

The background of the cover is a photograph of an art installation. It features large-scale digital projections of colorful, abstract, swirling patterns in shades of yellow, orange, and pink. Several people are seen in silhouette, interacting with the art. Two people in the foreground are looking at the projection, while others are visible in the background. The ceiling has exposed pipes and lighting fixtures.

Creative

Museum

Collaboratory

2024-2025

ANNUAL REPORT



MSU MUSEUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

The MSU Museum is an innovative and experimental collaboratory that exists to catalyze creativity. Here, people can openly explore, express, and experiment with ideas across disciplines and interests, and indulge their natural curiosity about the world. The Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and is the state's first Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution. The MSU Museum is a registered scientific institution with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and a member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.

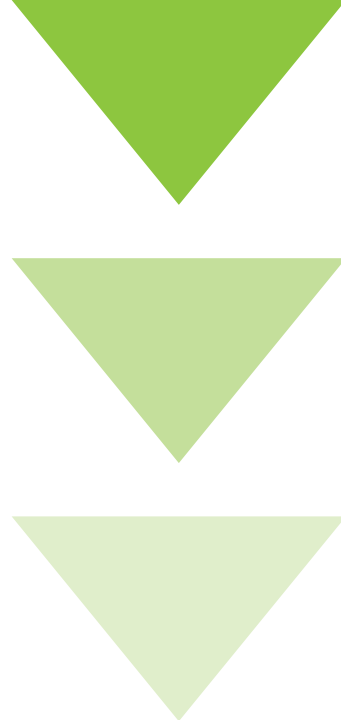
Since its inception in 1857, the Museum has been dedicated to the acquisition of diverse objects and specimens, as well as the creation of exhibitions that intricately capture our shared histories and experiences. These valuable collections and exhibitions serve as catalysts for enriching teaching, learning, and research endeavors, establishing the Museum as a pivotal space essential to the success of both students and faculty members. Administratively, the MSU Museum operates within the University Arts and Collections unit under the auspices of the Office of the Provost at Michigan State University.



International Coalition of
SITES of CONSCIENCE



MSU students at a silent disco event hosted by the MSU Museum at Beal Botanical Garden.



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is with immense pride and heartfelt appreciation that I welcome you to the MSU Museum's 2024–2025 Annual Report. This year has been a transformative chapter in our story—one defined by bold experimentation, deep community engagement, and a steadfast commitment to our mission during a time of great change.

Even as our building undergoes a major renovation, the Museum has continued to thrive beyond its walls. Through our downtown pop-up gallery and campus-wide initiatives, we brought immersive, inclusive experiences to the communities we serve. One of the year's standout successes was MSUFCU Arts Power Up, a new artist residency program developed in partnership with the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB), Arts MSU, and the STEAMpower Project. Its first installation, *Monumentum* by Berlin-based artist Abel Korinsky, captivated audiences and exemplified our vision of fusing art, science, and technology in ways that spark wonder and discovery.

Signature programs like *First Fridays* continued to foster belonging and connection for MSU students, while exhibitions such as *Techno: The Rise of Detroit's Machine Music* celebrated innovation and cultural heritage through powerful,

community-rooted storytelling. These efforts reaffirm the Museum's role as a dynamic space for dialogue and transformation—where creativity, scholarship, and public engagement intersect in meaningful ways.

All of this has been made possible by a passionate community of collaborators and supporters. To our staff, whose dedication fuels every achievement; to our partners, whose trust and creativity expand our reach; and to our donors and friends, whose belief in our future makes this work possible—thank you! Your support ensures that the Museum remains a vibrant contributor to campus life and a leader in the national museum field.

As we prepare to reopen our renovated building in 2026, we do so with an even bolder vision: to be a 21st-century collaboratory where people come together to explore, create, and learn across disciplines. Together, we are not just preserving a legacy—we are building the future of academic museums.

With deep appreciation,

Devon M. Akmon
Director, MSU Museum



FROM THE VICE PROVOST UNIVERSITY ARTS AND COLLECTIONS

The fall 2024 launch of the MSU Museum's Ascent campaign was a celebration of innovation. Part of the university's experimental project to democratize education from the day the campus opened, the Museum is exploring new modes of experiential learning that are both uniquely MSU and nationally pathbreaking.

This year's report chronicles the ways that a museum nested in a proudly public institution can partner with leading MSU researchers to generate new knowledge and broaden impact. The collaborations with the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB) are bringing scientists, artists, and Museum staff together to co-create, resulting in a technologically sophisticated exhibition that provided an immersive, multi-media journey into nuclear astrophysics, with another interactive exhibition opening in the fall. An exciting partnership with MSU's leading researchers in game design and development will offer a new kind of hands-on learning experience in the MSU Museum's evolving space. Museum faculty curators collaborated with communities off campus to illuminate the impact of Michigan's cultural heritage, including the artistry of Anishinaabe contemporary quill box makers and the genre-transforming Detroit artists who

invented Techno music. These exhibitions are grounded in this place, multidisciplinary in their process, and innovative in the ways they engage audiences.

The Museum provides a platform for student innovation by connecting peers across fields and student-led teams with national networks. Students from sciences, arts, and technology designed an educational game that is now traveling the country as part of a major Smithsonian exhibition. Student organizations were invited to activate science collections as part of a popular public program, and student researchers learned to communicate the broader impacts of their work in sold out public events. The MSU Museum is taking the experiential learning that was part of its foundational mission and reenvisioning how it can be a means to ignite students' creativity, team-building skills, and understanding of the tangible effects of their work on the communities around them.

