

LANSING ART GALLERY & EDUCATION CENTER

OUR RICH HISTORY



1965 GALLERY OPENING

September 8: The Lansing Community Art Gallery was incorporated as a non-profit organization, becoming Lansing's first community art gallery. This project was set into motion by Sexton art instructor Judith Leepa with the wholehearted support of many, including then-Mayor Max E. Murningham. Leepa initially served as President. Board members included: Sigmund Kempler, Robert Johnson, Douglas McNitt, Gilbert Hansen, Sue Fulton, Frances DeVries, Mildred Tompkins, and Shirley Brainard. Joining them as founders were Harry Worst, Jane Venable, Sally Swiss, Kenneth Beachler, Judy Reynolds and Aime Martinat. The Gallery's first location included eight rooms of the former Lansing Business University at 124 W. Ionia Street. On December 5, 1965, our first exhibition opened with free public access to the exhibitions established at the outset of our programming.



1974 FIRST LOGO DESIGN

The Board of Directors created our first paid staff position made possible with seed funding from the federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). CETA was created to combat severe unemployment during the mid-1970s and was the largest such program since the Works Progress Administration of the 1930s. Randy Mifflin served as the first Gallery Director. Of note: we also began to use our first logo, which was created by a Michigan State University graduate student.



1967 ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Community engagement increased dramatically by members, participating artists, and patrons, prompting a move to 118 1/2 E. Michigan, above Jim's Tiffany Restaurant, with the generous help of then-owner Angie Vlahakis. The Lansing Community Art Gallery remained in this location from 1967 until 1975.



1975 FUNDRAISING

Our staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, and supporters were instrumental in a community-wide fundraising campaign for a new Lansing Center for the Arts. In 1975 Lansing Art Gallery moved into the Center, located at 425 South Grand Avenue, once the Dan O'Shaughnessy Plymouth dealership. As our organization's programs grew, the staff was expanded to three total employees. Monthly art enrichment programs include the "Brown Bag" series include a growing group of volunteers and enthusiastic patrons.



1983 ART IN EDUCATION

After school art enrichment classes begin in the Lansing School District supported by the City of Lansing, which began a tradition of art instruction by teaching artists that continues today with Late-Start Wednesdays, a program that supports student learning on a weekly basis.



1993 SUMMER ART CAMP

Educational programs continue to grow to include Summer Art Camp, weekly series of classes in which young artists explore creative processes, techniques and materials with the guidance of trained artists. This program was held virtually in 2020 due to COVID-19 and has since ended.



1985 ENCOURAGING YOUNG ARTISTS

Our first high school exhibition and competition was founded by local arts educators: Peggy King and Sara Jane Venable. The program titled Art Scholarship Alert continues today, providing recognition and financial assistance to outstanding art students. We actively partner with arts teachers and schools to encourage artistic growth and provide young artists with an opportunity to participate in a professional gallery setting. Awards to students now total over \$110,000 to young artists to help further their creative endeavors.



2004 NEW DOWNTOWN LOCATION

Capitalizing on the initial stages of downtown revitalization for Lansing, we moved to the heart of the downtown district at 113 South Grand Avenue. Housed in the former "Lieberman's" building from fall 2004 through 2009, our attendance and artist participation grew significantly, partly due to increased outreach such as public art installations and artist demonstrations.



2015 50TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

Our community actively celebrated our fiftieth anniversary with a 50th anniversary exhibition and competitive awards, growing programs, and strategic plans toward increased access for all people. We established goals to build collaborations with other nonprofit organizations, become financially stable, and build an endowment fund to support our organization's future.



2018 ART PATH

Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center is partnering with the City of Lansing for the 5th annual ArtPath River Trail Exhibition. More than two and a half miles of the Lansing River Trail will highlight talented Michigan artists at multiple scenic and historic locations through the heart of downtown Lansing. Special thanks to our title sponsors Rathbun Agency and Auto-Owners Insurance. On average, over 82,000 visitors enjoyed the River Trail during the duration of ArtPath! Artwork of all media are eligible including natural materials, such as Wheatpaste and Moss-art, to murals, paintings, sculptures, and fiber installations



2022 NEW LOCATION: THE KNAPPS BUILDING

Our journey continues at 300 S. Washington, Suite 100, inside the historic Knapps building. This new location will offer a ground level space with plenty of natural light and accessible parking.



2020 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Collaborative programs flourish with Lansing School District, Peckham, Impression-5 and more. Celebrating 10 years of public art programming, we've inspired hundreds of thousands of people in Lansing with public art initiatives and compensated artists over \$100,000. Capacity-building efforts have yielded annual positive growth and enabled our Board of Directors, staff, and stakeholders to collectively make our mission a reality. Two dedicated funds have been established to support our work with over \$50,000 total, one endowed at the Capital Region Community Foundation.



ELIZABETH CHARLES FUND

Elizabeth Charles believed in the arts as a vehicle for self-expression and developing a deeper understanding of our humanity. As a student, Elizabeth actively championed human equity and diversity. In 2020, the Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center and Elizabeth's father, Norm Charles, established the fund in her honor. Initial funding was provided by Norm Charles and Phyllis Mellon, as well as additional funders who seek to continue her championship by supporting emerging Michigan artists and amplifying their voices through monetary award and promotions.

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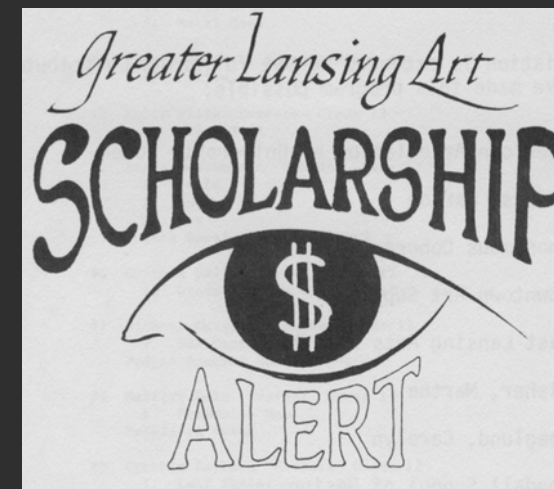
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