

## **Background**

The Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (KIA) is an 84-year-old art museum/art school in Southwest Michigan. Serving a nine-county region of small cities, towns, and rural areas, the KIA provides varied programming that includes exhibitions drawn from its permanent collection, temporary exhibitions, education programs for all ages, a fine arts library, and a curriculum-based art school. Every year, it attracts upwards of 125,000 regional residents and visitors.

Originally founded in 1924, the KIA moved into its own building—a Skidmore, Owings and Merrill structure based on the style of Mies van der Rohe—in 1961. Among other purposes, the building was erected to serve two key functions: provide space to host nationally recognized exhibitions and to start and house a permanent collection. The building, with a \$14.5 million expansion in 1998, has fulfilling both functions.

The KIA now annually hosts six-eight traveling exhibitions, many of which usually only visit museums in large cities. All are presented free of admission charge, except for major, biennial ticketed exhibitions. Recent exhibitions have included ancient Asian ceramics, Lorna Simpson's photographs and installations, prints by Jacob Lawrence, Dale Chihuly glassworks, Marc Chagall etchings, Michigan ceramics, contemporary Realist figure paintings, Norman Rockwell paintings, and the New Orleans Museums of Art's European and American masterworks.

Meanwhile, the KIA collection has grown to almost 4,000 works. The initial collection-management policy established the goal to acquire American works that complemented the KIA school's five areas of concentration: painting, sculpture, ceramics, photography, and works on paper. However, as the KIA strengthened its museum component, the collection steadily increased through the addition of gifts, purchases, and a major 1989 bequest. Though still emphasizing American art, the collection has added gifts of notable works from other cultures, such as Oceanic artifacts and German Expressionist drawings. Its quality is now at a level where it can contribute to the advancement of art scholarship and appreciation. It includes significant works by artists such as Alexander Calder, William Merritt Chase, Richard Diebenkorn, Helen Frankenthaler, Franz Kline, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Charles Peale, Lorna Simpson, and Andy Warhol, among others. It consists of some 2,000 works on paper, 700 photographs, 450 paintings, 300 decorative arts, and 200 works of sculpture, textiles, and media-media pieces.

### **1. Statement of Need**

The permanent collection is integrated into much of the KIA's programming. Its more significant works, for example, are on long-term display in three permanent collection galleries. Three-month exhibitions, mostly of recently acquired works, are hung on a quarterly basis in a small temporary gallery. Gallery tours often feature the permanent collection. Some works are hung to augment traveling exhibitions that visit the KIA, loaned to other museums, made available to art school classes, or featured in a children's interactive gallery.

However, additional steps must be taken to ensure that the permanent collection is used to its full potential. At present, viewing works in storage or searching the collection database can only be done in the KIA print study room, during business hours. Exhibitions of its works are not organized to travel to other museums. Museum requests to borrow works are seldom received. The KIA website does not highlight the collection, and its library does not offer access to any kind of permanent collection catalog.

The primary source of these shortcomings is inadequate permanent-collection records. While works are properly stored in two vaults and a print study room and electronically "catalogued" in a secure The Museum System (TMS) database, their catalog records contain little beyond basic information. While it is possible to search the database by obvious categories, such as artist, date,

and title, it is not possible to search by less obvious categories, such as landscape, portraits, or African-American artists. Less than 15% of the works have been photographed, with no standard resolution or quality controls. This limitation is compounded by the recent hiring of a collections and exhibitions director, curator, and registrar who lack their predecessors' familiarity with the collection. As a result, collection searches require physically looking through stored works.

To improve its poor collections management practices, the institute plans a three-phase collections digitization/cataloguing project. In the first phase, digital image capture will occur for all works in the permanent collection. In the second phase, catalog records will be standardized, copyright will be established for the museum's artworks, and meaningful metadata will be created in preparation for creating an online collection catalog on the institution's website. The third phase will involve placing the permanent collection images and information on the KIA website for public viewing. The goals of the overall project are to improve the collection's management for planning and developing exhibitions, incorporating works into programming, and loaning works to other museums; to improve accessibility to and awareness of the permanent collection to researchers, museum professionals, and the public; and to better preserve the KIA permanent collection, lessening handling risk and damage.

