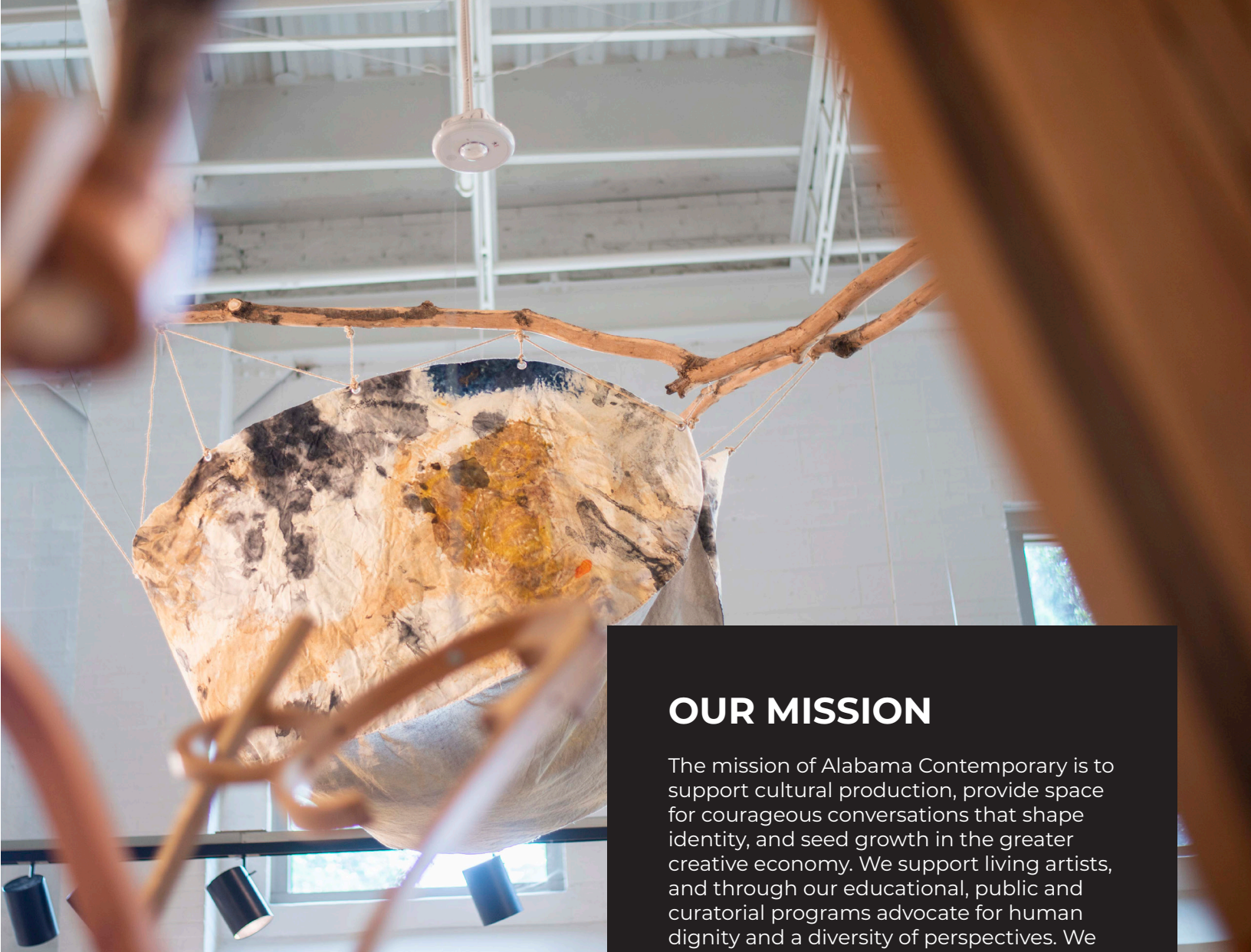
CENTRE FOR THE LIVING ARTS

dba Alabama Contemporary Art Center

elizabeth elliot, Executive Director (251) 208-5660
Dr. Paige A. Vitulli, Board Chair

301 CONTI ST, MOBILE, AL 36602
EIN: 63-1236563

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2023**



OUR MISSION

The mission of Alabama Contemporary is to support cultural production, provide space for courageous conversations that shape identity, and seed growth in the greater creative economy. We support living artists, and through our educational, public and curatorial programs advocate for human dignity and a diversity of perspectives. We strive to be a partner, resource and light in the Deep South.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



DEAR FRIENDS,

Our end of year giving campaign this year was titled 'Make New Myths'. As the only contemporary art museum in the State, our job has always been about looking forward; about our collective becoming. The story of what our community is capable of is unwritten, and we have the opportunity every day to expand the narrative. This year we've invested in cultivating new perspectives on the South and beyond. We've brought in globally relevant work that addresses urgent issues affecting our community, and we've added to the lexicon of the South by commissioning regional and local projects.

