

# SPACES

**SPACES IS 40 & FABULOUS**  
**2018 Annual Report**



# HELLO!



## BOARD PRESIDENT THOMAS STARINSKY

Providing resources to artists for four decades is no small feat. We owe it to the people who founded and diligently fostered the work of SPACES to thoughtfully plan a future that will sustain our legacy.

With this in mind, board and staff purposefully created a strategic plan for the organization that leverages our new location and the growing success of our exhibitions. Our process included a lot of dialogue in 2018 with you—artists, funders, neighbors, collaborators—and through our own reflection, we have begun to focus on the following objectives:

- Redesigning our programming model to emphasize residencies as a core component of our work.
- Reorganizing our governance and staffing models as a foundation for growth and long-term financial sustainability.
- Evolving our organizational brand by creating compelling communication channels that reach and inspire diverse audiences locally and throughout the world.

I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to lead SPACES in the search for our new location and through the development of our strategic plan. Our work is never completed by just one person—the board and staff passionately live our mission to be a resource and public forum for artists who explore and experiment. With the strategic plan in place, SPACES is poised to explore social and cultural boundaries for as long as there are artists to ask questions and audiences to engage with their work.

## EXECUTIVE + ARTISTIC DIRECTOR CHRISTINA VASSALLO

SPACES artists give us access to worlds that we otherwise might not have entered. The momentous projects that we presented in 2018, during our 40th anniversary year, showed us that we all live in a time as much as we live in a place.

The year opened with Julia Christensen's *Waiting for a Break*, which investigated the health of Lake Erie, and Mahwish Chishti's moving rumination on U.S. drone strikes in her native Pakistan. Next, we presented *20/20 Hindsight = 40 Years*, a group exhibition that celebrated the cumulative impact of 4 decades of SPACES on artists and audience members. In the summer, Michael Rakowitz and 4 local artists showed us how the expression of grief—caused by state-sanctioned violence—can unite a segregated community. Finally, Sarah Kabot and James Webb helped train our focus on the deeply personal ways in which we respond to the world around us.

These projects feel, in many ways, like they've been at least 40 years in the making. As we move past this milestone, we look toward a future in which we continue to challenge the status quo and support artists with unwavering dedication.

# HIGHLIGHTS!

## IN 2018 WE...

Conducted **27** one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders, received survey responses from **51** individuals, and analyzed the budgets of **4** peer organizations to inform our **5**-year strategic plan.

Created **2** new staff positions, hosted **1** Cleveland Foundation Summer Intern, worked with **3** paid fellows, and **14** interns from **5** area universities to make this place run.

Helped Cleveland become **1** of only **14** cities nationwide to host The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts Regional Regranting Program.

Conducted **175** on- and off-site events, through our Creative Engagement Campaign, that reached nearly **3,400** adults, seniors, and children.

## SPACES IN THE NEWS

“The new 40th anniversary show at SPACES is hysterically funny, politically irreverent, aesthetically thrilling and, at times, a muddle that loses its way. In other words, it’s a perfect and perfectly honest self-portrait for an institution that has never been afraid to experiment and occasionally fail, but that also has regained momentum in recent years. As the exhibition proves, SPACES remains a vital anchor in the city’s art scene.” - Steven Litt, “40th Anniversary Show at SPACES Offers Self-Portrait of an Essential Arts Institution,” *The Plain Dealer* (April 21, 2018)

“People in Cleveland and around the world have donated orange objects of all kinds—tarps, food wrappers, a set of plastic vampire teeth—that are now displayed around the gallery. It’s an idea that could have been exploitative, manipulative or literal-minded. But because Mr. Rakowitz—along with SPACES staff and Tamir [Rice’s] family, who are involved in the project—lets these objects accumulate with minimal intervention, it’s a pure precipitation of frustration and grief.” - Will Heinrich, “Cleveland Triennial Is An Artistic Scavenger Hunt With Civic Pride,” *The New York Times* (August 13, 2018)

“An important contribution SPACES provides is initiatives in social justice and community action. In addition to the Satellite Fund, SPACES is launching the Urgent Art Fund which finances art responding to political or cultural concerns.” - Kealey Boyd, “The Andy Warhol Foundation Is Expanding Its National Reach,” *Hyperallergic* (December 12, 2018)

## WE ALSO...

Announced **2** new opportunities—The Urgent Art Fund and The Satellite Fund—through which we will distribute **\$85,000** to **15** local artists to create new projects for display in Cuyahoga County in **2019**.