Museums for America funding is being sought for the project's first phase. Called the Collections Digitization Project (CDP), this phase occurs Sept. 1, 2009–Sept. 30, 2010. It will:

- establish a protocol for digitally documenting works
- create digital images of permanent collection works
- develop resources that guide the future creation of digital images and metadata records

Aligned with the Museums for America's goals, the CDP will enable the KIA to address a pressing institutional challenge in order to be a better steward of its growing permanent collection. In so doing, it will support high-priority activities that advance the KIA's mission and strategic plan, which has three goals supported by eight initiatives, complimented by yearly focus actions added to address institutional challenges.

When completed, the CDP will yield a new capacity that relates to the KIA mission, plus three goals of its strategic plan, one of its objectives, and one of this year's four focus actions:

*KIA mission:* To promote the creation and appreciation of the visual arts

*Goal 1.* Emphasize opportunities for art lovers and artists to be inspired by art and artists of national and international renown

*Goal 2.* Take KIA's relationship to its audience and community to the "next level," becoming a more proactive and community-friendly organization

*Goal 3.* Improve the stability of KIA funding as the arts funding landscape changes

*Objective 7.* Develop a stronger customer service focus by providing opportunities for the public to explore the visual arts and proactively encouraging them to do so

*2008 Focus Action 3* Launch first phase of Digital Arts Programs and Services project, which includes: Expanding public access to institute resources, such as exhibitions, permanent collection, and library

*More opportunities for art creation and appreciation, as well as inspiration by art and artists:* When completed, the project will strengthen the institution's ability to develop meaningful exhibitions for public enjoyment. It will afford greater access to the collection – for enjoyment and educational– and raise awareness of KIA works. And it lays the foundation for adding a public-accessible collection catalogue on our website and library resources.

*Increased customer-service capacity:* The CDP will enable the KIA to serve the public's cultural needs/interests. Resulting object images will be integrated into educational materials for

local schools, into PowerPoint presentations given to local organizations, and for training docents, who lead gallery tours. They will be integrated into the KIA website, used to illustrate institute publications, and offered to researchers, reporters, and others who request them.

*Improved collection stewardship:* The project will preserve works by eliminating the need to handle them for developing exhibitions, identifying acquisition needs, facilitating loans, and accommodating art researchers' requests for information. The project will create a system to define metadata standards that will be implemented in follow-up improvement efforts.

*Expanded funding opportunities:* The project creates a tool that can facilitate the creation of exhibitions, which may be rented to other museums.

The institute goals that the CDP supports are part of a strategic plan that was created during Spring 2005. As described in the accompanying Strategic Plan Summary, the process involved the KIA's staff and Board of Directors, led by planning consultant Nancy Frost. It stemmed from an inclusive process that spanned three months and entailed data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Numerous interviews and small group meetings were conducted with community stakeholders, including 120 donors, government officials, artists, KIA members, and business owners. KIA staff completed a detailed 186-item survey. Since its creation, the plan has been reviewed at an annual autumn board retreat, its process assessed, and new year-long initiatives are implemented to continue to advance the plan's goals and objectives.

The CDP will serve two audiences. Its primary audience is an internal one, consisting of the KIA's registrar, assistant curator, director of exhibitions and collections, and the museum education staff. All have expressed frustration that the lack of images and data in the collection database impedes their productivity. The project's secondary external audience consists of academic and art researchers, other museums, KIA members, and the general public. These constituents are disappointed with limited access to the collection, restricted means of reviewing the collection, and exhibitions that do not reflect the permanent collection's breadth.

## **2. Project Design**

The Collections Digitization Project has three goals:

- Goal 1. To prepare an image database of the collection for immediate KIA staff use
- Goal 2. To better preserve the KIA permanent collection, lessening handling risk and damage
- Goal 3. To create a digitizing standards manual and a metadata standards manual for current and future use

These goals will be achieved through several organizational and process activities

*Artwork Organization:* To facilitate workflow in an orderly, trackable fashion, the project's first activity separates works into categories based on medium and size and then schedules their photographing and image management. Workflow will be coordinated with the exhibition schedule, whereby transparencies and smaller 2-dimensional objects (which require little setup and movement) will be scanned during weeks when exhibitions are installed.

