



OCTAGON

CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Annual Report | 2022 - 2023

Our Mission

The Octagon Center for the Arts encourages interaction and creative self-expression by providing inclusive opportunities and spaces that bring people together through art.

*Revised in 2019.



OCTAGON STAFF

Heather Johnson
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Education Director

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Octagon Shop Manager

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*Gallery Director &
Communications Director*

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Business of Art Coordinator

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Vivian M. Cook
*Curator in Residence
Jan. 2022- Dec. 2022*

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The Octagon Center for the Arts

Annual Report

July 2022 – June 2023

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Front and Back Cover art by Christian Vandehaar

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Looking back at fiscal year 2022-23, I am so grateful for the continued support for the Octagon's programs. Thank you to our individual donors and corporate partners who have made contributions to the Octagon Center for the Arts. As an organization, we were still rebounding from fewer classes and events due to the pandemic. Our non-profit is centered around offering programs, events and special creative opportunities to the public. Without program income, the budget can be drastically affected. One highlight of the last fiscal year is we had a full year of regular programming back on the schedule! Art outreach programs have seen a positive increase. Thanks to support from the group 100 Women Who Care in Ames, the Octagon was awarded \$6,700 for outreach programs, especially the Boys & Girls Club.

I want to acknowledge the wonderful staff at the Octagon, who pour their heart and energy into offering great classes, exhibits, and events to the general public. Observing their passion for the arts is truly inspiring.

We are excited for new opportunities to provide art experiences in the coming fiscal year. I welcome you to sign up for a class, volunteer for an event, view an exhibit or purchase some great gifts in the Octagon shop.

Thank you again for your continued support for the Octagon Center for the Arts.

With gratitude,
Heather Johnson
Executive Director



57 years of the Octagon



The Octagon Center for the Arts began as the dream for a special place to foster the arts in Ames, IA. In Late 1965, four incredible women came together to make that dream a reality. They rented the center's namesake octagonal house (shown below), drew up a logo like the one to the left, and scheduled classes and exhibits for the upcoming year. On January 23rd, 1966, with the help of many artists and volunteers, they opened the

doors of their octagonal art center to an astounding 500+ person crowd!

By 1968, the Octagon was beginning to out grow the octagonal house. Every room was being rented to artists and instructors. They were able to move to the 2nd floor of a Main Street business in 1969. Then, just a handful of years later, they expanded again into the Masonic Building on Douglas Ave. And finally, in 1978, the Octagon purchased all four floors of the Masonic Building and transitioned all programming to the new location. Through sponsorships, donations, volunteers, and a lot of hard work, the center was able to remodel the interior to include a basement ceramics studio and a 2nd floor dance studio.

Though the octagonal house no longer stands and the times have changed, the Octagon Center for the Arts continues to be an integral part of arts education and community outreach in Ames. We are inspired, every day, by the four women who had the vision and passion to create something new for their community. Now it is our turn to envision something new to serve the community.



Our Wonder Founders

The Octagon was the vision of four women dedicated to promoting the arts in Ames: Veronika Ruedenberg, Martha Benson, Priscilla Sage and Janet Harris Squires.

(pictured left to right).

