When museums look ahead a year or two at a time they can generally feel confident about their immediate future, but peering deeper and predicting an accurate state of being five or ten years out can be more challenging.

Looking back is a lot easier and indeed the museum’s accomplishments are many. MOWA’s hard-working staff and its phenomenal board of directors have done much to be proud of—the museum’s beautifully sited facility on the Milwaukee River, its newly planted MOWA Gardens—a living artwork that connects the institution to its local community, and the 2019 launch of MOWA | DTN, an unprecedented, tradition-busting museum in Saint Kate—The Arts Hotel in the heart of downtown Milwaukee.

In 2020, with its evocation of perfect vision, MOWA looks forward to the future and to building the museum of the next generation. Seeing what MOWA can be and should be is a different enterprise. There are a few generalizations we can make about the future of museums: we live in a time when technology is changing minute by minute; artists worldwide are increasingly energized and activated by political causes and social issues; and the old cultural bastions that once stood as the arbiters of taste are less and less relevant.

Over the past year, a team of MOWA’s senior staff and a handful of dedicated board members closeted themselves in back rooms to contemplate the overarching question: What is the long view for MOWA? After hours of discussion, two broad concepts gelled into a pithy aspirational statement: MOWA—The Place for Art and The Art of Place. This simple, catchy phrase has become the guiding principle—the mantra—informing a five-year strategic plan that will help us create a vibrant, next-generation museum.

Future visitors will discover a welcoming and inclusive environment; reinstalled galleries and engaging exhibitions that address broader, culturally current issues; a demonstrated commitment to championing and supporting artists at all stages of development; and thoughtful audience and program opportunities for each of MOWA’s physical and virtual destinations. In an increasingly global world, MOWA is dedicated now more than ever to challenging stereotypes and emphasizing the reciprocal influence of art and place.

We invite you to visit often as we continue to experiment and evolve into our future self—a museum that seeks new ways to inspire, stimulate, occasionally provoke, and makes you proud to be a MOWA member.

Sincerely,

Laurie Winters
Executive Director | CEO
Every two years the Museum of Wisconsin Art showcases some of the most compelling art from a state rich in creative capital. The 2020 Wisconsin Artists Biennial recognizes emerging and established Wisconsin artists who are at the forefront of contemporary art. The Biennial not only exhibits the art, it awards a total of $10,000 in cash; the first-place prize winner receives $5,000 and a solo exhibition at MOWA in tandem with the following Biennial.

This year’s Biennial features 42 works by 39 artists hailing from throughout Wisconsin. The selections represent a wide spectrum of media and perspectives. The exhibition will fill the Hyde and Horicon Bank Galleries. Combustible Dust, the solo exhibition of work by the 2018 Biennial first-place prize winner, Mark Klassen, will be installed in the State Gallery.

Biennial jurors are Amy Baur and Brian Boldon from In Plain Sight Art Studios in Minneapolis, a dynamic duo who specialize in architectural and sculptural commissions and mixed-media public art, and Tylonn J. Sawyer, a figurative artist and freelance curator in Detroit whose work addresses themes of identity, politics, race, and pop culture.

The Wisconsin Artists Biennial is co-sponsored and organized by Wisconsin Visual Artists and the Museum of Wisconsin Art. The exhibition’s onsite organization is provided by Graeme Reid, MOWA’s director of collections and exhibitions.

Support for 2020 exhibitions is provided by James and Karen Hyde, Pick Heaters, Inc., and the Wisconsin Arts Board.

Cover: Martha Coaty, Geometry, Photograph, 2019
Left: Xiaohong Zhang, Spring Water I, 3D modeling and 2D print on canvas, 2018

