



Seattle Art Museum

-- *Executive Summary* --  
Strategic Plan 2014-2017

EMBRACING THE FUTURE

June 2014

## **Introduction**

After a focused and inclusive planning process undertaken by the Board of Trustees and the museum's director and staff in 2013-14, this plan confirms Seattle Art Museum's mission and vision statements, articulates our values, and asserts the key strategic directions to achieve during the next three years.

It is time to build more aggressively on the achievements of SAM's massive 2007 expansion, which resulted in three unique sites for SAM: downtown's flagship Museum, the Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park, and the free Olympic Sculpture Park located on the waterfront. We envision the museum's role in the Seattle of the future, asserting a leadership position for the institution as innovative and forward thinking. This new direction is informed by work undertaken by senior museum board and staff leaders in 2013 with the business innovation strategy consulting group JUMP Associates around the importance of thinking more intently about engaging a key focus audience while continuing to serve the broadest possible audience, to help us better engage all audiences, develop a more compelling profile and brand, and assume a leadership role in Seattle and beyond.

With a new Director and CEO in place, an expanding economy, and a stabilized real estate situation, we will address the museum's long-term operating challenges and realize the incredible promise and ambition of the 2007 expansion.

## **Mission**

SAM connects art to life.

Through art, the Seattle Art Museum enriches lives and engages diverse communities.

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond.

## **Core Values**

### **Creativity**

We bring art into people's lives and help them understand its unique power to inspire creative thinking, which is crucial to understanding and solving our world's complex problems.

**Excellence**

We build and create collections, exhibitions, and public programs of the highest quality and excellence.

**Engagement**

We engage our audiences through dialogue that is mutually beneficial and enlightening in a spirit of mutual respect.

**Diversity**

Knowing that organizations that embrace and embody diversity are stronger and more effective, we invite and respect many viewpoints and experiences, as we strive to develop and sustain a diverse staff and board, and showcase art from the world's diverse cultures.

**Accessibility**

We work to lower economic and physical barriers as well as barriers to understanding, so that art is accessible to everyone. We recognize the importance of excellent customer service in making art accessible to all.

**Stewardship**

Transparency and careful stewardship of resources, including collections, staff, volunteers, facilities, investments, and institutional records, are essential to the fulfillment of our mission. Because SAM's collection is our greatest resource and legacy to the future, we care for it and share it with the public through scholarship and interpretation, creative installation, conservation, and programming.

**Vision**

The Seattle Art Museum aspires to be a great art museum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. SAM is defined by its outstanding collections, dynamic and inspiring programs, and innovative uses of technology to engage audiences and supporters with great art. As an anchor institution in a forward-thinking global city, the Seattle Art Museum aspires to embody and inspire the Seattle region's dynamism and enhance its global profile while contributing to a healthy and vibrant community and enriching the lives of its citizens.

**Strategic Goals 2014-2017**

- *Strengthen and enhance collections and exhibitions, consolidating SAM's position as a leading comprehensive collecting institution*
- *Engage all audiences more deeply, with special attention to the focus audience*
- *Improve the end-to-end visitor experience*

- *Sustain and enhance our three unique sites, and build deeper connections between them*
- *Build technology capacity and infrastructure to better serve our audiences and enrich their understanding of art*
- *Deepen and broaden support base*
- *Align organization and resources*

### **Conclusion**

SAM is already engaged in addressing these strategic goals, and creating this plan is a key step in building momentum toward their full realization. It is also critical to develop the resources needed to realize this ambitious plan. Trustees and staff are resolved to work together to leverage resources, support, and knowledge as efficiently as possible so that SAM can sustain and extend its goal to enrich people's lives through art, as an essential part of a healthy and vibrant community.