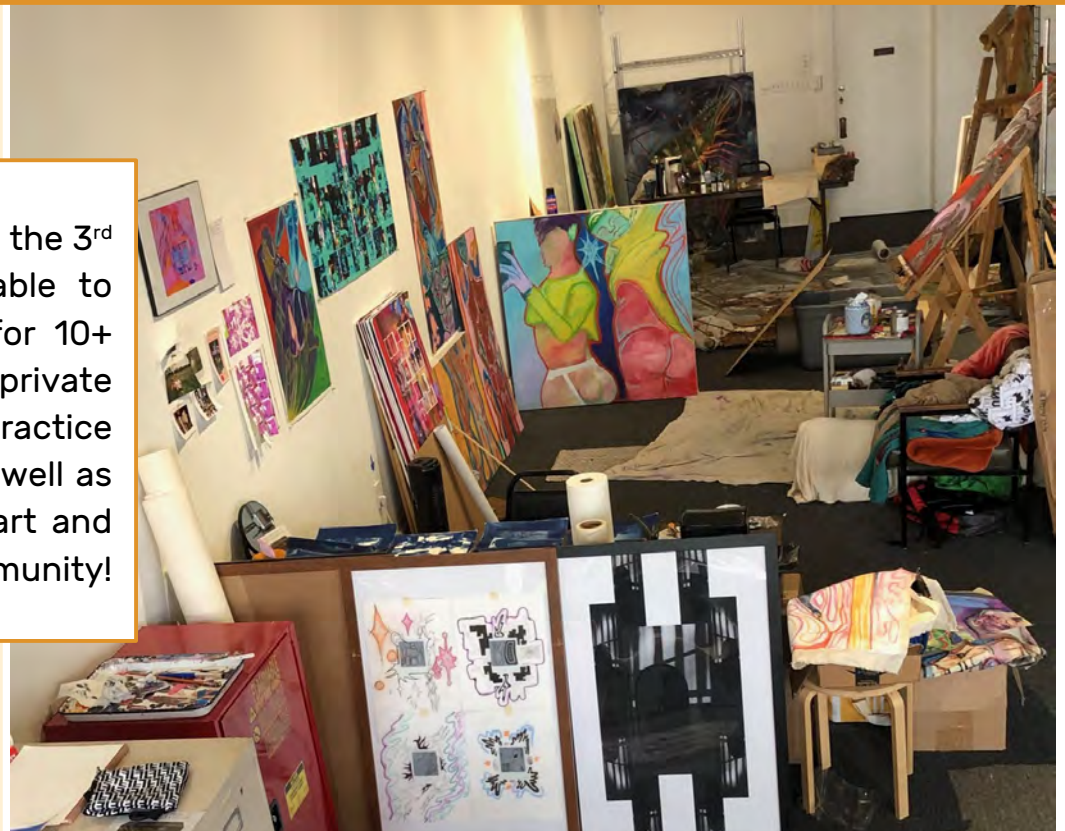
THIRD FLOOR

3rd Floor Artists Studios Project:

Feedback from surveys and focus groups with local artists shed light on one recurring theme in Ames: there was the lack of affordable studio space for creatives. Based on this, the Octagon decided to convert some underutilized space on the 3rd floor into 5 private artist studio spaces (Sweeney Gallery and part of the old kitchen). The Main Gallery on the 3rd floor is also being transitioned into co-working space for artists. The open floor plan studio space (no barriers or dividers currently used to separate studios) lends more to cooperative creative practices and community building for creatives in Ames.

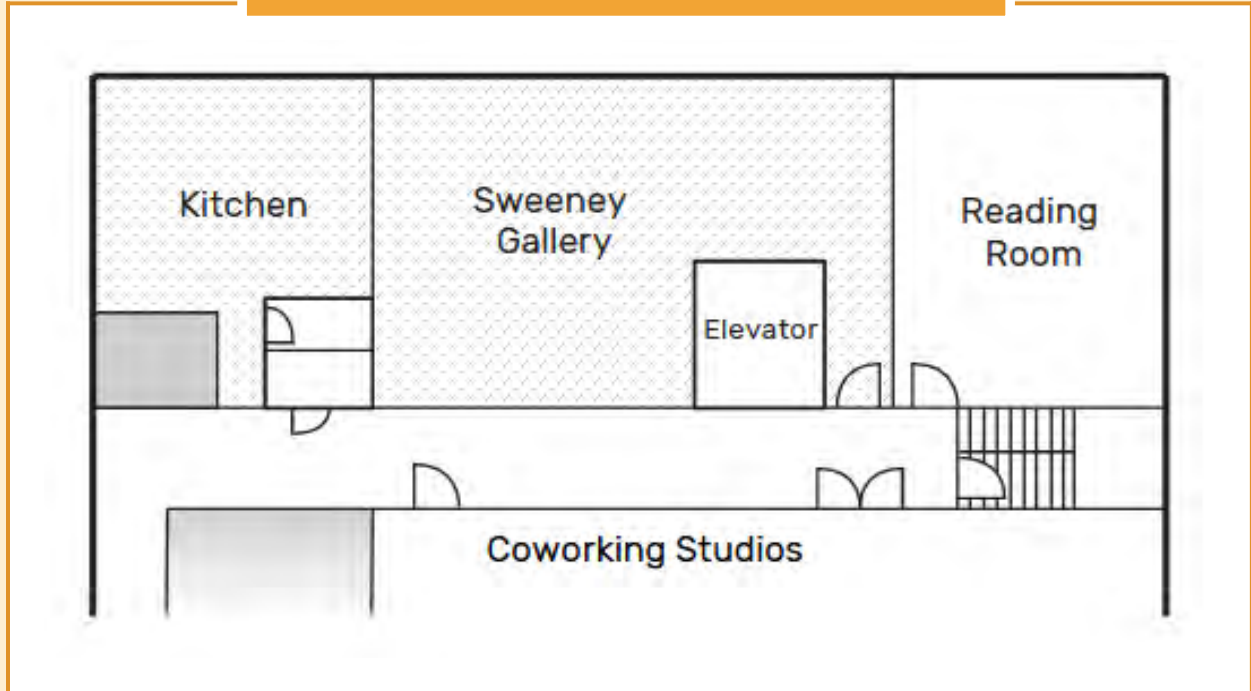
The City of Ames awarded the Octagon a capital arts grant of \$170,000 to help with this project. With additional funds raised from other private donors (Thank you!), the total project budget is \$310,000. The Octagon is working with 10Fold Architecture and Harold Pike Construction to make these studios become a reality! The current goal is to have the studios completed by January 2024, just in time for the new year! There is a wait list of artists wanting to use the private studios at affordable rental rates as well as for those who would like to utilize the co-working studio space.