In 2023, Charles Edwards Williams taught us about Radical Forgiveness. Sally Heller taught us about industrial waste. Abe Partridge showed us what 'meeting a community where they are' can truly mean. Soynika Edwards-Bush showed us how deeply connected we are, even when we believe we are very different. *Borderwaters* opened our minds to the idea that borders are more than geography, but lines drawn across our lived experiences, sometimes at great cost. And the *Soil* exhibition provided a difficult but important space for the community to reconcile the deep harm racism has done here in Mobile, and to imagine what healing could look like.

This year we made \$144,169.00 in direct payments to artists. We provided learning opportunities or added a line to a total of 308 artists' resumes. Our education department expanded regionally-scoped outreach programming in Title I schools, and we welcomed Muffinjaw Designs as a new 3rd floor program partner and studio mate! Muffinjaw hit the ground running by collaborating with Jenny Day during her micro-residency and site-specific installation: *A Feast to Remember*.

We had some of the biggest staff changes this year too. What was a staff of 4 in 2019 has doubled in size, and we have fresh new faces implementing core components of our work.

We support artists because they show us who we can be. Our success requires the idea of what is possible to expand beyond the stereotypes surrounding this place, it requires us to MAKE NEW MYTHS. We believe that the resilience and vitality of our community is contingent on our willingness to grow and challenge the status quo, and we can't wait to continue this work in 2024.

Yours,

elizabeth elliott
Executive Director

EXHIBITIONS

GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY
THE ANDY WARHOL FOUNDATION FOR THE VISUAL ARTS
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
ALABAMA STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS



JAN 13 - MAY 20, 2023
WITH SIGNS FOLLOWING
New work by Abe Partridge

For two years Abe Partridge embedded himself in several communities of Appalachian religious snake-handlers. He documented his experiences; the music, rituals, and stories that called to him. This is an exhibition of new work exploring those experiences, made in direct collaboration with this community.



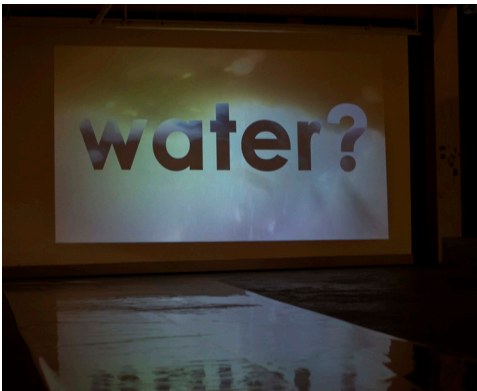
JAN 13 - MAR 11, 2023
HOT WATER: RIVER RAFT QUILTS
New work by Coulter Fussell

Drawing from a childhood growing up in a river-town that owes its existence to cotton mills, Coulter Fussell sews her stories as outfitted rafts and guide-maps — all set to journey on an imagined river rolling through valleys landscaped by the Southern economic fallout's reign upon the natural world.



APR 14 - JUL 22, 2023
SOIL: RADICAL EMPATHY IN THE ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

In partnership with the Mobile County Remembrance Project, ACAC commissioned 5 artists working with concepts of Black Identity and Remembrance to create new work around lynchings in Mobile County during what the Equal Justice Initiative recognizes as the Era of Racial Terror from 1877 to 1950.



MAY 12 - JUL 22, 2023
MAKE FOR HIGH GROUND
New work by Jamie Robertson

This multi-media installation by Jamie Robertson examines the socio-political and spiritual relationship between Blackness, water, and memory. Through photography and video, the Gulf states of Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama's individual histories are illuminated through their bodies of water.