Through these types of projects, the Museum continues to increase its international visibility. In a WKAR livestreamed event, the Museum took part in the Smithsonian National Youth Summit's conversation on political engagement. In two new initiatives it is partnering with Bloomberg Philanthropies: an app that makes the Museum's exhibitions and collections visible to any user across the world, and a VR and AR digitization project that will pave the way for immersive online and in-person exhibitions. The MSU Museum's dynamic vision will continue to influence the national conversation, as Director Devon Akmon starts his term as Chair of the Board for the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). Taking this momentum into the next year with a newly renovated building, the MSU Museum will invite campus and community partners to actively design what museums can do to be both relevant and pathbreaking, connecting us now and moving us forward.

Sincerely,

Judith Stoddart
Vice Provost
University Arts and Collections

STUDENT SUCCESS

Although the MSU Museum was closed this past year for exciting renovations and unable to support teaching and learning in the robust ways it has in the past, we remained committed to student success through a diverse range of dynamic and engaging programming. By meeting students where they are—across campus and within the community—we continued to foster learning, connection, and personal growth.

One of the Museum's signature initiatives, *First Fridays*, continued to thrive despite the building closure. This monthly program offers college students interactive, themed events on the first Friday of each month. Programming this past year took place at our temporary pop-up location at 311 Abbot in downtown East Lansing and other campus venues. Highlights included *A Midsummer Night's Silent Disco*, an evening of music and dancing in the enchanting Beal Botanical Garden; *Game On!* at 311 Abbot, featuring classic arcade games like *Ms. Pac-Man*, *Donkey Kong*, and *Tetris*; and the *Techno Silent*

Disco, which blended music and technology for a fully immersive experience. At a time when social isolation and loneliness are pressing concerns, *First Fridays* plays a vital role in building social infrastructure—creating inclusive spaces where students and the broader public can connect, engage, and share in joyful, cultural experiences.

The Museum also continued its acclaimed *Ignite Talks MSU* program, presented by the MSU Museum CoLab Studio. This transformative initiative challenges student researchers from across the university to distill their complex academic work into compelling five-minute presentations for public audiences. Through a rigorous and competitive selection process, students from 11 colleges and 24 departments participated in the program this year. *Ignite Talks MSU* helps students develop confidence, sharpen communication and storytelling skills, and foster cross-disciplinary dialogue.

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Techno event hosted by a student-run organization as part of the MSU Museum's programming for the exhibition *Techno: The Rise of Detroit's Machine Music*.



A silent disco hosted by the MSU Museum.





MSU students gather at the Beal Botanical Garden for a silent disco event hosted by the MSU Museum.



A student speaker shares research during Ignite Talks MSU.



Student presenters from across disciplines at Ignite Talks MSU, a MSU Museum program designed to amplify student research.

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It is more than a showcase—it is a platform that amplifies student voices, celebrates the diversity of scholarship at MSU, and strengthens the connection between campus and community.

In addition to our ongoing programs, the Museum partnered on new student-driven events, including *A Night at the Museum*, a dance party hosted by the student-run organization The Cadre in conjunction with the *Techno: The Rise of Detroit's Machine Music* exhibition. The event was an overwhelming success, and plans are now underway to launch a monthly series in collaboration with the student group beginning next academic year.

We also introduced *SciCurious*, a newly envisioned evolution of the Museum's longstanding *Darwin Discovery Day* program,

which concluded a successful 20-year run. *SciCurious* builds on that legacy, offering student organizations the opportunity to lead exciting public engagement efforts centered around MSU's vast science collections. The new format empowers students to design and deliver programming that inspires curiosity and fosters deeper understanding of science in everyday life.

Through all of these efforts, the MSU Museum continues to evolve as a dynamic third place—beyond the classroom and residence hall—where students are encouraged to connect, explore, and flourish. Even in a transitional year, the Museum remained a vital contributor to student success, demonstrating resilience, creativity, and an unwavering commitment to the MSU community. ▲



COMMUNITY

The MSU Museum continued to serve its audiences by launching an offsite pop-up gallery in downtown East Lansing, hosted in the MSU Federal Credit Union's building at the corner of Abbot Road and Albert Ave. This temporary space enabled the Museum to remain present and engaged with the community while its main facility underwent critical upgrades. The featured exhibition, *Techno: The Rise of Detroit's Machine Music*, exemplified the Museum's commitment to bold, community-centered programming and celebrated Detroit's global influence on electronic music through an immersive exploration of the genre's roots in Black innovation and Afrofuturist imagination.

On view from February through July 2025, the exhibition featured a powerful sound installation by the legendary Detroit collective Underground Resistance and a striking visual work by artist Andrew Charles Edman. These were presented alongside historical artifacts such as iconic Roland drum machines and a keyboard belonging to the late Joseph "Amp" Fiddler. The exhibition was

co-curated in partnership with John Collins of Underground Resistance, ensuring an authentic connection to the scene's Detroit roots.

The Museum extended the exhibition's reach through dynamic programming developed in collaboration with leading figures from Detroit's renowned techno community, including Carl Craig, Mike Banks, Jeff Mills, Stacey "Hotwaxx" Hale, DJs Minx and Holographic, and visual artist Abdul Qadim Haqq. Highlights included panel discussions recorded in the WKAR studios and electrifying DJ performances at 311 Abbot. With support from the MSU Federal Credit Union and in partnership with WKAR, the Museum also launched *RISE: Detroit's Machine Music*, a six-part podcast series produced by exhibition curator Dr. Julian Chambliss, the MSU Museum's Val Berryman Curator of History. The podcast expanded on the exhibition's core themes by exploring Afrofuturism, overlooked Techno pioneers, the city's cultural legacy, and the machines that shaped the genre.

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TOP LEFT: Artist and educator Frank Waln (right) performs during a panel, celebrating Indigenous voices through music and storytelling. TOP RIGHT: DJ Stacey "Hotwaxx" Hale during the MSU Museum's event series highlighting Techno. BOTTOM: Attendees dance at a Techno program.