We're eager to complete the 3rd floor project and be able to offer the opportunity for 10+ artists to have both private and shared spaces to practice and create their art, as well as be able to share their art and creativity with the community!

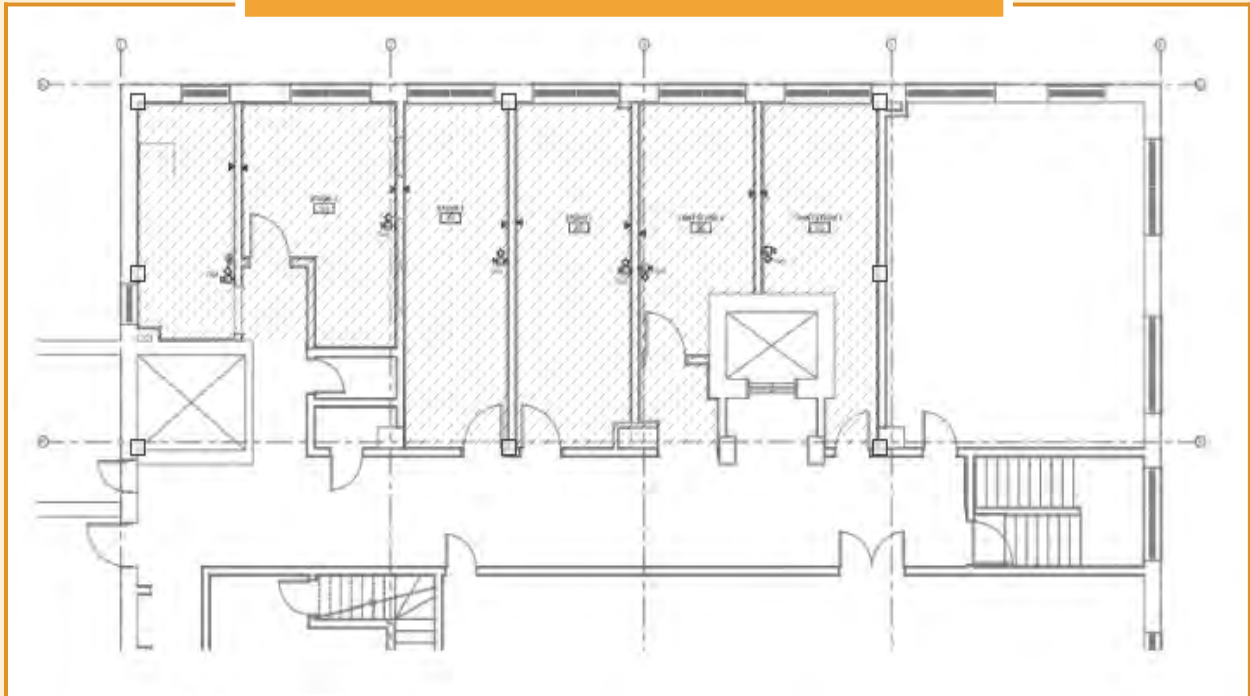


INITIATIVE

3rd Floor - Before



3rd Floor - After



** Hash-shaded spaces are those that are currently planned to be renovated.
This only includes the Kitchen and Sweeney Gallery spaces.

COMMUNITY GALLERY

2022 was a year of change for the galleries at the Octagon due to 3rd floor renovations turning the Main Gallery into our new co-working studios. Even with less space, we were still able to fill our Community Gallery with incredible and moving shows. We're extremely honored to be able work with each of the artists that exhibited with us this past season, and are excited to see what this new year of artists will bring to the community!

Our exhibit in September 2022 was a little different than our standard gallery shows. The OUT exhibit was shown outside of the Octagon in several community spaces within Downtown Ames. These included the Ames History Museum, the Ames Public Library, Back Alley House Plants, Dog-Eared Books, Heroic Ink, Little Woods Herbal, and London Underground. Thank you to our community and the artists for sharing their work, and our juror, aj castle, for taking the time to help extend an invitation to connect to the LGBTQIA+ community with authenticity.