JUN 9 - AUG 26, 2023
DRAWING IN SPACE

This is a thematic group exhibition of site-specific installations features 6 regional artists: Daisie Hoitsma, Teayoun Kim-Kassor, Lauren Rice, Brian Barr, Jason Tanner Young, and Sara Garden Armstrong. Approaching drawing as a verb (draw: to pull or drag) these artists pull a variety of materials through space, asking us to follow the action, feel the tension, and re-consider the present.



JUL 14 - SEP 23, 2023
SURFACE TENSION
New work by Daniel Luedtke

These works by Daniel Luedtke contemplate how we overlay significance onto bodies, individuals, and objects based on their external features. The viewer is invited reconsider the surface as more than a mere façade, but as a dynamic realm where meanings are assigned, power is exerted, and our relationship with the world is negotiated.

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EXHIBITIONS



AUG 11 - NOV 26, 2023
BORDERWATERS
Curated by Elizabeth S. Hawley

In this group exhibition of 13 artists, U.S. boundaries are reconceptualized as *borderwaters* that emphasize the shorelines of the coterminous U.S. and its island regions; the historical and contemporary significance of waterways ranging from inland rivers to international oceanic passages and their inextricable linkage with colonialist, imperialist U.S. policies.



SEP 8, 2023 - JAN 27, 2024
BLACK RIVER
Work by Charles Edward Williams
Curated by Calvin Phelps

Black River is a series of works by the artist Charles Edward Williams that acts as a composite portrait of the relationship between the artist and his father. Throughout this developing series, Williams uses biblical parables and modern narratives to explore the profound act of forgiveness between father and son.



OCT 13, 2023 - JAN 13, 2024
PROJECT 42
New work by Molly Jae Vaughan

Through the creation of unique garments and diverse collaborative memorial actions, artist Molly Vaughan raises awareness of the violence that transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, particularly trans women of color, face in contemporary American society.



DEC 8, 2023 - JAN 13, 2024
A FEAST TO REMEMBER
A Site-Specific Installation by Jenny Day

In this installation, Jenny Day's raucous use of materials – blown glass, mirrors, wood, fiber, fur, semi-precious stones, beads, bits and baubles – establishes a sculptural feast of celebratory chaos. Drawing on her deep concern for the planet's ecological health, Day invites us to see that what we build eventually falls down and what we attempt to discard may return to haunt us.



OCT 4, 2023 - DEC 31, 2024
REMEMBERING THE AVENUE
A Satellite Exhibition at the Historic Avenue Cultural Center

Remembering the Avenue is a civic practice exhibition, in partnership with the Mobile County Commission and curated by Jada Jones through Alabama Contemporary's Guest Curator Program. Davis Avenue, now named Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, in the 1940s-1970s was 'Black Main Street' – a hub of black-owned businesses and venues. This exhibition explores not only the history and shared memory of this once thriving community, but seeds the potential for new growth and possibility through shared dreaming.

PROGRAMS

Programs have grown exponentially in 2023. We host artists & curator talks, performances, and workshops in conjunction with each exhibition, as well as community programs that explore themes relevant to the work on our walls. Here are some highlights.



▶ **MOBILE ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL**

with 2 pre-screener programs, 1 main festival, showcasing 40+ films, with 120 attendees

▶ **BRUNCH RAVE**

3 drag performers, 2 DJs, 75 attendees

▶ **MEET THE ARTISTS DINNER**

Serving 5 artists, 50 attendees

▶ **NEU DAWN 6**

Serving 23 artists, 23 costume designers, & 23 models with 500 attendees

▶ **3 POETRY OPEN MICS**

20+ performers, 200 attendees

▶ **5 PERFORMANCES**

by 7 artists, 723 attendees

▶ **8 GALLERY TALKS**

1 guest curator, 7 artists

▶ **11 ARTWALKS**

3,498 attendees



PARTNERSHIPS



VERDANT FUND

The Verdant Fund is an annual project grant that funds independent artists with site-specific exhibition concepts, independent projects, or new work as it is relevant to the community we serve. An expansion of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts Regional Granting program, the Verdant Fund supports creative practice born of and within Alabama. Administered through a partnership between Alabama Contemporary Art Center (Mobile, AL), Coleman Center for the Arts (York, AL), and Space One Eleven (Birmingham, AL), our goal is to reach a broad range of artists across all geographic areas of the state and expand and support creative practice at the margins. In 2023 projects from a highly competitive group of applicants were reviewed by a panel of professionals that ultimately selected nine artists to receive up to \$7,000 in funding each, for a grant total of \$60,125. Each project is documented at verdantfund.org.

