

# *Strategic Plan Executive Summary*



**Albright-Knox Art Gallery**

1285 Elmwood Avenue  
Buffalo, New York 14222

Nancy L. Pressly & Associates  
Strategic Planning Consultants

# *Executive Summary: An Introduction*

The Albright-Knox Art Gallery has a rich and impressive history as one of the world's major venues for modern and contemporary art.

To build upon this tradition, and to forge an even stronger institution in the years ahead, the Board of Directors of The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy and the Gallery staff took the extraordinary step of engaging in a comprehensive strategic planning process. Their purpose was to establish a vision that would set the Gallery's trajectory for the 21st century, including the 150th anniversary celebration of the Academy's founding in 2012.

To accomplish this, the Gallery interviewed twelve national museum directors and curators and more than sixty members of the community and Gallery supporters, and engaged the Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers in the arduous work of numerous task forces, committees, and subcommittees to evaluate, question, and propose recommendations on every aspect of the Gallery's existence.

In the spirit of open and honest discussion, special consideration was given to future directions for our artistic focus, public and educational programs, community involvement, marketing, outreach to new and more diverse audiences, visitor experience, governance and administration, fund development and volunteer support, technology, and facilities.

The result is a Strategic Plan for the Gallery that clearly states our mission, our vision, and the strategic priorities required to fulfill them. It is a guide for our future, one that clearly reflects the vitality of the Gallery and the considerable commitment of our board and staff.

We will be implementing the plan through several phases over the coming years as we position the Albright-Knox Art Gallery to be:

- One of the world's most dynamic modern and contemporary art institutions because of our outstanding collections, programs, creative collaborations, and unique facilities;
- A vital cultural gathering place for Western New Yorkers and an indispensable community educational resource;
- A major contributor to the Buffalo/Niagara economy by serving as a magnet attraction for a growing regional, national, and international audience.

We look forward to the exciting opportunities presented by this Strategic Plan and to its promise of an even greater Albright-Knox Art Gallery as the new century unfolds.

CHARLES E. BALBACH  
*President, The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy*

DOUGLAS G. SCHULTZ  
*Director, Albright-Knox Art Gallery*

**THE BUFFALO FINE ARTS ACADEMY***An Esteemed History*

Founded officially in December 1862, The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy is among the country's oldest public arts institutions, sharing that distinction with the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, and the Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven, among others. At the turn of that century, John J. Albright set this institution on its course by donating funds for a new building. With Edward B. Green as its architect, the Greek revival structure that became the permanent home for the Albright Art Gallery was dedicated on May 31, 1905. During the middle years of the century, Seymour H. Knox, Jr. became the Gallery's most influential supporter, not only making possible the building of a new addition designed by Gordon Bunshaft, but also amassing a brilliant collection of artworks. The group of nearly 700 works collected during this time represent still the most intense period of growth for the Gallery's collection, a result of Mr. Knox's daring spirit, discerning judgment, and the unique partnership and vision he shared with Director Gordon M. Smith. The new wing that was dedicated in 1962, one hundred years after the founding of the Academy, stands as a testament to Mr. Knox and his vision; his generosity was reflected in the institution's adoption of a new name, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

# Foreword

Today, we stand at the cusp of yet another century's turn. Indeed, we have even moved into a new millennium. Strategic planning, so much a process of our times, has proven to be an invaluable way for institutions to vision, to plan, to strategize. It also gives us the opportunity to review the work we have done, affirm our successes, look with a critical eye on what we could have done better, and chart our course for the future. By its very nature, strategic planning involves an enormous amount of risk-taking, requiring honesty, courage, energy, and vision.

The process that the Gallery embarked upon over a year ago reflects a monumental amount of work. There have been many rigorous and spirited discussions around such topics as the Gallery's true mission, its role in the community, and its service to its audience. Everyone around the table – from Board members and staff to our friends in the community and our colleagues in the national art arena – have brought their best efforts to bear upon these issues. Through this series of candid conversations, we have clarified our mission, recasting it in language that more distinctly reflects our position in the 21st century. We have put forth a vision, setting us on a trajectory that will assure our prominence in the national and international art arenas. And, through thoughtful visioning, we have formulated a comprehensive strategic plan – with numerous bold initiatives – which will serve as a compass to set our path, with the understanding that any such process will take us down many roads.