-- Casey Bridgham, Gallery & Communications Director



253

Exhibited Artists in
Solo & Group Exhibits

11

Shows in our
Community Gallery

Our Curator in Residence: Vivian M. Cook

January 2022 - December 2022

Vivian M. Cook, originally from the mountains of Arizona, is a community-engaged performing artist. During her time at the Octagon, Vivian was pursuing Master's degrees in Community Development and Sustainable Agriculture, as well as a graduate certificate in Youth Program Management and Evaluation. We cannot be more grateful that she could share her time with us!

Vivian organized and curated our January 2023 exhibit, [UNTITLED]. In this exhibit, artist Tiffany Antone, and a community of artists with shared experiences of breast cancer, showcased visual, literary, and performance artwork, as well as interactive art-making opportunities for the Ames community.





'22 - '23 Community Gallery Season



ARTIST	EXHIBIT TITLE	OPENING - CLOSING DATES
Various Member Artists	2 nd Annual Member Show	July 9 - August 13, 2022
Various Artists	Work-In-Progress	August 20 - October 1, 2022
Various Artists	OUT	September 1 - 30, 2022
Andrew Clarridge & Matthew Terry	Layers of Reality	October 8 - November 12, 2022
Dawn Wahlford	What's the Buzz?	November 19 - December 24, 2022
Tiffany Antone + Various Artists	[UNTITLED]: How a breast cancer survivor learned to say goodbye to her boobs	January 5 - 21, 2023
Cynthia O'Hern	Snáithin Bainneanach / Feminine Fiber	January 30 - February 25, 2023
Various Artists	Octagonal: The All-Media Show	March 3 - April 8, 2023
Various Artists	Elem/MS/HS Annual Student Show	April 17 - May 13, 2023
Leo Bird	The Words He Cannot Say	May 22 - June 22, 2023
Various Member Artists	3 rd Annual Member Show	June 26 - July 22, 2023

THE OCTAGON SHOP

This fiscal year did not beat the previous fiscal year in sales but it can be clearly seen that it was still a strong year, as shown in the graph to the right. COVID was a terrible and scary period, and continues to effect us, but it also showed our community the importance of small businesses. And our community definitely stepped up and continues to do so!

In comparison, 2021-2022 was a record breaking year nearly every single month. This fiscal year, sales slowed during the summer and fall months, which were below the corresponding months the previous year. However, December sales were wonderful and beat all previous Decembers! May and June also showed stronger sales leaving us hopeful that this upcoming fiscal year will also be a

groundbreaking year and we can keep our sales strong.

Art Supplies, which were added in 2021-2022, saw a significant increase. Sales would have been higher but the economic bounce back from COVID related supply and demand issues didn't allow us the freedoms to increase our selection. Though, looking forward, wholesale prices have come down and with a large interest in our carrying more art supplies from artists, we plan to expand on what we're currently carrying!



One of the biggest improvements this year was the purchase of several movable walls and glass shelving from a gallery that closed in Valley Junction. These walls have added much needed surface area for two-dimensional work!