2020 Biennial Artists

Benjamin R. Balcom, Milwaukee
Jordan Acker Anderson, Wauwatosa
Krista V. Allenstein, Elm Grove
Trenton Baylor, Caledonia
Siara Berry, Milwaukee
Martha J. Coaty, Racine
Scott Espeseth, Madison
Daniel A. Fleming, Milwaukee
Nina Ghanbarzadeh, New Berlin
Madeline Glaspey, Milwaukee
Janelle M. Gramling, Milwaukee
Alexander Hopkins, Green Bay
Niki L. Johnson, Milwaukee
Frank Juarez, Sheboygan
Yevgeniya Kaganovich, Milwaukee
David Najib Kasir, Whitefish Bay
Daniel Klewer, Green Bay
Michael F. Knapstein, Middleton
Pat Kroth, Verona
Debbie Kupinsky, Appleton
Diane Levesque, Kenosha
Lisa Mathewson, Wauwatosa
Rob Neilson, Appleton
Angela Piehl, Milwaukee
Brian J. Pirman, De Pere
Denise Presnell, Eau Claire
Pete Railand and Jenna Valoe, Milwaukee
Christian A. Ricco, Milwaukee
Susan I. Rice, Mequon
Patrick Robison, Elkhart Lake
Laura Schneider, Mount Calvary
Jill Sebastian, Milwaukee
Shelley Smith, Milwaukee
Christine Style, Green Bay
Victoria L. Tasch, Hartland
Amanda Urmanski, Green Bay
John Whitney, Baileys Harbor
Xiaohong Zhang, Fort Atkinson
OPENING PARTY
Saturday, January 25 | 1:00–5:00
Juror Talk at 1:00–2:00
Remarks and Awards at 3:00–3:15
Celebrate contemporary Wisconsin artists! Hear from jurors Amy Baur, Brian Boldon, and Tylonn J. Sawyer as they discuss their process of selecting work for the Biennial. Meet the artists and explore their work, make art in the studio, and see what’s trending in Wisconsin. Plus, view 2018 Biennial MOWA Prize winner Mark Klassen’s solo exhibition, Combustible Dust, in the State Gallery.

GALLERY CONVERSATIONS
Saturday, February 8 | 12:00–2:00
Drop by the galleries to meet artists Ben Balcom, Daniel Fleming, Alex Hopkins, Yevgeniya Kaganovich, David Najib Kasir, Michael Knapstein, Brian Pirman, Denise Presnell, Laura Schneider, Amanda Urmanski, John Whitney, and Xiaohong Zhang.

CURATOR TALK
Thursday, February 27 | 11:00–12:00
Meet Director of Collections and Exhibitions Graeme Reid in the Hyde Gallery.

GALLERY CONVERSATIONS
Saturday, March 7 | 12:00–2:00
Strike up casual conversations with Biennial artists Krista Allenstein, Jordan Acker Anderson, Siara Berry, Martha Coaty, Nina Ghanbarzadeh, Debbie Kupinsky, Niki Johnson, Christian Ricco, Jill Sebastian, Christine Style, and Victoria Tasch.
If appearances are deceiving in Mark Klassen’s work, it’s only because appearances are deceiving in everyday life. The air-conditioning unit that makes the sultry summer tolerable also wreaks environmental havoc. To encounter such an object—or a picture-perfect wooden replica—in a museum setting is sufficiently strange to change what viewers notice in their day-to-day lives. Klassen’s deceptive sculptures transform banal objects—an air-conditioning unit, driver’s license, and water-squirting prank flower—into larger-than-life works of art that call attention to the things that make modern society possible and occasionally perilous.
Rosalie Waranius Vass

LIGHT LAYERS: WATERCOLORS

On view at Saint John’s On The Lake: January 16–April 8, 2020
Opening Party: Thursday, January 16 at 5:45 | Artist Talk at 6:30

Born and raised in Dundee, Wisconsin, the artistic vision of Rosalie Waranius Vass reflects the lush colors and glaciated landforms of the Kettle Moraine that cradles her hometown. Over six decades of creative activity, Vass has developed a unique watercolor technique that involves adding layer upon layer of the delicate, translucent paint to create a vibrant surface that shimmers with color. The richly detailed compositions evoke a longing for close-knit communities of yesteryear with a beguiling simplicity of style that updates American folk art traditions.

MOWA’S SATELLITE LOCATION
Saint John’s On The Lake, 1800 N. Prospect Avenue, Milwaukee

Rosalie Waranius Vass, Lean on Me, Watercolor on watercolor paper with prismacolor pencil, n.d.
By some estimates, China produces more than 9 million mobile phones per day. India recently surpassed China, meaning that this incredible rate of production generates more than 10 billion mobile phones per year. Add chargers, watches, tablets, and computers, and a global problem looms. The World After Us asks “what will—and what can—happen to this technology over time?” The exhibition is a timely provocation that will leave viewers contemplating how we might change our ecological trajectory.

Artist and academic Nathaniel Stern exhibits a range of possibilities for our electronic waste. He gathers sculptures, prints, photographs, and experiments that encourage viewers to consider their relationship with technology and nature. Combining plant life with electronic waste and current scientific experimentation with artistic exploration, the multi-faceted installation includes a wallhung jungle of computer detritus, fossilized phones, laptops, and repurposed electronics.

This exhibition is generously supported by the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee’s Office of Research.