*Digitizing Workplan:* With the consultation of the Digitization Center of the Western Michigan University library system, a comprehensive plan will be developed that ensures every work in the permanent collection has a preservation-quality digital image that is quality controlled and color managed. To assure that images are of a preservation quality, industry standards, such as those found in the Bibliographical Center for Research's *CDP Digital Imaging Best Practices* and NISO Framework Working Group's *A Framework of Guidance for Building Good Digital Collections*, will be researched. This step will help insure interoperability and is

especially important for future collaborations with art organizations. The workplan plots the sequence of tasks regarding the digitization order for each work, articulates project team roles, produces a precise project timeline, and ensures all future digital imaging needs are accommodated. Pilot runs will test the workplan and the running of sample files on the network.

*Digitizing Standards Manual:* A digitizing standards manual will be developed that establishes protocols, processes, and guidelines for digital-content production and archiving, including data transfer, scanning and image manipulation, and quality control. This reference resource will serve as the definitive manual for creating digital images, and it will be used to ensure that consistent and proper standards are followed for digitizing acquisitions in the future.

*Digitizing Station:* A digital-image capture/production station will be set up in a large, secure room near art storage areas. It will be outfitted with digital equipment that has been purchased with digitization expert input and detailed in the accompanying project budget. In this space, works will be retrieved from storage, photographed or scanned, and color managed before being returned to storage.

*Digitizing:* Works will be captured on high-resolution RAW digital images using a Canon 21.17MP Digital SLR Camera. Minor modifications will be made immediately to the images, such as color corrections in the presence of the original object under controlled balanced lighting. RAW images will be processed and saved, derivative lossless TIFF format files will be made and entered into a digital collection archive storage. Derivative TIFF images will be created for use over the network. RAW images and working TIFF images will be archived on storage discs that will be stored off-site. This activity will occur over a concentrated, 16- hour period every week to allow staff members to address other job responsibilities during the balance of the week. Digitizing a work will take an estimated 10-15 minutes. The goal will be to digitize 75 works per week. The images of some KIA works, particularly large sculptures and paintings, have been previously captured in 4x5 transparencies, which will be scanned as part of this process and converted to the same formats as the digitally photographed works. In addition, hundreds of 2-dimensional works, which fit on a requested flatbed scanner, will be scanned.

*Collection-Management System Updates:* At each day's end, images will be uploaded from the KIA network and the TMS database. They will also be archived on a separate server.

*Metadata Standards Manual:* To prepare for the following phase of the Collection Digitization/Cataloguing Project, a reference resource will be created to provide complete collection-database records for works in the collection. This manual will be added to the previously discussed digitization standards manual. It will incorporate metadata-creation guidelines, based on accepted industry references, including the *Visual Resources Association's Core 4.0* and the *Getty's Union List of Artist Names and Art and Architecture Thesaurus*. It will serve as the metadata manual for phase two of the project and will be used in the future to create metadata for new acquisitions.

*Project Oversight:* The project will employ the services of two members of the KIA's Collections and Exhibitions Department. But its progress will be carefully tracked through weekly reports to the department director, who will pass on updates to the institute's executive director and a Permanent Collections Committee comprised of KIA board members and community residents. In addition, the project staff and department director will meet quarterly with consultants to assess digitizing and metadata efforts and address concerns. Employed by a comprehensive library-digitization center at nearby Western Michigan University, the consultants will offer guidance on acquiring, installing, and using digitization equipment, creating digitization standards, and developing a metadata standards manual.

The project will be evaluated while being implemented and at its conclusion. Ongoing evaluations will be part of weekly project director reports and monthly consultant meetings. They will assess staff and consultant actions and check the project's progress on its goals. When concluded, the project will be evaluated based on its success in attainment of its four goals. Since the CDP is only the first phase of a three-phase initiative, a more comprehensive evaluation will be conducted once phases two and three are completed. This evaluation will assess all facets of the initiative and integrate individual evaluations done for each phase.