-- Terrie Hoefler, Octagon Shop Manager



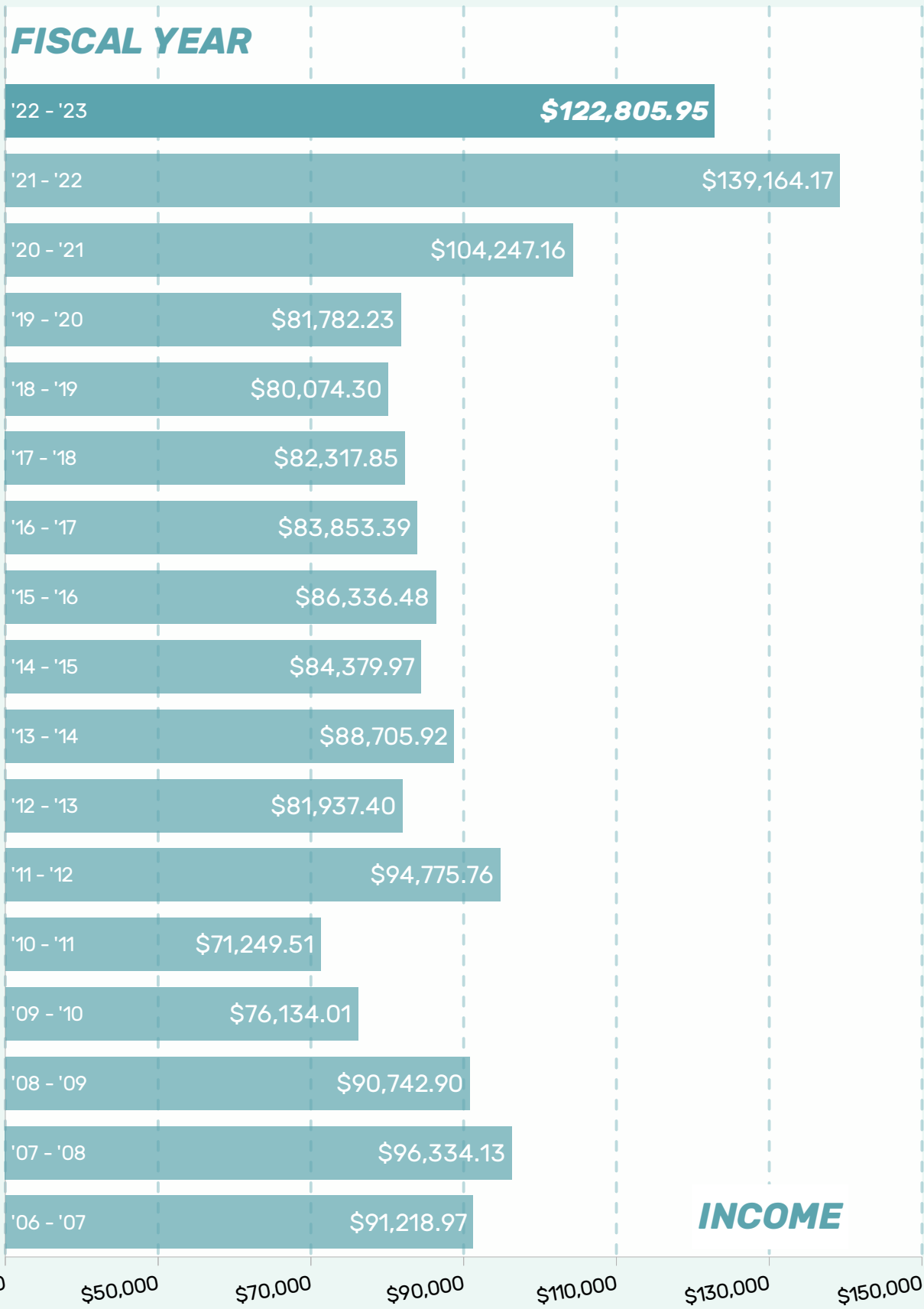
180

Number of Shop Artists

10,906

Visitors to the Shop

Shop Sales by Fiscal Year



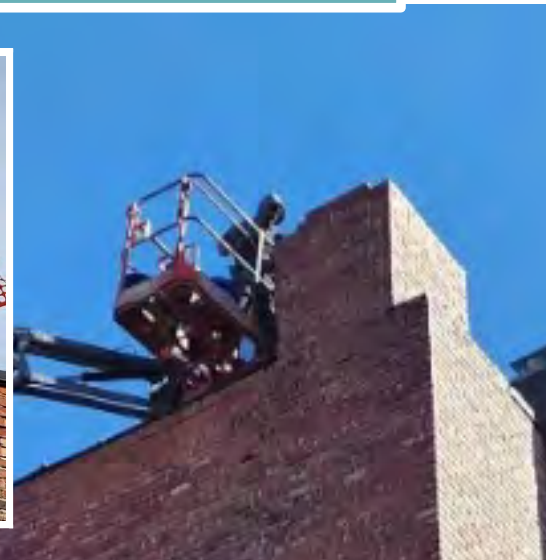
OCTAGON PATIO



The patio behind our building is quite the fun little oasis in our concrete jungle here in Downtown. The staff dug out all the old paint from everywhere in the building and invited the public to Paint the Patio as an activity during Downtown Ames' 515 Event in May and what a success! With this new "face lift," the Patio has become even more of a common area for anyone in the community to utilize. The Back Alley Knitters (pictured above) come to the Patio for a private space for community and crafts!

The Chimney Swifts Return!

As is common with older buildings like ours, the chimney needed to be repaired this year. Fortunately, we were able to save a significant portion of it! Ours is one of the last chimneys in Downtown Ames that is available as a roost for the migrating chimney swifts whose habitat is ever dwindling. Todd Burras, the owner of Wild Birds Unlimited counted over 400 birds roosting in our chimney this May!