Visitors arrive at the MSU Museum's exhibition space for *Techno: The Rise of Detroit's Machine Music*.



Attendees fill the dance floor during a DJ set organized by MSU students in conjunction with the exhibition *Techno: The Rise of Detroit's Machine Music*.

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The project garnered international media attention, drew visitors from across the United States and around the world, and was an immensely successful model of community-based, co-curated exhibition-making. Together, the exhibition, programming, and podcast positioned Techno not merely as a musical genre, but as a powerful cultural movement born in Detroit—one that continues to shape global conversations about music, identity, and the future.

In addition to *Techno: The Rise of Detroit's Machine Music*, the MSU Museum advanced its mission of inclusive, collaborative storytelling through two impactful projects. *Gaawii Eta-Go Aawizinoo Gaawiye Mkakoons / It's Not Just a Quill Box / Anishinaabe Gaak Gaawiiyikewin Zhichiganan / Anishinabek Porcupine Quill Art* is the first major traveling exhibition devoted to contemporary Anishinaabe quillwork. Co-created with Native artists, language specialists, elders, and scholars—and guided by a Native

advisory committee—the exhibition debuted at the Ziibiwing Center in Mount Pleasant before traveling to Harbor Springs and beyond. Led by MSU Museum curators Dr. C. Kurt Dewhurst and Dr. Marsha MacDowell, the project highlights more than 90 works from public and private collections and is fully bilingual in Anishinaabemowin and English. It celebrates the resilience, intergenerational knowledge, and artistic excellence of Anishinaabe communities across the Great Lakes region.

Meanwhile, the Museum presented *Indigenous Hip Hop: Frank Waln's Journey of Music, Activism, and Resilience* in partnership with the Native American Institute and WKAR. Featuring award-winning Sicangu Lakota artist Frank Waln, this intimate conversation and performance explored music as a powerful vehicle for storytelling, resistance, and cultural preservation—reinforcing the Museum's role as a platform for transformative voices and diverse histories. ▲



After a panel talk about women DJs in Detroit (left to right) DJs Le Femme, Minx, Holographic, Stacey "Hotwaxx" Hale and (center) John Collins.



DJ John Collins mixes records on a turntable during a live set.



Live conversation with Abdul Qadim Haqq (right) and moderator Julian Chambliss.



Visitors dancing at a DJ performance at the MSU Museum's temporary downtown exhibition space.



SMITHSONIAN AFFILIATIONS

Since becoming Michigan's first Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution in September 2001, the MSU Museum has continued to deepen its relationship with the Smithsonian and its national network of Affiliates. This enduring partnership has fostered a dynamic range of collaborations—spanning research, knowledge production, and public engagement—that reflect a shared commitment to education, cultural exchange, and global dialogue. Through these initiatives, the Museum extends its impact beyond campus, contributing meaningfully to the MSU community and the broader world.

In September 2024, the MSU Museum participated in its second *Smithsonian National Youth Summit*, building on its initial involvement in 2021. Centered on the theme *Elections & Politics*, the summit brought together students, scholars, and civic leaders to explore how young people can engage with and influence democratic processes. Co-hosted with WKAR Public Media and ASMSU, the event featured panel discussions on political participation at both local and national levels.

Expanding its public engagement efforts, the Museum partnered with MSU Libraries to present the temporary pop-up exhibition *Cellphone: Unseen Connections* (April–May 2025). The exhibition invited visitors to examine the hidden relationships among mobile devices, the environment, and the global labor and supply chains behind their production.

Building on this momentum, the Museum also collaborated with the Smithsonian on *Knowing Nature: Stories of the Boreal Forest*, a traveling

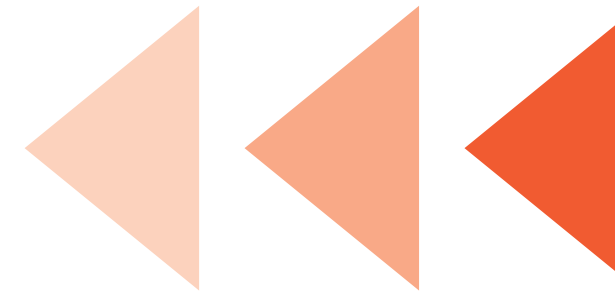
exhibition that premiered at the MSU Museum in April 2023. As part of the exhibition's debut, MSU students created *A Boreal Balance*, an interactive digital game exploring how everyday choices affect ecosystems. Available on mobile and desktop platforms, the game extends the exhibition's core themes—climate change, Indigenous knowledge, and environmental interdependence—into an accessible learning experience. Now traveling nationally, *Knowing Nature* is currently on view at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry and will next appear at the Peabody Essex Museum and other venues. The game now travels with the exhibition as part of the tour. This initiative exemplifies the Museum's commitment to interdisciplinary education that bridges science, culture, and community.

In addition, the MSU Museum contributed to key Smithsonian administrative initiatives. Museum staff served as consultants for the development of a new, reimagined version of the exhibition *Girlhood*, which explores how American girls have shaped history and defied expectations over the past two centuries. MSU Museum Director Devon Akmon also served on the national search committee for the next director of Smithsonian SITES | Affiliations. We are honored to serve as trusted thought partners on such mission-critical efforts.

As we look ahead, the MSU Museum team is excited to continue this legacy of collaboration and innovation. Several new projects with the Smithsonian are already underway—and we look forward to sharing more in the year to come.



A Smithsonian Leadership for Change intern, Chemutai, engages with an interactive DJ Station at Submerge/Exhibit 3000 as part of her internship with the MSU Museum.