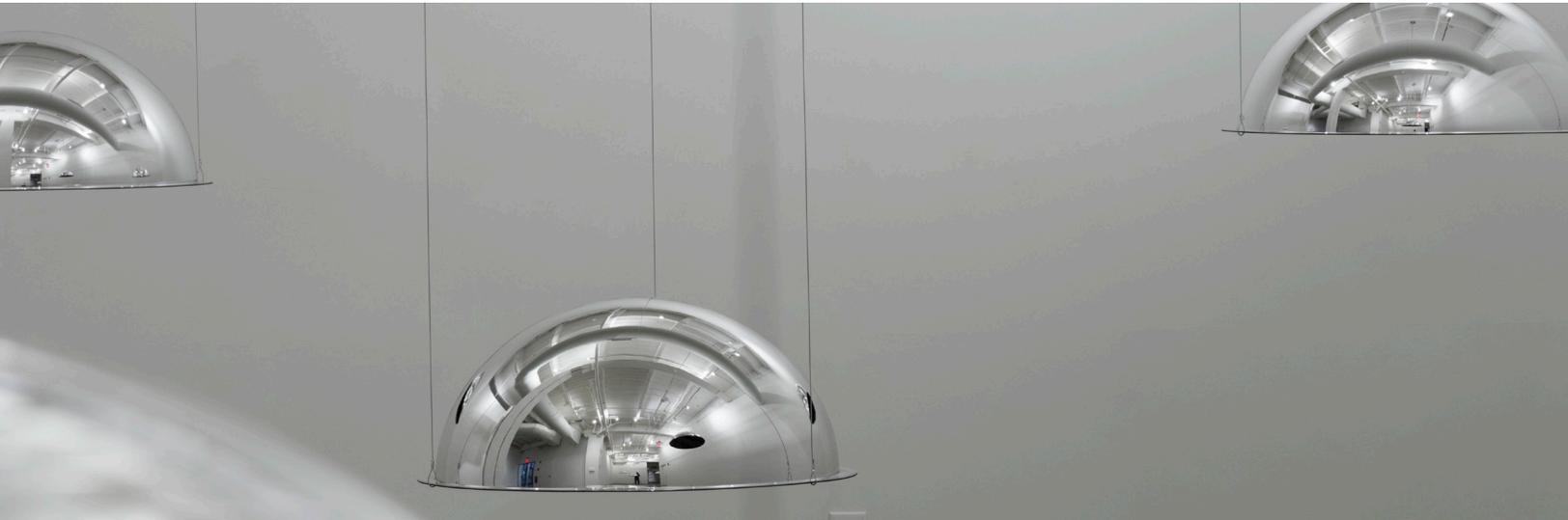
Received over **40** press mentions in local, national, and international publications for our summer exhibition and citywide participatory project, *A Color Removed*. We also donated **7** collection bins, which were an integral part of the exhibition, to The Tamir Rice Foundation of Cleveland.

Accepted **88** applications from artists who proposed to participate in our **2020** exhibition and residency program.

Collaborated with **4** partners—Haven Home, Art House, Talespinner children’s Theatre, and Ground Works—to provide programming to **33** homeless women and children.

Commissioned **8** artists to make new projects about transportation alternatives and neighborhood cohesion through Hingetown Culture Works—a neighborhood alliance spearheaded by SPACES and comprised of **10** partners.

# NEW COMMISSIONS: SWAP



Mahwish Chishty, *Naming the Dead*, photograph courtesy of Jerry Mann



Ward Shelley, *Office in the Flats, Cleveland* installed in *20/20 Hindsight = 40 Years*, photograph courtesy of Jerry Mann



Michael Rakowitz, *A Color Removed* donation bin, photograph courtesy of FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art

# NEW COMMISSIONS: SWAP

The SPACES World Artists Program (SWAP) supports artists in the creation, presentation, and discussion of new work through a 2-month residency that culminates in an exhibition.