GATHERINGS!

Patio Parties all Summer Long!



Thank you to our community for supporting our 3rd year hosting Patio Parties! We love featuring a wide variety of performance genres and welcoming performers at all stages of their careers, whether that be as hobbyists or as veteran show-people.

During Summer 2022 we were able to share the Patio with 5 musical artists; and in Summer 2023 we were so happy to showcase 8 more amazing performers!



Patio Lineup 2022:

- May* - Elizabeth Zimmerman (Soul, Jazz)
- June* - Sondra Wilson
- July* - Tyler Miller
- Aug* - Prince Poly (Bedroom Punk)
- Sept* - Emmett Phillips Jr. (Hip Hop)

Patio Lineup 2023:

- May* - Leo Bird (Stand-up)
- June* - Cyre Empire™ (Hip Hop)
- July* - The Bone People (Jazz, R&B)
- Aug* - King Wylde (Rock, R&B)
- Sept* - Madhyami Deshmukh (Classical Sitar)



EDUCATION

In June 2022, the Octagon was awarded \$6000 from Youth and Shelter Services (YSS) to provide art experiences and outreach opportunities for the Summer Kids Clubs in Madrid, Boone, Ogden and United schools. We provided two new art projects each week for 120 children over the summer. Simultaneously, the Octagon hosted summer art camps and also held art programming at the Octagon for over 260 children for the Boys and Girls Clubs through funding provided by REG and the Ames 100 Women Who Care.

In the spring of 2023, we were designated a Host Site for Americorps Youth Outreach Educator position. We were extremely lucky to have Anna Segner, an ISU Art Instructor, help us with our summer art camp programs for children in K-5th grade.

We currently offer free community events such as monthly mending nights (*A Place to Mend*), weekly open ceramic studios for current and past Octagon ceramics students, and our Valentine making workshop in February. We hope to host more open studios in different disciplines, like printmaking and fiber arts.

-- Beth Weninger, Education Director



Classes and Camps and

Fall 2022

- > Wool Felted Animals
- > Kids Crazy Comic Book Camp
- > Wheel Throwing Classes
- > Hand Built Ceramics Classes
- > Junk Art!
- > Found Object Art Workshop
- > Children's Book Illustration Workshop
- > Puppets & Masks Camp

Winter 2022

- > Very Silly Monster Workshop
- > Coptic Bookmaking Workshop
- > Wheel Throwing
- > Pastel and Charcoal Drawing
- > Watercolor Painting
- > Drawing Workshop
- > Hand Built Holiday Ornaments

38

Classes, Camps, and Workshops

260

Children from the Boys & Girls Club

350

Students of All Ages

Each season we offer a variety of different classes and workshops, as well as several opportunities that repeat on a regular basis:

Exploring Art & Creative Explorations

For children 18mo. to 3yrs. and 3 to 5 yrs. respectively, these weekly classes are filled with activities focused on playful, artistic, and sensory exploration!

All Kinds of Art

All day workshops for children in Grades K – 5 during no-school days. Students can spend the day making a variety of different projects while learning about art!

Ceramics Open Studios

Each week our North/Clay Studio is open to all current and past students of ceramics classes to practice skills and processes independently.



Workshops, Oh My!

Spring 2023

- > Wheel Throwing Classes
- > Wool Felting Basics Workshop
- > Spring Break Art Camp
- > Pastel Drawing

Summer 2023

- > Wheel Throwing Classes
- > Procreate: Digital Illustration/Painting
- > Tiny Travel Trailers Camp
- > Painted Animals Camp
- > Pocket Pets & Sweater Stuffies Camp
- > ZWAP! Zero Waste Art Projects Camp

OCTAGON EVENTS



The Octagon Art Festival

September 25th, 2022

The Octagon Art Festival takes place the fourth Sunday of each September along Main Street in downtown Ames, IA. The festival is held outdoors on pavement, rain or shine! Visual arts, children's art area, food vendors and performing arts form the foundation of the Octagon Art Festival.