HISTORIC AVENUE CULTURAL CENTER

In partnership with the Mobile County Commission, Alabama Contemporary facilitates monthly satellite programs at the HACC, exploring the lost histories and possible futures for the Historic Avenue community.

BLACC

The Black Life Arts & Culture Coalition (BLACC) is a subcommittee of ACAC's Board of Directors, working to realize public-facing projects that lift up Black artists and voices in the Mobile community, in line with the ACAC mission and in pursuit of equity and accountability in the arts.



3RD FLOOR STUDIO

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

This residency program prioritizes experimentation and exploration that expands the scope of an artist's work, and benefits the community. The two-year commitment offers an artist studio space, professional development, and an exhibition outcome in exchange for outreach teaching and participation in public programs that serve local needs. In 2023, we welcomed 2 new artists to the program: visual artist June Reddix-Stennis and performing artist Ottie James.

MUFFINJAW DESIGNS

In October of 2023, our Education Studio offerings expanded as we welcomed new studio mates, Muffinjaw Designs. Muffinjaw is a glass blowing cohort who now occupies a fully-operational glass studio on our 3rd Floor. Alabama Contemporary partners with this group of working artists on joint programming, open studio events, and classes coming in 2024.

ODDCOLLEGE / CARTOGRAPHER RECORDS

Cartographer Records, founded by James Black and Bryan Gottshall, is a recording studio that offers robust programming commitments including a video concert series called OddCollege. As a full-service recording studio, they provide program support that seeds growth in the cultural production of the South.

GENEROUSLY
SUPPORTED BY





ADULTS

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

TEACHING ARTISTS: 7, ATTENDANCE: 105 STUDENTS

We offer evening and weekend adult classes and workshops in a variety of mediums on a seasonal basis. Led by a working artist, these classes occur in 4-, 6-, 8-week sessions, or are one-two day workshops, and are beginner level for anyone looking to expand their creative interests.

- INTRO TO WHEEL THROWING W/ JENNY WILLIAMS
- POTTERY DATE NIGHTS W/ JENNY WILLIAMS
- INTERMEDIATE WHEEL THROWING W/ JENNY WILLIAMS
- SUBATOMIC FLOWER WORKSHOP W/ SALLY HELLER
- PAINTING W/ SOYNIKA EDWARDS-BUSH
- ARGENTINE TANGO CLASSES
- YOGA ON THE TERRACE W/ KINDRED YOGA



K-12

SUMMER ART CAMPS

TEACHING ARTISTS: 9, ATTENDANCE: 45 STUDENTS

We offered five weeks of art camps that provided an opportunity to discover the transformative effect of contemporary art. In these camps students experiment with ceramics, mixed media, drawing and illustrating, painting, and collage

- SOYNIKA'S ART SAMPLER
- MASTERING THE CLASSICS
- CARICATURES IN CLAY
- THEATRE & COSTUME MAKING
- THINK LIKE AN ARTIST ART SAMPLER



OUTREACH

FIELD TRIPS

7 GUIDED TOURS AND A TOTAL OF 226 PEOPLE

Our field trips focus on the four areas of Discipline-Based Arts Education: arts production, art history and culture, criticism and aesthetics, and core curriculum standards.

ROVING FIELD TRIPS

ATTENDANCE: 364 STUDENTS, 21 TEACHERS

This program uses video interviews with artists produced by ACAC in free monthly and summer programs at Public Libraries in Mobile, Semmes, and Washington Counties. Included are art activities that integrate math, science, and history to incite deep understanding. In the fall of 2023, we took this program into the public school system and included both English & Spanish instruction for schools that serve predominately Lantinx students.



LIFELINES COUNSELING

ATTENDANCE: 35 PARTICIPANTS

We served 35 patients and counselors who created paintings and clay sculptures letting go of self-judgment and allowing themselves to translate challenging emotions and life experiences into a tangible piece of art. Our project participants include abuse and domestic violence survivors, single mothers, and people who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

POETRY OUT LOUD STUDENT WORKSHOP

3 TEACHING ARTISTS, 4 STUDENTS

Students received sessions on poetry analysis, recitation, and writing; performances by Powerlines Poetry; and a chance to rehearse their poems in the competition space.