Devon Akmon, Elizabeth Babcock, and Jorge Zamanillo speak at a Smithsonian Affiliations leadership summit.





Museum



NATIONAL
YOUTH
SUMMIT
2024

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ELECTIONS
& POLITICS

WKAR



Student panelists during the 2024 National Youth Summit, co-hosted by the MSU Museum and WKAR in collaboration with the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.



EXCELLENCE

On October 4, 2024, the MSU Museum debuted its temporary pop-up venue at 311 Abbot in downtown East Lansing with a dynamic and exclusive event: *Ascent – A Launch Party to Benefit the MSU Museum*. This multifaceted evening served as the official launch of the Museum's new capital campaign to raise critical funds for the renovation of its semi-permanent galleries (see page 30 for campaign details). The event offered a remarkable culinary experience curated by acclaimed MSU alumni chefs Joseph VanWagner—whose impressive resume includes leadership roles at Detroit's Bacco Ristorante, Chartreuse, Local Kitchen and Bar, and Ann Arbor's Echelon—and Sarah Welch, executive chef at Marrow in Detroit, two-time James Beard Award nominee, and Top Chef contestant. Capping off the evening, guests enjoyed an electrifying DJ set by Detroit Techno pioneer and Underground Resistance member “Jammin’” John Collins.

Attendees were also treated to the premiere of *Monumentum*, an immersive light and sound installation by Berlin-based artist Abel Korinsky. This installation marked the first of three exhibitions the Museum has planned for its temporary venue at 311 Abbot, which serves as a satellite exhibition space until the Museum's main facility reopens following renovations in 2026. Developed through the inaugural MSUFCU Arts Power Up artists-in-residence program—a collaboration between the MSU Museum, the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB), Arts MSU, and the STEAMpower Project—*Monumentum* reimagines humanity's origins through the lens of nuclear astrophysics. Using generative tools, Korinsky transforms star data into humanlike visual forms, accompanied by an evocative soundscape. This immersive audio experience incorporates field recordings from FRIB and simulated sounds of neutron star collisions, culminating in a moment when gravitational waves—typically

imperceptible—resonate within the human hearing range. This rare phenomenon offers a deeply emotional connection to our cosmic heritage.

Over the past year, the MSU Museum has secured several transformative grants that are accelerating its evolution into a national model of innovation, accessibility, and interdisciplinary engagement. A Humanities and Arts Research Program (HARP) Large-Scale Development Grant will support *Game Changers*, an immersive exhibition developed in collaboration with MSU's nationally recognized Game Design and Development Program and its Games for Entertainment and Learning (GEL) Lab. More than just a showcase of video games, *Game Changers* will transform the Museum into a vibrant, arcade-inspired space where visitors explore the intersections of learning, creativity, and discovery through interactive, hands-on experiences. This project exemplifies the Museum's growing role as a platform for translating cutting-edge research into accessible and engaging public encounters.

In parallel, a \$190,132 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is bolstering the Museum's accessibility initiatives, particularly for visitors with visual impairments. Building on prior work with RFID technology, this funding supports staff training, spatial assessments, and the development of high-quality audio descriptions to enrich interpretive content. These efforts advance the Museum's mission to create inclusive environments where physical and digital experiences are equally meaningful and available to all.

Adding to this momentum, the Museum has been selected to join the Bloomberg Philanthropies Digital Accelerator Program, becoming a part of a prestigious cohort of 200 nonprofit cultural institutions across the U.S. and U.K. As part of this initiative, the Museum is launching the *Digital Surrogates Pipeline*, an ambitious



DJ John Collins performs during an event at the for the MSU Museum.

project that employs Virtual and Augmented Reality technologies to bring collections to life in educational, immersive formats. With a dedicated lab and interdisciplinary team, the Museum is laying the groundwork for dynamic digital storytelling and new modes of audience engagement that transcend traditional exhibition models.

In support of its digital transformation, the Museum also debuted a new digital guide on the Bloomberg Connects app, an international arts and culture platform. This free resource provides onsite and remote access to the Museum's exhibitions and collections through rich multimedia content, including photos, videos, expert commentary, and audio features. The guide premiered alongside *Techno: The Rise of Detroit's Machine Music*, offering behind-the-scenes insights that amplify visitor engagement

and celebrate Detroit's global influence on electronic music. By joining the Bloomberg Connects network, the Museum broadens its reach and affirms its commitment to accessible, tech-forward experiences.

Capping off a year of notable achievements, MSU Museum Director Devon Akmon was appointed Chair of the Board for the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the leading organization representing the museum sector across the United States. Akmon's appointment comes as AAM embarks on a new strategic planning cycle aimed at shaping the future of museums in a rapidly changing world. His leadership further elevates the MSU Museum's national profile and underscore its role as a leader in shaping transformative practices in the cultural field.





Artist Abel Korinsky poses in front of his art installation.

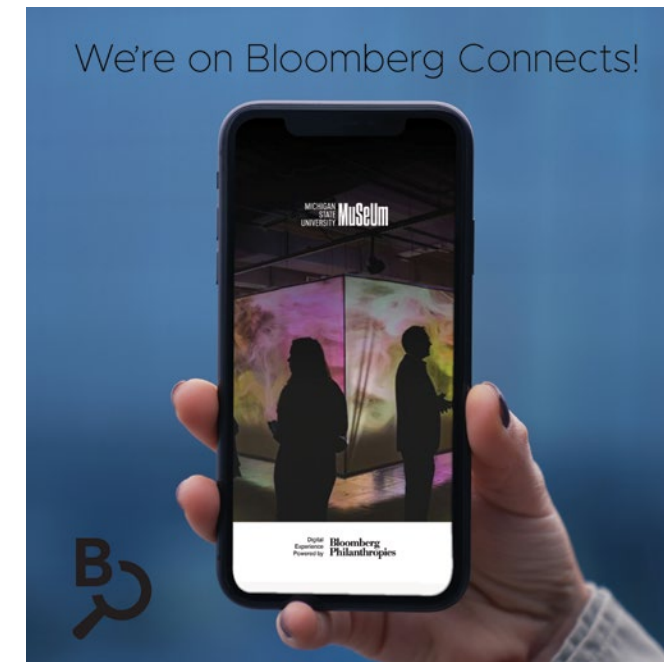


MSU Museum visitors engage with a video featured in the exhibition Monumentum.