8 Live Performances:

- > The Vida Sisters
- > Steve George Band
- > Vinyl Vagabonds
- > Mirage Middle Eastern Dance Troupe
- > Music on the Move: Second Chair Brass
- > Elizabeth Zimmerman
- > Alleygrass
- > ISU Orchestris | Dance

Our Amazing Food Trucks:

- > Jack's Beef Delight
- > Sweet Treats
- > Los Primos Grill
- > Karam's Grill Ilc.
- > Smiles & Gyros
- > Hy-Chi Food Truck
- > Sandwich Studio

Our Festival Booth Award Winner:

Best in Show: **Danielle Clouse Gast (Painting)**

Honorable Mention Awards:

Doug Adams (Mixed Media) **Nancy Briggs (Ceramic)** **Gregg Messer (Wood)**

84

**Artists Participated
From 6 States**

10,000

**Approximate
Attendance!**

159

**Volunteer Hours Went
Into the Day**

OCTAGON ART FESTIVAL SPONSORS



5th Annual Business of Art Conference March 3rd – 4th, 2023

The Business of Art Conference is designed to strengthen skills and provide resources for both formally trained and self-taught creatives. Topics can include: developing a brand, creating an online presence, festivals, galleries, consignment, retail and wholesale sales, searching for funding, as well as self-care and well-being. In addition to sessions for professional development, the conference includes networking opportunities throughout the day, giving attendees the chance to talk one-on-one with both speakers and other creatives. All are welcome, professional or student, part time or full time, in all stages of their career.



BUSINESS of ART
CONFERENCE
2023

Our Keynote Speaker: Ash Hansen

Friday Speakers:

- > Clark Colby
- > Sheri Benson & Leah Locke
- > Cameron Gray
- > George Klotzbach

Saturday Speakers:

- > Amanda Petefish-Schrag
 - > Caroline Freese
 - > Allison & Andy McGuire
 - > Cynthia O'Hern
 - > Gretchen Bohling
 - > Lindsay Keast & David Schmitz
 - > Casey Bridgham
 - > Tiffany Johnson
- > Panelists:
- Barb Walton
 - Naomi Friend
 - Mary Kline-Misol
 - Anna Segner

BUSINESS OF ART SPONSORS

BRACKETS CUSTOM
WINDOW COVERINGS



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We want to thank all of our members at all levels. Without your support we wouldn't be able to put on the quantity nor quality of events, exhibits, classes, or workshops that we do. Your support means the world to us and to our community.

- Theresa Warren, Office Manager

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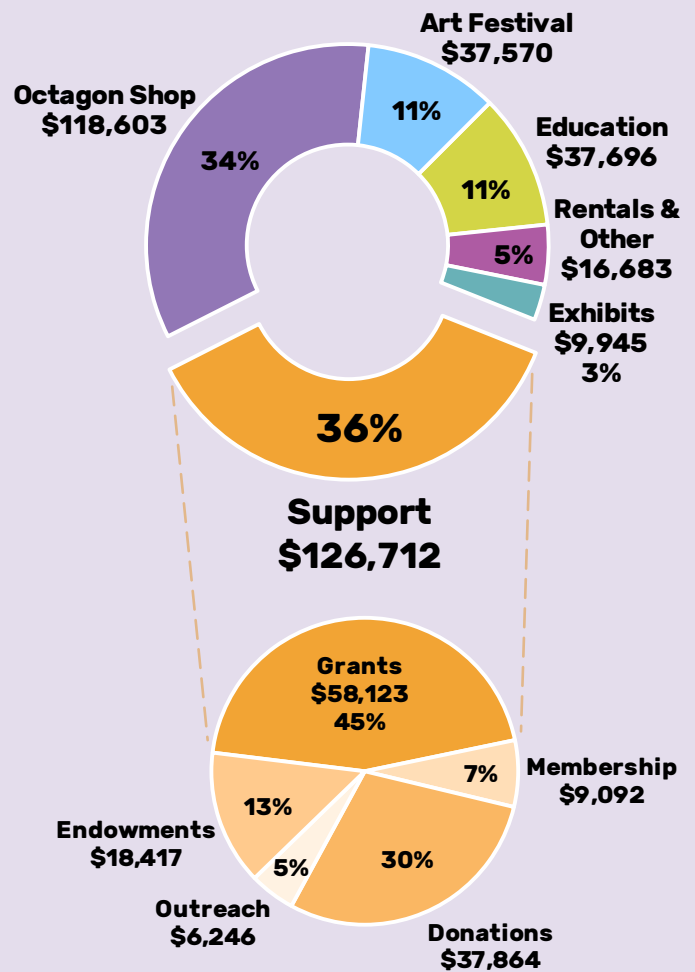
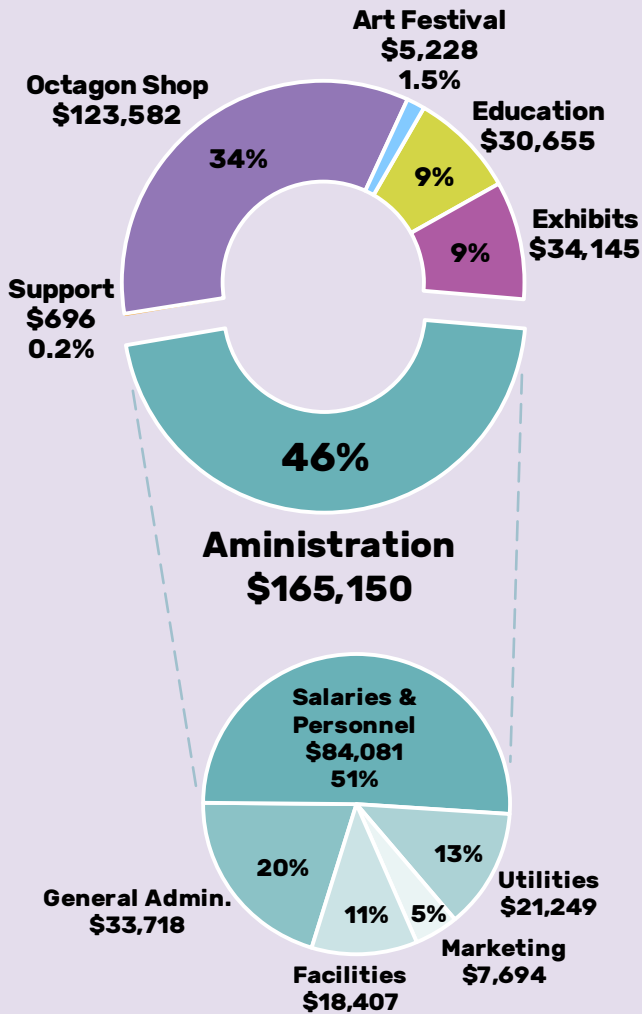
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Sasha Phillips
Joseph Plum
Timothy Pross
Shana Rainey
Kyle Renell
Lori Ristau
Kristin Roach
Kimberlee Rocca
Karen Ruff
Ruben Ruiz
Denese Sanden
Nancy Sartori
Pat Schlarbaum
Nancy Schneider
Kelly Schwartz
Rhonda Scott
Maureen Seamonds