Left: Nathaniel Stern, The Wall After Us, Installation, 2019 (detail) 
Below: Nathaniel Stern, Windows, Photograph, 2019 (detail)
Emerging Artist Forum
Saturday, March 14 | 1:00–4:00

Pursuing a career in the arts is both highly fulfilling and uniquely challenging. There may not be a single recipe for success, but the Museum of Wisconsin Art is a great place to start. MOWA collaborates with many of the most talented and successful artists, educators, gallery owners, influencers, and collectors in the state—individuals who want to support emerging Wisconsin artists.

Artists are invited to attend an afternoon of networking and round-table discussions about professional practices in the arts. Guest artists, professors, and gallery owners will share their wisdom, experiences, and unique viewpoints. Discussion topics will include gallery representation, legal contracts and liability, selling artwork, branding, residencies, as well as involvement with art institutions and collectives.

Register at wisconsinart.org/artists
$20 | Registration includes a complimentary MOWA membership for one full year
Laurie Winters | West Bend, WI
MOWA’s Executive Director | CEO shares industry standards and insights on mounting exhibitions, generating exhibition publications, and site-specific installations.

Mark Klassen | Milwaukee, WI
Klassen is an artist, professor, and director of The Ski Club—an artist-run contemporary art space in Milwaukee. His work has garnered reviews in Sculpture Magazine, The New York Times, The New Yorker, and Artforum.

Jenie Gao | Madison, WI
Gao is an artist, creative director, and entrepreneur. Through her work, she advocates for art and creativity as necessary builders of connection, resilience, and community citizenry.

Ariana Vaeth | Milwaukee, WI
Recipient of a 2017 Mary L. Nohl Fellowship, Vaeth is an emerging artist who has exhibited her work in Milwaukee, Chicago, Madison, and at MOWA’s Saint John’s On The Lake Gallery.

Frank Juarez | Sheboygan, WI
Juarez brings nineteen years of art education and arts management experience organizing local and regional art exhibitions, community art events, facilitating professional development workshops, supporting artists through grant programs, and advocating for art education.

Maggie Jo Sanderson | Milwaukee, WI
A recent graduate of MIAD, Sanderson has already made a splash in the woodworking industry—winning Best of Show at the 2018 International Woodworking Fair (IWF). She also exhibited work at MOWA in the 2019 exhibition, Handmade for Home.
CHICAGO’S 1893 WORLD’S FAIR
THE ARCHEOLOGY OF GARBAGE
Saturday, February 8 | 2:00–3:00
Each year MOWA celebrates Carl von Marr’s February 14 birthday with a talk about his work and the world in which he lived. Since MOWA is home to two works that Marr exhibited at the 1893 World’s Fair (The Flagellants and Summer Afternoon), Professor Rebecca Graft of Lake Forest College will speak about the famous World’s Fair and the—literally—ground-breaking archaeological work she does by digging up historic trash that is a treasure trove of information. As is customary, the event will end with birthday cake!

Special thanks to the Melitta S. and Joan M. Pick Charitable Trust for its ongoing support of MOWA.

WISCONSIN VISUAL ART
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS CEREMONY
Saturday, February 29 | 2:00–3:30
The Wisconsin Visual Art Achievement Awards (WVAAA) honor individuals, institutions, and organizations who have significantly contributed to the visual arts and creative culture of the state. In the fall of 2019, MOWA accepted nominations for six awards: Legacy, Educator (K–12), Educator (University or College), Exhibition, Community Arts Advocate, and Arts Writing. Celebrate the nominees and see who is honored in 2020. Reception to follow.

The WVAAA is made possible through a collaboration between MOWA, Wisconsin Visual Artists, and the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.
Laurie Winters, MOWA’s executive director, is delighted to announce the first collaboration of its kind in the state between an art museum and the Wisconsin Governor’s Executive Residence. The partnership extends the museum’s footprint westward to the state’s capital and presents Wisconsin art to visitors and dignitaries from across the nation.

“MOWA possesses an extensive collection of significant Wisconsin art, and we are so pleased to partner with the museum to highlight Wisconsin art and artists in the Residence,” said First Lady Kathy Evers. “We worked with MOWA to select art pieces that tell stories about our state’s history and culture over the past 100 years. Some—like the sketches for the mural in our hometown post office in Plymouth—have a personal resonance for Tony and me. Wisconsin has a rich art culture and so many talented artists, and our hope is to feature a rotating collection of art at the Residence each year for the public to enjoy.”

MOWA has loaned nearly twenty historical and contemporary works for this special annual exhibition in the Governor’s Residence. Featured artists include Reginald Baylor, Éoin Breadon, Tom Jones, David Lenz, Dona Look (pictured above), Truman Lowe, Jeremy Popelka, Adolph Rosenblatt, Gerrit Sinclair, Lucia Stern, Charles Thwaites, Stephanie Trenchard, Tom Uttech, and Lee Weiss.