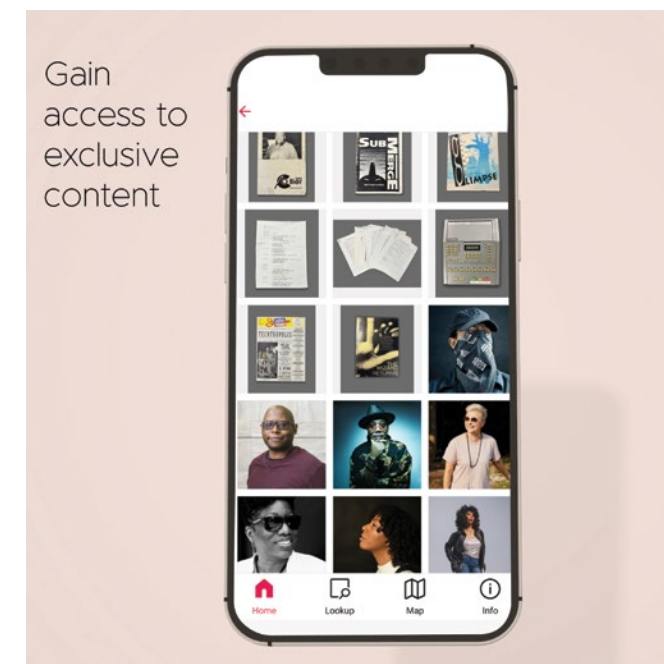
MSU Museum Director, Devon Akmon addresses guests at the ASCENT campaign launch event for the MSU Museum.

► BLOOMBERG CONNECTS

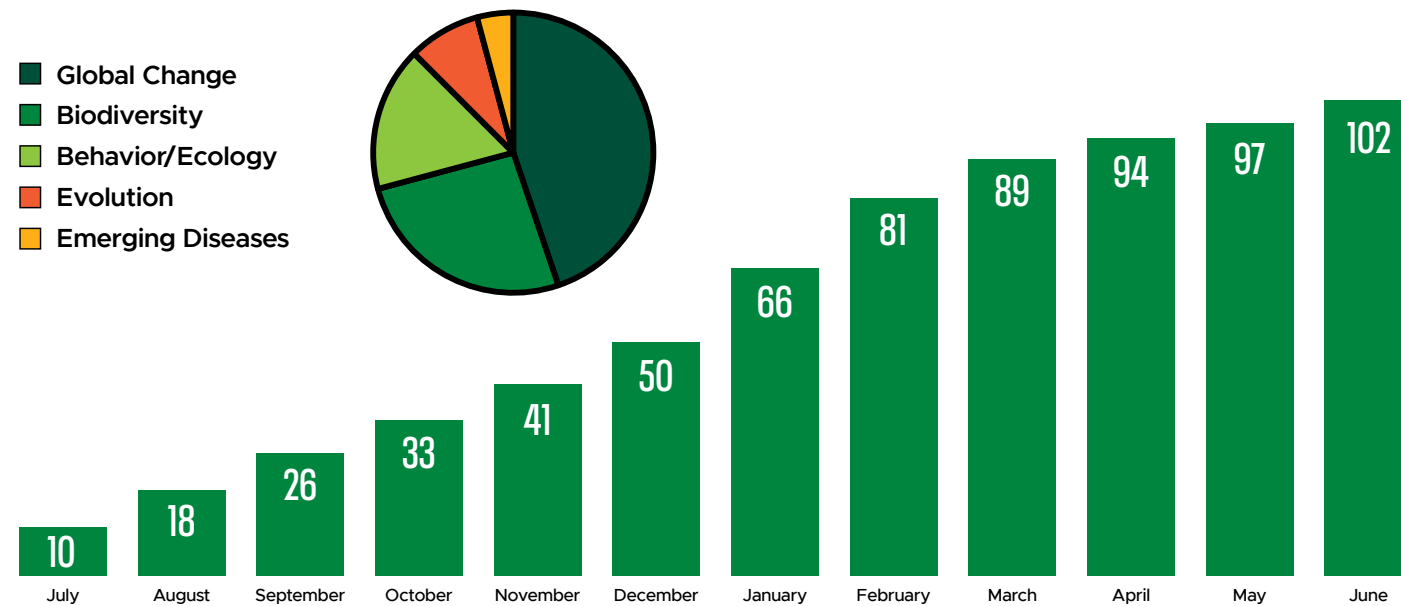


Expanding Access Through Bloomberg Connects

The MSU Museum launched a digital guide on Bloomberg Connects, a free arts and culture app created by Bloomberg Philanthropies. This guide enhances both onsite and offsite experiences through curated content, expert commentary, and multimedia features. The launch coincided with *Techno: The Rise of Detroit's Machine Music*, allowing users to explore the exhibition in new and dynamic ways. As part of Bloomberg Connects' global network of cultural institutions, the MSU Museum is broadening access and embracing innovation to make its exhibitions and collections more accessible, interactive, and engaging for audiences everywhere. ▲



cumulative July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025
a new citation ~ every 2.8 days!