## ***Naming the Dead, Mahwish Chishty (Kent, OH)***

Representing a major departure from her traditional practice as a miniature painter, Mahwish Chishty's *Naming the Dead* project was a sound installation that aimed to create a connection between US citizens and Pakistani civilians killed by US drone strikes. Chishty worked with community members and students in the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center to read the names of the dead for the audio component.

## ***Back Office, in the Flats, Cleveland, Ward Shelley (Easton, CT)***

Ward Shelley's initial SWAP residency at SPACES in 2015 culminated in *The Last Library*, comprised of nearly 4,000 unwritten books with crowd-sourced titles and authors. Just as *The Last Library* formed a portrait of Cleveland at that specific moment, Shelley likewise created during his return residency a new perspective on the city—as part of SPACES' 40th anniversary exhibition, *20/20 Hindsight = 40 Years*—by organizing a mass of interrelated facts, assumptions, and personal observations in a walk-through diorama. His editorial process of inclusion and redaction touched on the infrastructure, philanthropy, topography, and economic forces that are unique to Cleveland.

## ***A Color Removed, a participatory project conceived by Michael Rakowitz (Chicago, IL) and presented at SPACES for the FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art***

In collaboration with local artists, community leaders, and the Tamir Rice family, Michael Rakowitz asked us to bear witness to the distinctly American catastrophe of disintegrating police/community relations by removing orange—a symbol of safety—from the city. A response to the murder of Tamir Rice by Cleveland police, this project instrumentalized art in a time of crisis, with the installation of collection bins in public locations across the city, an extensive calendar of events, and the commissioning of local artists of color, to allow Cuyahoga County residents to self-organize for positive change.

## ***It's not what it looks like: An audio guide to getting lost, James Webb (Cape Town, South Africa)***

During his residency at SPACES, artist James Webb created an immersive installation, working with sound and form, to investigate cultural displacement and the public voice. The culminating exhibition explored ideas of reorientation and rejuvenation through Webb's personal studies and collaborative experiences in Cleveland. As the art and architecture critic of *The Plain Dealer* noted, the exhibition included “a series of six restrained and minimal installations that provoke unsettling meditations on science, religion, politics and psychology.”

## ***Art-Writer-In-Residence Bean Gilsdorf (Portland, OR)***

Bean Gilsdorf's research and writing focused on Cleveland's history and how it is connected to the art produced in the city today, especially by women. Her writing on the Cleveland art scene appeared in SFMOMA Open Space and she also reported on the FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art during her residency.

# NEW COMMISSIONS: R&D



School group visiting Julia Christensen's *Waiting for a Break*, photograph courtesy of SPACES



*20/20 Hindsight = 40 Years*, photograph courtesy of Jerry Mann



RA Washington, *Glenville Service* displayed in *A Color Removed*, photograph courtesy of Jerry Mann

# NEW COMMISSIONS: R&D

The R&D program invites cultural producers to articulate their investigation of ideas through a supported project that may take the form of solo, collaborative, or curated endeavors.

## ***Waiting for a Break*, Julia Christensen (Oberlin, OH)**

Julia Christensen encouraged conversation around climate change and its effects on Lake Erie. Her interdisciplinary project allowed viewers to experience the lake's nuanced winter drama via live feeds displayed within SPACES' gallery, projected onto the street, and within Cleveland's Public Square (through a collaboration with LAND Studio). *The Plain Dealer's* review of Christensen's project was one of the publisher's most read online articles of the year, and the project was featured in *Pacific Standard*, in an article by former SPACES Art Writer-in-Residence, Jillian Steinhauer.

## ***20/20 Hindsight = 40 Years*, curated by Susan Channing (Cleveland, OH), Christopher Lynn (Salt Lake City, UT), James Rosenberger (Cincinnati, OH), and Christina Vassallo (Cleveland, OH)**

Four of SPACES' past and present executive directors invited the participation of 17 artists and collectives, each of whom were seminal to their artistic direction while at the helm. Artists were commissioned to create new works for the show or contribute variations on recent works. This acclaimed 40th anniversary exhibition was a re-evaluation of SPACES' impact on artists and where the organization stands today within the context of alternative art spaces nationwide.

