



Narrative of 2023-2024 Annual Activities
Prepared for Norman Parks & Recreation Board

Our Mission, Vision & Values

*OUR VISION: A community connected
through shared artistic experiences*

*OUR MISSION: to create, curate, and present quality arts programs to connect
and enrich our community*

*OUR VALUES: Community,
Creativity, Inclusion, Representation, Intentionality, Quality*

We are Music

The Depot produces Norman's beloved Summer Breeze Concert Series in Lion's Park every summer where 1500-2000 of our neighbors bring a picnic and we bring the band. We are also a fantastic listening room for our Depot Concerts featuring the best in touring and local music.

TOTAL AUDIENCES FOR MUSIC: 25,000 (includes Summer Breeze, Concert, Comedy, and Poetry Attendees, and the over 3,000 views of our Depot TV videos on YouTube)



Summer Breeze - In 2024, we entertained our audiences with incredible concerts from local bands Casii Stephan, Em and the Mother Superiors, Caleb McGee, The Imaginaries, Mariachi Orgullo de America and brought touring artists The Sensational Barnes Brothers, and Mouths of Babes, and the latest in our Homegrown series curated by Kierston White of the Tequila Songbirds!

This series continued to draw huge crowds of people of all ages and diverse musical preferences. Lion's Park is the perfect concert venue and we love the partnership with the City of Norman Parks and Recreation department. The park is always ready for us and we appreciate the support with power, trash

receptacles and trash service. Our Summer Breeze Green Team, which helps collect and transport recyclables from the parks for each concert, has less work to do each year as audiences learn to take home their own trash. We have dramatically reduced the waste left for pickup at each concert. We believe this exemplary behavior and collaborative partnership is an expression of their appreciation for the high quality music and friendly family atmosphere that Summer Breeze provides.



Depot Concerts - Deeply rooted in local connections, and sprinkled with national attention, Depot Concerts continue to showcase the best of what The Depot is about. We are a unique space for a show - in a historic train station, with gorgeous art on the walls, hosting musicians and audiences that are excited to be there. We are continually surprised at the numbers of our guests coming from out of town, and from out of state to see the shows we produce. Our rooms were packed last year with concerts from Beppe Gambetta, a depot favorite and Italian singer/songwriter, Chanda Graham, a must-see in the OKC music scene, our annual holiday show with Miss Brown to You (so popular we did TWO nights in 2024), and Oklahoma favorites like Travis Linville, and Carter Sampson, and touring artists Tony Furtado, Julia Othmer, and The Brother Brothers. Depot Concerts feel like a family of music lovers and sound beautiful in our historic listening room.



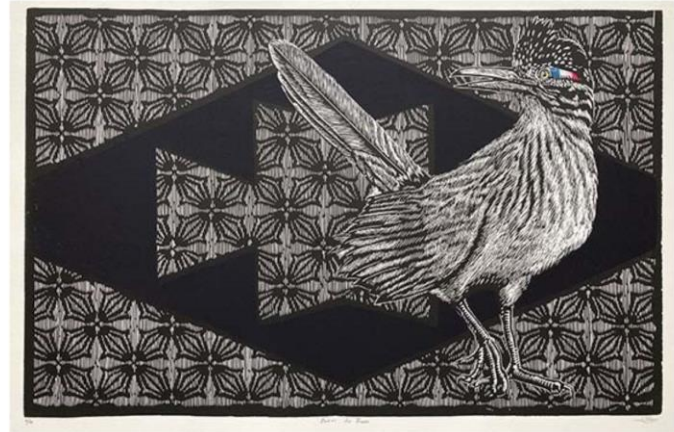
Friday, May 10—Saturday, June 29

Gallery Hours 10am-2pm, Wednesday-Saturday



EXTANT: INDIGENOUS VISIONS

an all-indigenous artist showcase featuring
Kristin Gentry, Tom Farris and Marwin Begaye



We are Art. The Depot Gallery hosts Oklahoma artists or artists with strong Oklahoma ties for six exhibits each year in our main gallery. The gallery is free and open to the public. Our gallery has worked diligently over the last 5 years to become the premiere gallery in Norman with annual sales averaging \$20,000 and art provided for viewing for over 25,000 patrons including our gallery guests, rental patrons, train customers, and the groups hosted by our venue. We host solo exhibitions and group shows and 2023 included our first ever “Emerging Artists Show” showcasing the breadth of artistic talent in our community.