The recent past has presented a number of challenges. Today, the Gallery has sharpened its focus and set its sights high and wide. We have been unrestrained and enthusiastic in our creative brainstorming. We look with anticipation at the exciting opportunity to embark on a new and significant building project that will address pressing space issues and support ambitious programming initiatives. In an environment that welcomes innovation and nurtures creativity, we renew our commitment to abiding by the highest standards as we do our work to advance this fine institution.

DOUGLAS G. SCHULTZ

*Director*

*Albright-Knox Art Gallery*

*August 2001*

# *A Dynamic Future*

Since its inception 138 years ago, The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy has had the foresight to build a world-renowned collection of art. From the very beginning, the Academy, and then the Gallery, exhibited and acquired works of contemporary artists with the hope that many would become the old masters of tomorrow. The result of this practice, through the sheer passage of time, has placed the Gallery in the enviable position of housing one of the world's most extraordinary collections of modern art. Today, the Gallery also possesses a collection of significant contemporary art, which is the result of more recent acquisition decisions. It continues as well its notable history of mounting important exhibitions of contemporary artists. This process of successive generations of directors, curators, and Board members taking risks to acquire and exhibit the contemporary art of their era has been fundamental, indeed critical, to the Gallery's success.

For many decades, the Gallery was one of only a handful of institutions committed to a strategy of taking bold risks to acquire and exhibit contemporary art, continually and successfully staking its reputation on works and trends that had yet to receive the final imprimatur from art historians. Currently, there are many more institutions and voices in the contemporary art world commanding attention and respect. Today, in this ever-widening field, the Gallery recognizes and welcomes the opportunity to promote its distinguished history and its superb collections, exhibitions, and programs in an ambitious way. By expanding its efforts strategically to enrich its holdings and offerings, the Gallery will affirm its position within the national and international art arenas.

All of the goals set forth in this Plan are carefully crafted and high-reaching. Some call upon new attitudes and visions and can be realized within a short amount of time. Others will require a significant infusion of funds and are large in scope. Of the latter, the most challenging but also the most exciting is the creation of a new, exceptional building to meet the programmatic needs of this Plan. Designed by a world-class architect, it will also be an attraction in and of itself, will signal bold change, and will be a key factor in the Gallery's future success. By attracting visitors from all over the world by sheer virtue of its architectural presence, it will serve as a cornerstone in the cultural life of the Buffalo/Niagara Region.

The Board of Directors of The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy and staff of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery are committed to the vision and goals outlined in this Strategic Plan.

## *Mission*

The Albright-Knox Art Gallery, one of the nation's oldest public arts organizations, has a clear and compelling mission to acquire, exhibit, and preserve both modern and contemporary art. It focuses especially on contemporary art, with an active commitment to taking a global and multidisciplinary approach to the presentation, interpretation, and collection of the artistic expressions of our times. In an enriching, dynamic, and vibrant environment that embraces diverse cultures and traditions, the Gallery seeks to serve a broad and far-reaching audience.

## *The Vision*

It is the commitment of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery to be one of the world's best and most dynamic modern and contemporary art institutions.

It will be recognized locally as a vital and energetic cultural gathering place and as an indispensable educational resource for the community.

Through its outstanding programs, creative collaborations, and an extraordinary new addition that will address pressing space issues and important programming initiatives, the Gallery will attract a growing national and international audience to the Buffalo/Niagara Region.

# *Strategic Priorities*

## **ARTISTIC FOCUS**

- Foster a policy that endorses risk-taking, recognizing that testing and experimentation are part of being a contemporary arts institution.
- Reinstall the collection in a dynamic context with regular rotations.
- Sustain an acquisitions program that emphasizes significant works by emerging and mid-career artists and enhances the Gallery's outstanding collection of modern art.
- Present a vibrant and challenging exhibition program that makes significant contributions to the field.

## **PUBLIC AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

- Through new education initiatives involving modern and contemporary art, reinforce the Gallery's position as an important learning resource and underscore its community role as a vital and energetic cultural gathering place.