MSU Museum vertebrate specimen records
downloaded July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025



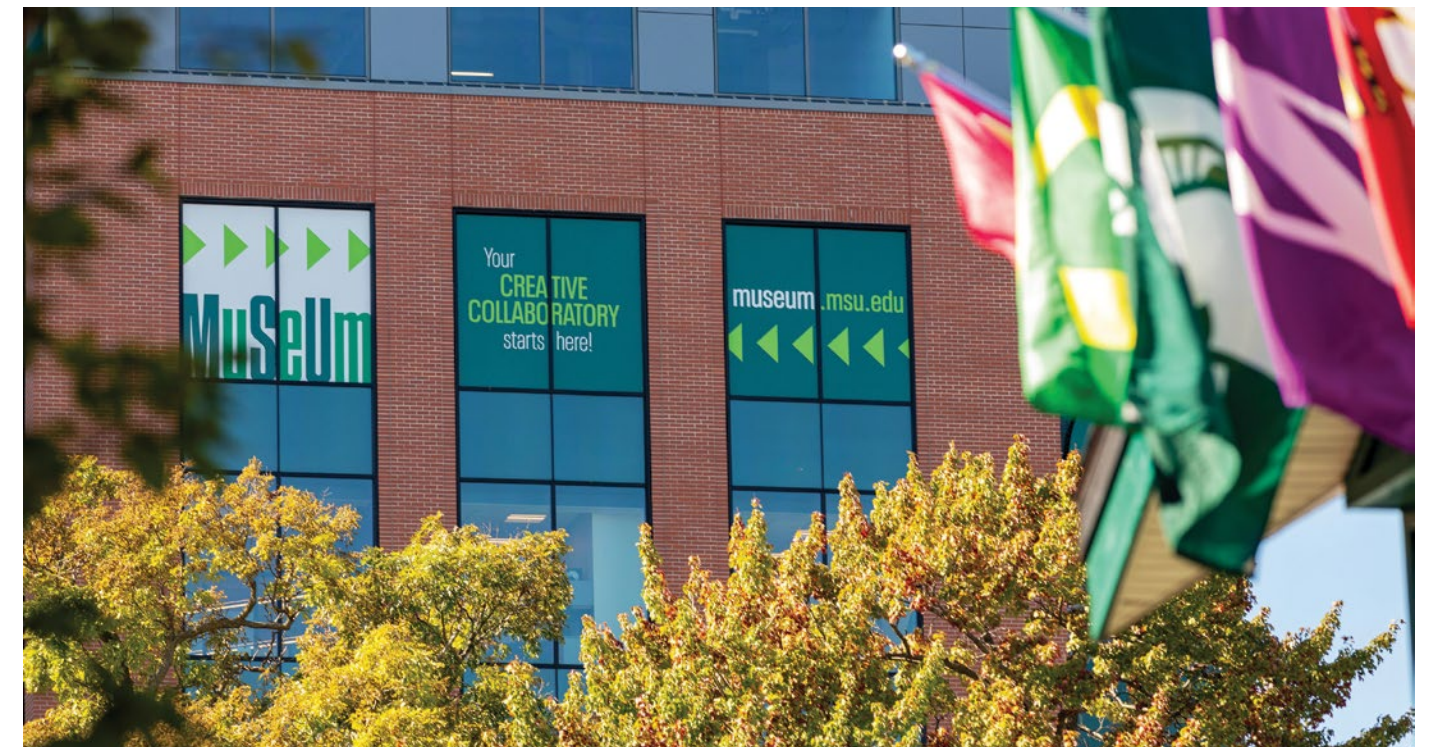
BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

In summer 2024, the MSU Museum began a major renovation of its historic facility—an essential step in its transformation into a 21st-century interdisciplinary collaboratory. Supported by a \$28 million investment from Michigan State University, this infrastructure overhaul is not only preserving the Museum’s storied legacy, but also preparing it to lead as a model for innovation among academic museums.

The renovations address critical building systems that support both preservation and public engagement. Work includes the complete reconstruction of the HVAC system to ensure consistent climate control for the Museum’s extensive and diverse collections. A new fire suppression system is being installed to protect

artifacts and specimens, while comprehensive upgrades to electrical, lighting, and data infrastructure will enable the use of immersive, interactive technologies throughout the building. In addition, new windows are being installed to improve energy efficiency and natural lighting, and all renovations are being completed with a strong focus on accessibility, ensuring compliance with ADA standards and improving the experience for all visitors.