### 3. Project Resources

Significant research and planning went into the creation of this project, including consultations with digitization/metadata experts and the registration staff of the Detroit Institute of Arts, which has conducted a similar project. Thanks to their input, this project is supported by an extensive menu of equipment and personnel that are deployed in a well-planned fashion.

A menu of equipment is needed to perform the digitizing tasks. All equipment was identified and selected with advice from the project's digitization consultant. It includes:

- Canon 21.1MP digital camera
- Kaiser RSP rePRO copy stand with lighting
- Apple Mac Pro with 4GB ram memory
- Capture correction software
- Camera tripod
- Macro lens
- Epson tabletop scanner
- Dell pc with 6GB ram memory
- Server

This project spans 13 months. Its relatively short timeline for photographing works is based on the fact that approximately 70% of the KIA's permanent collection consists of unframed works on paper that require less "set-up" time to be photographed. The project's accompanying Schedule of Completion aligns with staff workloads and scheduled activities, as well as currently planned commitments for the project's consultants. Photography of paintings and sculptures will be completed after the installation/deinstallation of exhibitions. Sufficient time will be allocated to accommodate unexpected situations. The project will be a priority activity for the project team members, who will devote two days a week. They will set aside the rest of the work week to address other duties.

The project team includes two capable staff members, a digitization consultant and a metadata consultant, with support from two additional KIA staff members. The two staff members should be able to execute all of their normal duties during this project. If needed, they will prioritize tasks to do in non-project hours.

*Project Manager* Robin Goodman has been the institute's registrar since May 2008. She has a master's degree in art history, along with cataloguing and collections management experience. Previously, she worked on an inventory project at the Kingman Museum in Battle Creek, Mich., where she assisted in its conversion from paper records to a digital database. She also has had scanning experience working at the Visual Resource Center at Pennsylvania State University.

Her project responsibilities entail scheduling and tracking activities, assisting with archiving of the digital images, meeting quarterly with consultants, and providing weekly project reports to the KIA collections and exhibitions director. She will devote 40% of work time to this project.

*Photographer/Preparator* Brian Mosher has worked as a photographer for 18 years and the KIA preparator for the last six years. He has extensive experience with film-based and digital formats. As KIA preparator, Mr. Mosher has gained an intimate knowledge of the collection's works, which will facilitate project workflow.

His project responsibilities are focused entirely on the digitization process. They entail handling works and preparing them to be photographed, capturing digital images of works, color correcting them, and archiving them. He will devote 40% of work time to this project.

*Digitization Consultant* Paul Howell will lend his expertise to the digitization process. Mr. Howell is director of the Western Michigan University Libraries' Digitization Center, which offers digitization and metadata services for the university, as well as scholars and organizations nationwide. Mr. Howell has practiced in the fields of image capture and cataloging since 1986. He has a bachelor's degree in industrial science and extensive training in digital preservation management, computer information systems, and imaging science. He will devote eight days to this project, helping create a public-access image-based collection database, providing image color-management guidance, and monitoring and evaluating database progress.

*Metadata Consultant* Sheila A. Bair is Western Michigan University's Cataloging and Metadata Librarian. Versed in metadata formats, including Dublin Core and Visual Resources Association Core, Ms. Bair has guided metadata projects, including state and federal grants, that involved maps, letters, and digital art images. She has written journal articles, led workshops, and presented widely on metadata and cataloging procedures. She will devote four days to the project, reviewing the permanent collection's catalog and metadata needs, guiding staff, and overseeing the development of a metadata standards manual.

Other employees who will contribute to the CDP as part of their ongoing responsibilities are:

*Collections and Exhibitions Director* Vicki Wright brings extensive collections-management experience to the project. She has master of arts degree in art history degrees and 29 years or experience as an art museum curator, registrar, and director. Ms. Wright will closely monitor the project to identify workload needs.

*KIA Fine Arts Librarian* Dennis Kreps has more than 20 years of experience working as a librarian and a master's degree in library science from the University of Illinois. He will offer guidance on creating the project's digitizing and metadata standards.