Our gallery in 2023-2024 hosted the works of:

Joshua Martin - hyper realism artist and Norman resident whose works confound even photographers who don't believe they are painted.

Lauri Ketchum - self-described 'cowboy artist' and co-founder of the Cowgirl Artists of America Extant Indigenous Visions with a trio of nationally recognized artists Marwin Begaye, Kristin Gentry and Tom Farris,

Gayla Goodell - Norman resident and former designer for the works of Mary Engelbreit whose charming pictures flew off our walls.

'Musicians Who Make Art' with Tim Gregory of Helen Kelter Skelter, guitarist and composer Gregg Standridge, and the spectacular jewelry by Lacey Saunders



We are Education. We offer art clinics, chats and workshops working with the stellar artists who show on our walls and are gearing up to have regular clinics, chats and classes for the 2025-2026 year. The experiences we provide are unique, intimate, and impactful and last year included multiple workshops with inimitable watercolor artist Connie Seabourn and the multi-talented Debby Kaspari.

We are Comedy. Our Third Thursday Comedy Night featuring comedy in a variety of forms from standup to sketch to improv. Our growing audiences are proving to us that our community desperately needs a good laugh.

We are a Community Partner The Depot partners with community organizations who might need headquarters for a festival, a home for a fundraiser, a room for a meeting or space for a classroom including Mardi Gras, Pride Parade, Oklahoma Storyworks, Two Weird Sisters Productions, Sierra Club, Cimarron Opera, Songwriters Association of Norman, Norman Next, , Food & Shelter, Inc, Jacobson House and others. We are also the premiere rental venue in the heart of the Walker Arts District.





We are Poetry. Our poetry program returned with a reading by Lance Harper to a packed audience and continued in the last fiscal year with quarterly evenings of multiple poets around a theme organized by amazing Oklahoma author, poet, actor and director Paul Austin. The first was Oklahomeography in the fall of 2024 featuring Joey Brown, Ken Hada, and Benjamin Myers. Joey Brown, a poet and a fiction writer who has authored two poetry collections: Her poems and prose have appeared in many journals and anthologies. She was the featured writer of the Oswald Writers Series at the University of South Carolina-Aiken. Ken Hada is the author of eleven books of poetry and the director of the annual Scissortail Creative Writing Festival. Ken Hada received the 2022 Oklahoma Book Award for his collection, Contour Feathers, and many other awards and prizes. Benjamin Myers was the 2015-2016 Poet Laureate of the State of Oklahoma and the recipient of the Oklahoma Book Award for Poetry. He is the author of four books of poetry and his work has appeared in many journals.

We are a Depot. As caretakers of this historic facility, we welcome the opportunity to serve as host to passengers boarding Amtrak's Heartland Flyer from 8 to 9 a.m. - 7 days a week. Hosting consists of ensuring that passengers have required ticket information, luggage tags, parking information and comfortable waiting room with clean, stocked restrooms. This year, the City of Norman provided The Depot with \$11,600 to help cover the costs of providing these services. Volunteers open the Depot and serve as passenger hosts on evenings and weekends. In addition, our staff prints schedules and answers questions daily for potential train customers.



Our social media and YouTube reach have extended our audiences - We reached 118.9k people on Facebook/Instagram with our posts and reels with over 4500 followers and 3200 views of our Depot TV episodes on our YouTube channel.

We believe that the programming we provide through the stewardship of this structure on the National Registry of Historic Places not only aids the growth of Downtown Norman and supports its designation as a cultural district by the Oklahoma Arts Council, but promotes a strong and healthy community and makes Norman a great place to live and visit.