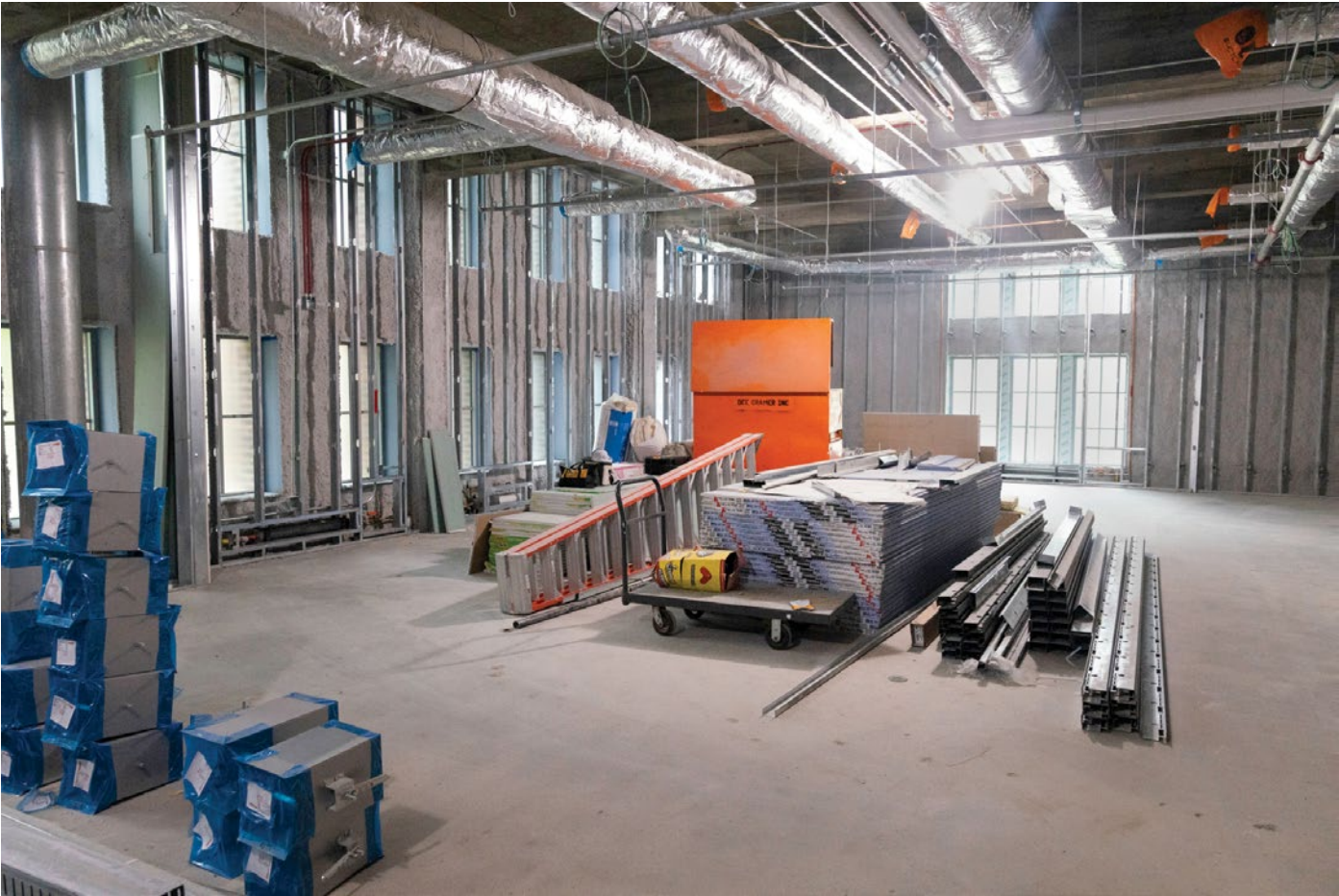
This work is on track to be completed by the end of calendar year 2025. Once construction is finished, Museum staff will begin moving collections back into the building and installing a new suite of exhibitions designed to reflect the Museum’s bold, interdisciplinary future.



Exterior view of the MSU Museum’s temporary location in downtown East Lansing



A 3D digital rendering of the ground floor plan for the MSU Museum's renovation.



Science On a Sphere® covered due to renovation work.



A space at the MSU Museum under construction.

The public reopening is scheduled for early 2026, marking the debut of a renovated Museum poised to serve as a hub of learning, collaboration, and innovation.

These renovations are more than structural—they are foundational to the Museum's strategic vision. By creating a flexible, future-ready environment, MSU is empowering the Museum to serve as a connective center for research, teaching, and public dialogue across disciplines. The result will

be a reimagined institution equipped to support the evolving needs of the campus community while setting a new standard for academic museums nationwide.

As the MSU Museum approaches its 170th anniversary, these investments ensure that its next century will be as pioneering and impactful as its first—anchored in tradition but built for tomorrow.



A space at the MSU Museum under construction.

Renovation work at the MSU Museum includes installation of new windows to enhance energy efficiency.

▶ ASCENT: LEADING THE FUTURE OF ACADEMIC MUSEUMS

Launched in the 2024–25 academic year, the MSU Museum’s capital campaign is a signature initiative of Michigan State University’s *Uncommon Will, Far Better World* campaign—a \$4 billion effort to activate talent, catalyze synergies, and build futures. This campaign marks a bold new chapter for the MSU Museum as it transforms into a national model for academic museums—one defined by collaboration, innovation, and interdisciplinary exploration.

Building on a \$28 million infrastructure investment made by MSU prior to the campaign’s launch, the Museum is undergoing a comprehensive transformation. These facility upgrades lay the groundwork for a reimagined institution—one that blends physical renewal with a visionary shift in purpose. Rather than serving solely as a repository of objects, the Museum is becoming a collaboratory: a living, adaptive space that fosters experimentation at the intersection of arts, sciences, cultures, and technologies.

This evolution is more than a renovation—it is a strategic repositioning. The Museum is setting a new standard for how academic museums can engage with research, teaching, and public service. Flexible galleries, immersive technologies, and accessible design will support a new generation of exhibitions and programs that reflect the dynamic work happening across MSU.

The result is a platform where students, faculty, artists, researchers, and community members co-create knowledge, spark dialogue, and confront complex global challenges together.

As one of the oldest university museums in the country—and the first Smithsonian Affiliate in Michigan—the MSU Museum is uniquely poised to lead. Its transformation aligns with the broader aspirations of *Uncommon Will*, helping MSU foster learning environments that are inclusive, interdisciplinary, and impact-driven.

The capital campaign invites individuals, foundations, and organizations to help realize this vision. From naming opportunities to investments in technology, collections infrastructure, and programming, supporters can play a critical role in shaping a museum designed for the future of higher education.

This is more than preserving a legacy—it’s building one. Together, we can establish the MSU Museum as a flagship institution that defines what’s possible for academic museums in the 21st century.

To learn more, contact Liz Ivkovich, Senior Director of Advancement, Cultural Arts, at lgi@msu.edu or (517) 353-5213.