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATIONS**

- Strengthen the Gallery's role as a respected cultural leader in the community by working collaboratively with other local cultural and non-cultural organizations for the benefit of the Buffalo/Niagara Region.
- Strive to be a strong partner, engaging in collaborations and cross-fertilization of ideas with other cultural and educational institutions.

## **MARKETING AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT**

- Position the Albright-Knox Art Gallery locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally as an energetic, innovative, and vital modern and contemporary art institution that attracts a growing audience, making it a powerful economic force for the Buffalo/Niagara Region.
- Position the Gallery as a destination for the entire community, where people of all ages, backgrounds, and ethnic groups feel welcome.

**VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

- Provide a welcoming, comfortable, and accessible environment for Gallery visitors that will affirm their choice in coming, encourage them to learn, and beckon them to return.

**GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

- Establish a Board structure and ongoing process that can fully support the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan.
- Create an atmosphere that fosters collegiality and mutual respect, maintaining an environment where there is a continuous flow of information, where natural talent is developed, where initiatives are encouraged, and where issues affecting productivity and morale are recognized and addressed.

**FUND DEVELOPMENT AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORT**

- Expand the Gallery's public- and private-sector support base and build the endowment necessary to maximize institutional creativity and sustain programmatic excellence.
- Recognize that an active and enthusiastic corps of volunteers make critical contributions to the Gallery's strategic efforts.

**TECHNOLOGY**

- Become a national leader in the area of museum technology through the aggressive application of new technologies to achieve the goals of this Strategic Plan, through collaboration with local and national peer cultural institutions, and through the creative use of new communication media.

**FACILITIES**

- Meet the Gallery's pressing needs by expanding its facilities:  
Commission a world-class architect to design an extraordinary building that will attract visitors from all over the world by sheer virtue of its architectural presence and serve as a cornerstone in the cultural life of the Buffalo/Niagara Region.

# *Appendices*

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE**

Charles W. Banta, Board Co-Chair

Judy Beecher, Staff Co-Chair

Charles E. Balbach

Steven G. Biltekoff

Mrs. John T. Elfvin

Richard E. Garman

Gerald S. Lippes

Jennifer Bayles

Douglas Dreishpoon

Carol Halter

Anne Hayes

Douglas G. Schultz

Mariann Smith

Karen Lee Spaulding

Nancy L. Pressly & Associates, Strategic Planning Consultants

**TASK FORCE 1***Broadening Our Audience and  
Defining Image***DISCUSSION POINTS**

- Define image locally, nationally, internationally
- Other marketing issues
- How to become a destination/cultural tourism
- Understand our constituencies; whom are we looking to attract?
- Broadening and diversifying audience
- Technology opportunities

**TASK FORCE LEADERS***Malcolm Burnett and Carol Halter***Board Members**

*Malcolm Burnett*  
*Richard E. Garman*  
*Robert M. Greene*  
*Thomas P. Hartnett*  
*Jeremy M. Jacobs, Jr.*  
*Timothy Kupinski (ex-officio)*  
*Herbert P. Ladds, Jr.*  
*Randolph A. Marks*  
*Karin Roach*  
*B. Dale Wilson*

**Staff Members**

*Sarah Blackman*  
*Linda Byrd*  
*Carol Halter*  
*Sarah Hezel*  
*Thomas Loonan*  
*Cheryl Orlick*  
*Joseph Porto*  
*Claire Schneider*  
*Kathy Gaye Shiroki*  
*Karen Lee Spaulding*

**TASK FORCE 2***Community Involvement and Institutional Leadership Opportunities***DISCUSSION POINTS**

- Partnerships and collaborations
- Becoming an active partner in the cultural leadership of the community
- Cross Fertilization among cultural institutions
- Collaborations with higher education
- Cultural tourism
- Regional collaboration
- Technology opportunities

**GROUP LEADERS**

*Kurt Wiedenhaupt and Mariann Smith*

**Board Members**

*Richard W. Cutting*  
*Jeanne Donovan (ex-officio)*  
*Anthony H. Gioia*  
*William J. Magavern II*  
*Ryland E. Melford*  
*George F. Phillips, Jr.*  
*John N. Walsh III*  
*Kurt Wiedenhaupt*

**Staff Members**

*Douglas Dreishpoon*  
*Maureen Fayle*  
*Terrie Ford*  
*Anne Hayes*  
*Janice Lurie*  
*Carrie Marcotte*  
*Jan O'Connell*  
*Mariann Smith*  
*Yvonne Widenor*