Jessica Shimek
Richard Shook
Tina Slykhuis
Jill Sneed
Jacob Soendker
Josh Sorrell
Melissa Stenstrom
Tracey Stewart
Robert Sunderman
Lynn Swan
Alyssa Tauber
Troy Thomas
Barb Thompson
Sean Thornton
Mark True
Melynda Van Zee
Ashley Vance
Lisa Victoria
Tatiana Vyushkina
Ruth Waite
Robert Wallace
Rachel Weber
Mary Weisgram
Marlene Weisshaar
Abigail West
Justin West
Beverly Westra
Amanda Williams
Kelsey Wilson
Alex Wilson
Norma Wolff
Irina Yavorskaya
Dafang Zhang

FY22-23 FINANCIALS

EXPENSES = \$359,456

INCOME = \$347,209



'22 - '23 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

THE OCTAGON IN A NUTSHELL

Net Income:	\$109,927
Cash on Hand:	\$67,377
Endowment Total:	\$218,265
Total Assets:	\$655,890

Number of Members	275
Number of Gifts	191
Volunteer Hours	442

For our full Statement of Financial Position, please visit octagonarts.org/about-2/funding-annual-report/



LOOKING TO SUPPORT THE OCTAGON?



BECOME A MEMBER

Members make it possible to keep our programming and events accessible to everyone in our community. Current members enjoy a 10% discount on all Shop purchases and classes!

TAKE A CLASS

The Octagon offers all kinds of art classes, workshops and camps throughout the year for students of all ages and skill levels. Topics and media vary and we're always looking for new instructors too!

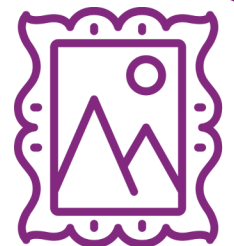


PURCHASE A GIFT

The Octagon Shop is a consignment retailer for original works for 180+ artists. With something for every budget and every taste, you're sure to find something special.

VIEW THE EXHIBITS

Our Community Gallery is totally free to the public and displays 10-12 exhibits each year, featuring a variety of artwork created by artists local, national, and international.



ATTEND AN EVENT

Events are happening all the time! The Octagon Art Festival and the Business of Art Conference occur each year and are great opportunities to explore the art in our community.



facebook



instagram

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram, or sign up for our email newsletter to get the most up to date information on new events, classes, and exhibits!



octagonarts.org



OCTAGON
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

427 Douglas Avenue, Ames, IA 50010
octagonart.org | 515-232-5331