Group photo at a campaign celebration, (from left to right) Steven Bridges, Rebecca Ross, Thomas Jeitschko, Devon Akmon, and Alan Ross.



A digital rendering of the Immersive Lab.



A rendering of the open collection storage area.



MSU MUSEUM STAFF

The continued success of the MSU Museum is driven by the creativity, expertise, and dedication of its exceptional staff. From curators and researchers to educators and administrators, each team member plays an essential role in shaping the Museum's dynamic programming and public engagement. Their collaborative efforts create experiences at the nexus of the arts, sciences, cultures, and technologies for the Michigan State University community.

The Team

Devon Akmon, Director

Laura Abraczinskas, Vertebrate Collections Manager

Denice Blair, Ph.D., Director of Education

Sandra Brown, Associate Director of Development

Brittany Carter, Education Program Coordinator

Julian Chambliss, Ph.D., Val Berryman Curator of History

C. Kurt Dewhurst, Ph.D., Curator of Folklife and Cultural Heritage

Samantha Ellens, Ph.D., Archaeology Collections Manager

Teresa Goforth, Director of Exhibitions

Tam Heaton-Wyrick, Associate Director of Development

Riley Hubbard, Assistant Director of Annual Giving

Liz Ivkovich, Senior Director of Advancement

Jeff Lambert, Fiscal Officer and HR Administrator

Barbara Lundrigan, Ph.D., Curator of Mammalogy and Ornithology

Marsha MacDowell, Ph.D., Curator of Folk Arts and Quilt Studies

Lynn Mande, Director of Finance and Human Resources

Natasha Miller, Community Engagement Manager

Julie Orlor, Administrative and Operational Support

Stephanie Palagyi, Director of Marketing and Communications

Kristin Phillips, Digital Communications Coordinator

Abbie Stevens, Ph.D., CoLab Studio Public Programming Manager

Mark Sullivan, D.M.A., CoLab Studio Creative Director

Lynne Swanson, Cultural Collections Manager

Sunny Wang, Academic Information Technologist

Ethan Watrall, Ph.D., Curator of Archaeology

Caroline White, CoLab Studio Education and Learning Manager

Carrie Wicker, Museum Educator and Science On a Sphere® Coordinator

Mary Worrall, Director of Collections



A group of MSU Museum staff and students staff at the ASCENT campaign launch.



STUDENT EMPLOYEES

Student employees and interns play a vital role in advancing the MSU Museum's mission. Their contributions not only enrich the Museum's work but also offer transformative learning experiences that support their academic and professional development. By engaging in hands-on projects and collaborating across disciplines, students gain valuable skills in areas such as research, curation, collections care, exhibition development, marketing, and communications. Their energy, creativity, and insight bring fresh ideas to our programs, helping us stay relevant and forward-thinking. We deeply value their enthusiasm and commitment, which continue to shape the Museum as a space for innovation, exploration, and growth.

Graduate Students

Ani Hristova – Integrative Biology & Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Program

Katie Huard – Arts, Cultural Management, and Museum Studies

Andrew Kracinski – Anthropology

Katie Quinlan – Earth & Environmental Sciences

Nevaeh Ramon – Arts, Cultural Management, and Museum Studies



Undergraduate Students

Ben Adams – Biosystems Engineering

Muna Akwali – Criminal Justice and Psychology

Samuel Booth – Digital Storytelling

Jessica Freedman – Media and Information

Vatsal Gupta – Computer Science

Joe Jones – Apparel and Textile Design

Rachel Lewis – Art History and Journalism

Sandhya Manivasagam – Biochemistry and Molecular Biology/Biotechnology

Aubree Marshall – Anthropology

Jane Moore – Experience Architecture

Emily Page – Zoology

Emma Riddle – History

Saanch Rustagi – Psychology

Sydney Urbaniak – Philosophy

Erin Vollertsen – Art Education

Student staff of the MSU Museum at the ASCENT campaign launch.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Curator Julian Chambliss, MSU President Kevin Guskiewicz, Sam Booth, Ben Adams, Saanch Rustagi, and Amy Guskiewicz at the exhibition, *Techno: The Rise of Detroit's Machine Music*.



COMMUNITY & CULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Community & Culture Advisory Committee was established to foster a welcoming environment for all visitors. Through meaningful community engagement and active feedback gathering, the committee helps ensure that the Museum reflects the experiences of its audience and fosters a space where all individuals feel seen, valued, and open to collaborate with the Museum.

- Jena Baker-Calloway**, MPH, Director, MSU Detroit Center
- Ruth Nicole Brown**, Ph.D., Professor and Inaugural Chair, Department of African American and African Studies
- Siddharth Chandra**, Ph.D., Professor of Economics, James Madison College; Director, Asian Studies Center
- Delia Fernández-Jones**, Ph.D., Associate Professor of History and Core Faculty, Chicano/Latino Studies Program
- Tesia Freer**, Access Specialist for Blindness & Visual Impairment, MSU Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities

- Salah D. Hassan**, Ph.D., Professor, Department of English; Core Faculty in Muslim Studies Program and Global Studies in the Arts & Humanities; Director of Global Studies
- Kevin P. Leonard**, Ph.D., Director, Native American Institute in the Office of University Outreach and Engagement
- Blaire Morseau**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies; Affiliate Faculty in Digital Humanities & American Indian & Indigenous Studies



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We extend our heartfelt thanks to the dedicated donors whose generosity has sustained and inspired our work over the past year. Your support has been instrumental in furthering our mission and creating meaningful impact. It is your unwavering belief in the Museum’s purpose that fuels our continued progress. We are deeply appreciative of your partnership and the powerful difference you make through your commitment and generosity.

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