As you hopefully all know, The Depot offers an intimate listening room for concerts and poetry, an art gallery, Summer Breeze Concerts in Lions Park, Depot Comedy and a rental venue for private and community events, plus Amtrak service each morning, all in a beautiful historic building, fulfilling our mission *to create, curate and present quality fine arts programs for the enrichment of our community.*

Audience Numbers:

Summer Breeze - 20,000

Concerts - 622

Gallery Guests (includes rental patrons) - 22,000

Train Passengers - 7,047 passengers boarded the Heartland Flyer at the Depot during the 2023-2024 fiscal year. (this number does not include the patrons who stop by the Depot daily for information about how to book AMTRAK tickets, website assistance, etc.)

REVENUE SOURCES: The Depot is a 501c3, registered as a charitable organization with the State of Oklahoma and the IRS, filing an annual 990 return available on request.

Depot Rental - \$27,5877

Rental revenue is our most important revenue stream to assist in covering the administrative expenses of offering our programs. Rental income must cover salaries, insurance, phone, office supplies and other administrative costs. This was our largest year for rental revenue but doesn't appear to be a trend. Although we saw a record year in 22-23, we saw our rental numbers drop by half in 23-24 and are happy to see them rebounding this year. It seemed to be a market correction after everyone rushed to host events post-pandemic and then slowed down before returning to a more steady stream of event planning.

Rentals Sunday through Thursday are \$100/hour and rentals on Friday or Saturday are \$150/hour. This still keeps us the most reasonable rental venue in town, but allows us to continue to keep pace with inflated costs. Rentals must be a minimum of 2 hours and have an additional \$75 cleaning fee. The nearly 100 chairs, 6 round and 10 rectangular tables are available to use at no additional charge.

Membership - \$12,924

The Depot offers a membership program with a variety of benefits including discounts on art and rentals and members-only events. Membership levels are currently at \$60 for a Basic Membership which includes pre-sale ticket purchases, and a calendar of events. The Premier Membership is \$180 and offers basic benefits and 25% off a Depot rental, a 10% Gallery Discount, and we have added a Sustaining Level Membership that adds the member's name to our listings on Press Releases and Social Media posts.

Program Partners - \$37,716

The Depot's programs are beloved by the community and both in-kind and cash partnerships make up a substantial portion of our program budgets for Summer Breeze, Winter Wind, and the Gallery.

Art and Ticket Sales - \$39,018

In the last fiscal year we sold nearly \$20,000 in art and merchandise (65% going back to the artist), and nearly \$15,000 in concert tickets (80% of which go to the artist)

Responsible Parties: The Depot has an active Board of Directors and 4 part-time employees who accomplish an extraordinary slate of activities with the help of community volunteers.

Officers who authorize expenditures:

Michael Duncan, Board Chair

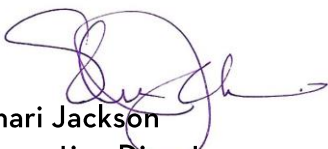
Shari Jackson, Executive Director

Danielle Tipton, Events Director

Danielle and Shari are responsible for keeping the books and working with Board Treasurer Keith Reams to provide reporting to the board and coordinate the timely filing of all payroll taxes and annual 990 filings.

The Depot is extremely grateful to the City of Norman for the use of the beautiful, historic Depot and for paying a percentage of the utilities, without which it is very doubtful The Depot could exist and administer great arts programming for our community. In addition to our work, we remain committed to allowing The Depot to function as a community gathering place for events such as the Norman Music Festival, Mardi Gras, PRIDE Festival, and other community events and organizations. Norman is truly enriched by the support provided by the City for The Depot, as well as the Firehouse Art Center, Sooner Theatre and Moore-Lindsey House, all of which are integral to making Norman such a wonderful place to live.

Thank you for your consideration and attention,



Shari Jackson
Executive Director
The Depot