**TASK FORCE 3***Artistic Focus***DISCUSSION POINTS**

- Exhibition philosophy
- Acquisitions philosophy
- Creative use and interpretation of the permanent collection
- Publications and contributions to scholarship
- Technology opportunities
- Space implications

**GROUP LEADERS**

*Steven G. Biltekoff and Douglas Dreishpoon*

**Board Members**

*Charles E. Balbach*  
*Charles W. Banta*  
*Steven G. Biltekoff*  
*Carla Goldberg (ex-officio)*  
*Gerald S. Lippes*  
*Mark R. Mendell*  
*Frederic P. Norton*  
*Lisa Wardynski*

**Staff Members**

*Douglas Dreishpoon*  
*Laura Fleischmann*  
*Carol Halter*  
*Claire Schneider*  
*Douglas G. Schultz*  
*Mariann Smith*  
*Karen Lee Spaulding*  
*Kenneth Wayne*

**TASK FORCE 4***Public Programming and  
Audience Experience***DISCUSSION POINTS**

- Interpretative materials
- Collaborations with higher education and cultural communities
- Adult programs/becoming a cultural gathering place
- Provide a rich environment for accessible education experiences
- Visitor Experience
- School and Community Outreach Programs
- Broadening and diversifying audience base
- Volunteers
- Technology opportunities

**GROUP LEADERS**

*Margery Nobel and Jennifer Bayles*

**Board Members**

*Janet Barnett*  
*Steven G. Biltekoff*  
*Mrs. John T. Elfvn*  
*Whitworth Ferguson, Jr.*  
*David I. Herer*  
*Seymour H. Knox IV*  
*Randolph A. Marks*  
*Ryland E. Melford*  
*Katie Naughton (ex-officio)*  
*Margery Nobel*  
*John N. Walsh III*

**Staff Members**

*Jennifer Bayles*  
*Judy Beecher*  
*Richard Cherry*  
*Edward Drabczyk*  
*Thomas Getska*  
*Julie Lewitzky*  
*Nancy Spector*  
*Daisy Stroud*  
*Kenneth Wayne*

**TASK FORCE 5***Institutional Growth***DISCUSSION POINTS**

- Membership
- Volunteers
- Planned giving
- Expanding support base
- Thinking about a campaign

**GROUP LEADERS**

*Gerald S. Lippes and Anne Hayes*

**Board Members**

*Charles E. Balbach*

*Charles W. Banta*

*Richard E. Garman*

*Anthony H. Gioia*

*Robert M. Greene*

*Northrup R. Knox, Jr.*

*Gerald S. Lippes*

**Staff Members**

*Judy Beecher*

*Robert Dickerson*

*Anne Hayes*

*Douglas G. Schultz*

## **SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEES**

### **GOVERNANCE SUBCOMMITTEE**

*John N. Walsh III, Chair*

*Charles E. Balbach*

*Charles W. Banta*

*Malcolm Burnett*

*Richard W. Cutting*

*Mrs. John T. Elfvín*

*Anne Hayes, Staff Liaison*

*David I. Herer*

*Margery Nobel*

### **MISSION STATEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE**

*Karen Lee Spaulding, Chair*

*Judy Beecher*

*Steven G. Biltekoff*

*Mrs. John T. Elfvín*

*Anne Hayes*

### **STAFFING SUBCOMMITTEE**

*Judy Beecher, Chair*

*Jennifer Bayles*

*Douglas Dreishpoon*

*Carol Halter*

*Anne Hayes*

*Douglas G. Schultz*

*Mariann Smith*

*Karen Lee Spaulding*

### **TECHNOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE**

*Richard Cherry, Chair*

*Charles E. Balbach*

*Jennifer Bayles*

*Conan Cerretani*

*David Chan*

*Laura Fleischmann*

*Sandi Hale*

*Carol Halter*

*David I. Herer*

*Sarah Hezel*

*Janice Lurie*

*Claire Schneider*

*Mariann Smith*

*Karen Lee Spaulding*

*Yvonne Widenor*

### **VOLUNTEER SUBCOMMITTEE**

*Anne Hayes, Convener*

*Carla Goldberg*

*Roberta Joseph*

*Katie Naughton*

*Jan O'Connell*

*Elizabeth Smith*

# *List of Interviews*

Nancy L. Pressly, the Gallery's consultant for the Strategic Planning process, conducted individual and group interviews with more than sixty members of the community.