FOUNDATIONS, MUNICIPAL, & BUSINESSES

Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts
 National Endowment for the Arts
 Alabama State Council on the Arts
 City of Mobile
 Mobile County Commission
 The Caring Foundation
 Mary Josephine Larkins Foundation
 The C.D., Helen, & Jeff Glaze Foundation
 Tech 251
 Bread by Beck
 Hargrove Foundation
 Realand Title

Oyster City
 United Johnson Brothers
 Blick
 Serah's Rainbow
 Publix
 Nova Espresso
 Cathead Distillery
 B'Bobs
 Southern Sounds Production & Event Design
 Sterling Event Design
 Greer's
 Thompson Engineering

DONOR CIRCLE

Anonymous
 Mike Dow
 Susie Bowman
 Carol Hunter
 Chandra Brown
 Anitra Belle Henderson
 Harold & Carlos Parkman
 Paige Vitulli
 Afiya Hooker
 Irving Silver
 Myla E. Calhoun
 Leida Javier-Ferrell
 Murphy Bishop II
 Lynn Yonge
 Allen Perkins

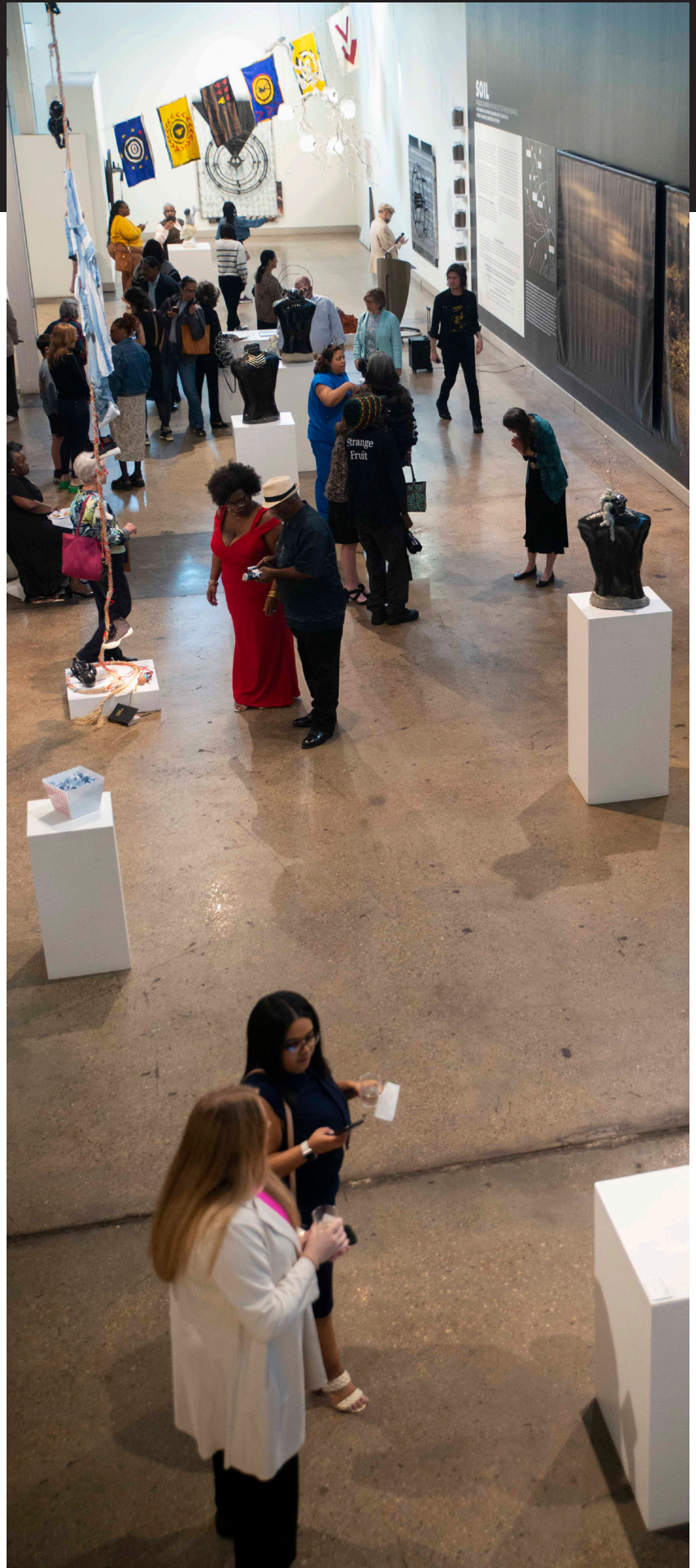
J. Russell Goodloe
 Alison Herlihy
 Jon Carfagno
 Evan Bernard
 Therese G ("Winkie") Greer
 Graham Boettcher
 Lee Weissinger
 Rosemary Shade
 Amanda Donald
 Deborah Velders
 Robert Pfeffle
 Grey Redditt
 Stephanie Mermilliod
 Joanne Brandt
 James Zimmer