Tour Information
To book a guided tour, please call 608.246.5501 or visit wisconsinexecutiveresidence.com.
Art Making for All Ages
Free Programming for Members

STUDIO SATURDAYS
Saturdays | Anytime from 10:30–1:30
Drop in for an art-making studio for all ages and artistic backgrounds. Explore new art techniques each week. Plus check out Special Studio Saturdays that celebrate exhibition openings, holidays, and other events!

Extended hours!

WISCONSIN ARTISTS BIENNIAL EXTENDED STUDIO
Saturday, January 25 | 10:30–5:00
Drop in the studio to explore different art media. This open maker space encourages creativity! Stay for the Opening Party from 1:00–5:00.

VALENTINE’S DAY
Saturday, February 8 | 10:30–1:30
Get ready for Valentine’s Day and craft your own valentine for someone you love.

SPRING EQUINOX
Saturday, March 21 | 10:30–1:30
Celebrate the seasonal changes! Bring yourself out of winter hibernation and make sunlight and earth masterpieces.

Studio Saturdays is sponsored by meijer

Additional support is provided by the Wallace and Marion Scheunemann Fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.
MINI MASTERS
First and Third Tuesdays | 10:15–11:00
Young artists and their caregivers are invited to discover MOWA’s galleries, enjoy story time, and create an art project to take home! Each session is different, so come often.

SPARK!
Last Tuesdays | 10:30–12:00
*Please note there is no January session
Designed for people with memory loss and their caregivers, SPARK! is a free monthly program that engages participants in conversation about Wisconsin art. Each session includes a facilitated discussion about works of art in the galleries followed by time for coffee and mingling in the studio. Some sessions feature special collaborations with community partners and local youth.
Register at wisconsinart.org/spark

YOUTH EDUCATION AT MOWA
Attention teachers, troop leaders, and parents! MOWA offers a range of programs that connect art to the everyday for youth, including:

- Pre-K–12 School Tours
- Wisconsin History and Visual Arts Tour
- Homeschool Tours
- Girl Scout Tours
- Birthday Parties

For more information, contact Youth Education Coordinator Jordan Gibbon at 262.247.2277 or jgibbon@wisconsinart.org.

The Wisconsin History and Visual Arts Tour is sponsored by
PLAY: MATERIAL EXPLORATION  
Saturday, February 22 | 10:30–1:30
Join Mollie Oblinger, professor of art at Ripon College, for a non-traditional, experimental art making studio. Using various games, objects, and materials, discover how chance and material exploration collide as you create. Play with both traditional and non-traditional art materials. Explore established techniques and invent your own.
Register at wisconsinart.org/mowamasters  
$50 with Membership  
All supplies included

THE ART OF COLLAGE  
Saturday, March 28 | 10:30–12:30
Join Biennial artist Angela Piehl as she explores the themes of color and composition. Learn techniques for making your own collage artwork.
Register at wisconsinart.org/mowamasters  
$40 with Membership  
All supplies included
Junior Masters
Spring Break Workshops
Become a Wisconsin Artist

Looking for a creative escape during the week of Spring Break? Young artists are invited to explore MOWA’s permanent collection and head to the studio to create their own unique masterpieces. Youth Education Coordinator Jordan Gibbon will teach students unique art styles used by some of Wisconsin’s most inspirational artists.

ARCHITECTURE
Thursday, April 9
Ages 5–8 | 10:30–12:00
Ages 9–12 | 1:00–3:00
Architecture is everywhere! Get inspired by MOWA’s contemporary wedge-shaped structure designed by HGA architect Jim Shields. View Frank Lloyd Wright’s iconic Prairie style designs and build your own three-dimensional structure.

SCULPTURE
Friday, April 10
Ages 5–8 | 10:30–12:00
Ages 9–12 | 1:00–3:00
MOWA has more than 100 sculptures in the permanent collection. The glass installations, Interconnection by Renee and Doug Sigwarth and Beth Lipman’s InEarth, are two magnificent works to study. Experience these installations and make your own sculpture in the studio.