Civic and cultural leaders, public officials, African-American special interest groups, executives in industry and banking, academicians and scholars, artists, and parents of ART ATTACK! students all participated in valuable dialogue about the Gallery and its role in the community.

As well, twelve national museum directors and curators spoke at length with Ms. Pressly about the Gallery, its collection, its work, and its place within the national arena.

The Albright-Knox Art Gallery is exceedingly grateful to all those who contributed to this Plan by giving us so much of their time and by speaking so candidly and thoughtfully about the Gallery.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS INTERVIEWS**

Charles E. Balbach  
 Charles W. Banta  
 Mrs. Donald J. Barnett  
 Steven G. Biltekoff  
 Malcolm Burnett  
 Mrs. John T. Elfvin  
 Richard W. Cutting  
 Richard E. Garman  
 Anthony H. Gioia  
 Jeremy M. Jacobs, Jr.  
 Seymour H. Knox IV  
 Gerald S. Lippes  
 William J. Magavern II  
 Mrs. Sanford M. Nobel  
 Frederic P. Norton  
 Mrs. Daniel T. Roach  
 John N. Walsh III

## **INDIVIDUAL STAFF INTERVIEWS**

Jennifer Bayles, *Curator of Education*  
 Judy Beecher, *Assistant Director for  
Administration and Facilities*  
 Richard Cherry, *Chief Technology Officer*  
 Eileen P. Custodi, *Secretary to the Director*  
 Robert Dickerson, *Controller*  
 Edward Drabczyk, *Manager of Security  
and Safety*  
 Douglas Dreishpoon, *Curator*  
 Laura Fleischmann, *Senior Registrar*  
 Carol Halter, *Marketing Manager*  
 Anne Hayes, *Development/  
Membership Officer*  
 Janice Lurie, *Head Librarian*  
 Joseph Porto, *Building Superintendent*  
 Claire Schneider, *Assistant Curator*  
 Douglas G. Schultz, *Director*  
 Mariann Smith, *Associate Curator of  
Education*  
 Karen Lee Spaulding, *Editor for Special  
Projects*  
 Beth Walsh, *Acting Museum Sales and  
Marketing Manager*  
 Kenneth Wayne, *Curator*

## **GROUP STAFF INTERVIEWS**

### **DEVELOPMENT AND CURATORIAL**

(Sandra Hale, Sandra Hoffman, Elizabeth Ross)  
 (Holly Hughes)

**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT** (Terrie Ford,  
 Carrie Marcotte, Kelley J. Mullaney, Kathy  
 Gaye Shiroki, Nancy Spector)

**GALLERY SHOP/ACCOUNTING** (Sarah  
 Blackman, Conan Cerretani, David Chan,  
 Robert Do, Joe Gerace, Gretchan Grobe,  
 Mary Ellen Gullo, Sean Schlifke, Holly  
 Tiftickjian, Sarah Victor) (Susan Griffin,  
 Judy Parrino, Blair Schwed)

**LIBRARY** (Pamela Jones, Tara Riese,  
 Yvonne Widenor)

**MAINTENANCE** (Linda Byrd, James Collins,  
 Michael Dougherty, Robert Gunning,  
 Timothy Short, Kenneth Walker)

**PUBLIC RELATIONS/ MARKETING**  
 (Maureen Fayle, Robert Feidt, Julie Lewitzky,  
 Cheryl Orlick, Catherine Pepper)

**REGISTRAR** (Michael Benner, Mark  
 Burakowski, Bruce Rainier, Daisy Stroud)

**SECURITY GUARDS** (Gregory Cooper,  
 Martin Harris, Lesley Holmes, Roger  
 Kahn, Arietta Lee, Barbara Madden,  
 Ernest Mata, Aaron Orlowski, Heidi  
 Robinson, Nelson Vergara)

**TECHNOLOGY AND PUBLICATIONS**  
 (Kelly Frank, Bryan Gawronski) (Betsy McCall)