The project's total direct costs equal \$88,244. The KIA's 53% cost-share contribution meets the Museums for America's cost-share requirement. The bulk of grant support is for the purchase of digitization and computer equipment, as well as digitization and metadata consultant services.

The project budget was determined after consulting professional and institutions that executed similar projects. Equipment costs are based on a review of two to three retail estimates. Staff salaries are within industry standards. Costs have been somewhat minimized by the selection of qualified consultants who are located nearby in Kalamazoo. Digitizing and metadata training will also be obtained from sources in Chicago and Detroit, which are both two-hour drive of Kalamazoo. The KIA has solid fiscal standing that make it prepared to absorb unanticipated project costs.

#### **4. Impact**

Upon completion of the Collections Digitization Project, the KIA will be a better community resource and steward of its permanent collection.

It will create resources that enable the staff to create digital images of works in the collection as well as future acquisitions:

- a workstation for photographing, scanning, and digitally storing images
- a digital-image database of permanent collection artwork
- a bound digitizing standards manual that will be used as a reference to ensure that all images are created according to prescribed industry standards

- a metadata standards manual that will be ready to be used in a follow-up permanent collections management project

The impact of these resources will be immediately apparent, particularly for exhibitions and collections, museum education, and marketing staff members. The improved database records and resources will make possible brand-new uses of the KIA's permanent collection that will result in improved exhibitions, educational programs, marketing efforts, research services, acquisitions, and conservation of works of art.

These resources represent the first phase of a three-phase project to create a permanent collection database of records that are complete, accurate, and designed according to industry standards. In the long-term, the project creates a drastically upgraded collections management system that promises several beneficial results:

*Improved Collection Stewardship* The collection-management system will be upgraded to current industry standards. The control it affords will minimize the need to handle actual works, preserving their longevity, and will facilitate continued growth of the collection.

*Expanded Institutional Use of the Collection* The standardized, complete collection-management system will significantly improve the KIA staff's ability to tap the collection for planning and developing exhibitions, creating educational and promotional materials, and loaning works to other museums.

*Standardized Collection-Management Processes* Underscoring the importance of good records, the new collection-management system will articulate processes for accessioning works, precisely stating the fields that must accompany every work as it is accessioned. This process lays the groundwork for accommodating future growth of the collection.

*Expanded Public Access* The project yields enhanced ability to search the collection, enabling staff to better respond to public information requests. In addition, this project represents the first step in creating records of the collection that will be assembled into an interactive permanent collection catalog that can be accessed via the KIA website and the KIA's library.

*Improved Internal Operations* The improved collection-management system will make it easier for the institute to adapt to staff turnover. It affords a resource that new employees can easily embrace in order to manage and gain knowledge of the collection.

*On-Line Collection Access Preparedness* The produced databases will create resources that can be linked to the institute's website and to other online collections so that museums and patrons can access our permanent collection holdings.

**BUDGET FORM - PAGE FOUR**

**Section B: Summary Budget**

	\$ IMLS	\$ Cost Share	\$ TOTAL COSTS
1. Salaries and Wages			
2. Fringe Benefits			
3. Consultant Fees			
4. Travel			
5. Supplies and Materials			
6. Services			
7. Student Support			
8. Other Costs			
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (1–8)			
9. Indirect Costs			
TOTAL COSTS (Direct and Indirect)			

**Project Funding for the Entire Grant Period**

1. Grant Funds Requested from IMLS

2. Cost Sharing:

    a. Cash Contribution

    b. In-Kind Contribution

    c. Other Federal Agencies\*

    d. TOTAL COST SHARING

3. TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING (1+2d)

% of Total Costs Requested from IMLS

\* If funding has been requested from another federal agency, indicate the agency's name:

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts

The KIA Collections Digitization Project is a 13-month effort, extending from September 1, 2009, to September 30, 2010. The table below plots the timeframes for the project's activities.

Collection Digitization/Cataloguing Project Kalamazoo Institute of Arts													
	2009				2010								
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Artwork Organization	■												
Digitization Workplan	■												
Digitizing Standards Manual	■												
Digitizing Process		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Coll-Mgmt. System Updates				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Metadata Standards Manual													■
Consultant Consults/Reports	■						■					■	