Morning Session: $15 per day with Membership
Afternoon Session: $20 per day with Membership
Register at wisconsinart.org/juniormasters
All supplies included

For more information, contact Youth Education Coordinator Jordan Gibbon at 262.247.2277 or jgibbon@wisconsinart.org.
One blustery February day in 2016, MOWA received an email that read: “Please feel free to reach out to me if you think we could help out by getting involved at MOWA.” It was almost out of a dream. Marty Butorac, a classically-trained pianist and sound technician, noticed the grand piano tucked under the staircase on a visit to MOWA. He had recently retired from nearly thirty years at Northwestern Mutual and wanted to devote his time to an organization he valued. His wife, Kathleen, was similarly inclined, with decades of professional event coordination experience to share. Since then, you may have heard Marty play music at a program or headline with his rock band at Art & Chalk Fest. Kathleen has inevitably helped coordinate an event you have attended at MOWA. Perhaps you ordered a beverage from them at one of the exhibition opening parties. Throughout the past four years, Kathleen and Marty have logged hundreds of volunteer hours at MOWA. We are grateful for all they contribute.

Kathleen and Marty were recently honored with the 2019 Volunteer Excellence Award from the Wisconsin Federation of Museums for their excellence in volunteer service to MOWA. This notable recognition is a testament to their genuine enthusiasm and commitment. And it all began with spying the piano under the stairs.

Volunteer at MOWA
Share your expertise like Marty and Kathleen! A wide range of museum needs offer opportunities for volunteers to get involved, give back, and learn more about Wisconsin art. Sign up today at wisconsinart.org/volunteer or call Kerry at 262.247.2278 for more information.
Let’s be friends!

As a Friend of Wisconsin Art (FOWA), you support the arts and culture of the state and engage more deeply with the museum, artists, and like-minded enthusiasts.

FOWA members enjoy basic benefits, unlimited access for up to six adults with any number of children, plus these special benefits:

**MOWA+ | $100 ($100 tax deductible)**

Plus

- 15% discount on MOWA Shop purchases
- Invitations to artist studios and private events

**Premium | $250 ($250 tax deductible)**

MOWA+ benefits plus

- 50% discount on Three+ gift memberships
- Special recognition in MOWA newsletter

**Partner | $500 ($500 tax deductible)**

Premium benefits plus

- Private curator-led tours of special exhibitions
- Invitation to annual State of the Wedge event

**Benefactor | $1,000 ($900 tax deductible)**

Partner benefits plus

- Annual Benefactor Lunch with guest artist
- Opportunities to meet artists
- Curator consultation on personal collecting
- Wisconsin People & Ideas, Wisconsin Academy’s quarterly magazine of contemporary thought and culture

For more information or to become a FOWA member contact Brenda at 262.247.2263.
Meet Artist Mark Klassen
Director and Curator of The Ski Club,
a contemporary, non-profit art space in Milwaukee

Starting January 25, Mark Klassen’s work will be on view at MOWA in a solo exhibition, Combustible Dust. Klassen is an Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Art History at Beloit College in Beloit.

When did you know you wanted to be an artist?
I remember drawing when I was about eight years old and thinking it would be great if I could do this for the rest of my life. I’ve been unwavering since then, apart from a moment in college when I considered mortuary science.

When are you most creative?
I think a lot in the car. You’re forced to put your phone away and just be present. The car, bed, and shower are the few times we aren’t consuming other people’s work.

What do you love most about being an artist?
I love trying to think differently about the world and then constructing objects that embody these thoughts. Anything is possible.

What’s one of your unique interests?
I love teaching old-school bookbinding.

Favorite brunch spot in Milwaukee?
We stick with the standard: Beans & Barley is the best brunch in town.

Poet Phone
Klassen’s Poet Phone, on view at MOWA | DTN in summer 2019, offered an immersive experience. With the lift of the receiver, patrons listened to poems by eight Wisconsin poets—all inspired by the beauty of Milwaukee.
The Notorious Air Conditioner

First-place prize winner of the 2018 Wisconsin Artists Biennial, this air conditioner may look like the real thing, but don’t be fooled. It’s a perfect replica carved entirely from wood—even the tape, filter slats, and screws.

Did you know?

In 2007, Klassen was awarded the prestigious Mary L. Nohl Fellowship in the Established Artist Category.

Name a Wisconsin artist you would love to share a meal with?

Simon Sparrow (1925–2000). He and I became friends while I was in graduate school in Madison. I miss his stories.

Tell us about The Ski Club

The Ski Club is a contemporary, non-profit art space located in the Riverwest neighborhood of Milwaukee. Polish immigrants settled this neighborhood and the storefront was originally built as the Borkowski Market in 1913. 101 years later the storefront was converted to an art gallery. The name “The Ski Club” is an homage to the original owners, the Borkowski family.

Photograph by Edward Otto
Save the Date

MOWA’s biennial fundraiser is held at the peak of summer when the colors are vibrant and the exhibitions are bold.

Saturday, July 11, 2020 | 6:00
Museum of Wisconsin Art
205 Veterans Avenue, West Bend
Supporting Wisconsin art and artists

wisconsinart.org/color