Kevin Allen
 Ben Bloom
 Elizabeth Lyker
 James Roach
 Franklin Trimm & Robert Koch
 Milton & Margaret Brown
 Raoul Richardson
 Colleen Comer
 Manson Brooks
 Chris Gibson
 Moshae Donald
 Merceria Ludgood
 Roma Hanks
 Suzanne Cleveland
 Daryn Glassbrook

BY THE NUMBERS

Full budget available upon request

- ▶ **\$800K**
Operating Budget
- ▶ **\$250K**
National Grants
- ▶ **\$200K**
Regional Grants
- ▶ **\$200K**
Local Grants
- ▶ **\$100K**
Events & Programs
- ▶ **\$50K**
Individual Giving
- ▶ **100K**
Web Visits
- ▶ **15,887**
visitors (in-person)
- ▶ **7,183**
Facebook followers
- ▶ **6,810**
Instagram followers
- ▶ **816**
Students served
- ▶ **328**
Members
- ▶ **308**
Artists served
- ▶ **81**
Teachers served



STAFF & BOARD



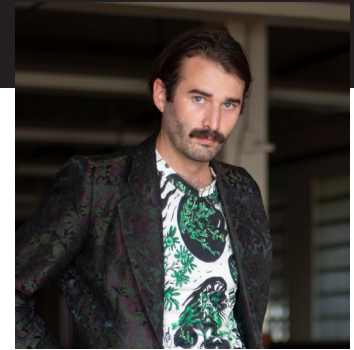
elizabeth elliott
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



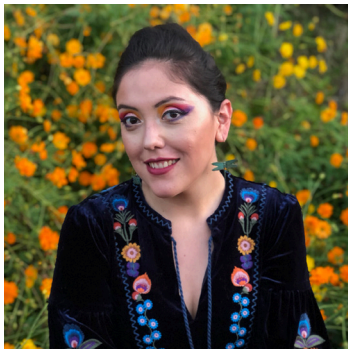
Glenn Robertson
DIRECTOR OF STORYTELLING



Allison Schaub Skoda
CURATOR



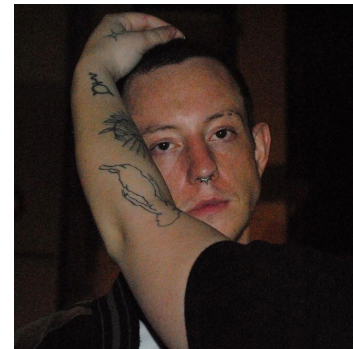
Micah Mermilliod
CURATOR



Pame Cevallos Amores
CURATOR OF EDUCATION



Tyrese Bess
PROGRAM MANAGER
OPPORTUNITIES & ADMIN



Garrett Grimes Timme
SPECIAL EVENTS MANAGER

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (ALPHABETICAL)

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SUSIE BOWMAN, Education Committee
Independent Artist and Educator

MANSON BROOKS, Operations Committee
Rogers & Willard

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Executive Director of Lifelines Counseling Services

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Housing Authority, Mobile United, President-Elect

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CEO of Sunshine Haven Counseling Center, ED of the
Sunshine Haven's Empowerment, Co-Owner of Yin Yang
Wellness Center, Licensed Psychotherapist

CAROL S. HUNTER, Secretary
Downtown Mobile Alliance

HILL LUSCHER, Treasurer, Development Committee Chair
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Baheth Research & Development Laboratories LTD.

TERRANCE DESHAUN SMITH
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Former 16-year Mayor of Mobile

EDWARD C. MATHES (EX-OFICIO)
Mathes Brierre Architects

JULIE H. FRIEDMAN, ADVISORY (EX-OFICIO)
Alabama State Council on the Arts