## ***A Color Removed*, Michael Rakowitz (Chicago, IL)**

A key component of this citywide intervention, conceived by visiting artist Michael Rakowitz, was a group exhibition of newly commissioned works by local artists Amber N. Ford, Amanda King and Shooting Without Bullets youth photographers, M. Carmen Lane, and RA Washington. Their installations commented on the vulnerability of black women navigating the intersecting oppressions of race, gender, and socioeconomic status; the cumulative impact of racialized violence; and the shared responsibility of improving our community.

## ***Forgetting Lessons*, Sarah Kabot (Cleveland, OH)**

Sarah Kabot developed an intimate take on the news as raw material with her intricate collages and large-scale sculptures. The works in *Forgetting Lessons* reflected on how the media influences the inevitable distortions and omissions occurring in the public recollection of news events.



Sarah Kabot, *Forgetting Lessons*, photograph courtesy of Rustin McCann

# NEW COMMISSIONS: THE VAULT



Alison O'Daniel, *The Tuba Thieves* displayed in *Interpretation / Clarification*, image courtesy of the artist



Kevin Jerome Everson, *ninety-three* displayed in *20/20 Hindsight = 40 Years*, image courtesy of the artist



Dustin Grella, *Animation Hotline*, image courtesy of the artist

# NEW COMMISSIONS: THE VAULT

The Vault functions as an intimate setting where audiences can experience a variety of video and audio art. Curated selections are added to The Vault on a quarterly basis.

## ***Interpretation / Clarification*, curated by Zak Long (San Francisco, CA)**

The delivery of information online increasingly favors speed over accuracy. We're not always getting the full picture when it comes to how we're perceiving it for the first time. The videos in *Interpretation / Clarification* explored the ways we interpret information through storytelling, performance or visual cues. Participating artists include: Christina Corfield (Oakland, CA), Zak Long (San Francisco, CA), Tim Marshall (Australia), Alison O'Daniel (Los Angeles, CA), Renee Rhodes (San Francisco, CA), and Erin Robinson Grant (Portland, OR).

## ***20/20 Hindsight = 40 Years*, curated by Susan Channing (Cleveland, OH), Christopher Lynn (Salt Lake City, UT), James Rosenberger (Cincinnati, OH), and Christina Vassallo (Cleveland, OH)**

In a rare alignment of SPACES' 3 major programs—The Vault, SWAP, and R&D—we celebrated an incredible 40 years of artistic exploration and experimentation. This presentation of The Vault included video works by 12 individual artists and collectives who had previously shown at SPACES over our 40 year history, including: Margaret Cogswell (New York, NY); James Duesing (Pittsburgh, PA); Kevin Jerome Everson (Charlottesville, VA); Dustin Grella (Bronx, NY); Anna Viola Hallberg (Stockholm, Sweden); Ben Kinsley & Jessica Langley (Colorado Springs, CO); Sarah Paul (Cleveland, OH); Corrie Slawson (Cleveland, OH), Amber J. Anderson (Cleveland, OH) & Elena Harvey Collins (Santa Cruz, CA); and Jud Yalkut (d. Cincinnati, OH).

## ***Animation Hotline*, Dustin Grella (Bronx, NY)**

Akron native Dustin Grella is an animator and documentary filmmaker whose work inserts colorful insight into the seemingly mundane. His films have screened at festivals worldwide, including the Cannes Film Festival and the Ottawa International Animation Festival. For this project he created animations of our visitors' favorite SPACES stories, collected during the 40th anniversary exhibition earlier in the year.



Sarah Paul, *Little Miss Cleveland Approved Message* displayed in *20/20 Hindsight = 40 Years*, image courtesy of the artist

# CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT



A young participant in “Baby It’s Cold Outside,” image courtesy of SPACES



Hands-on art-making workshop with residents of A Place for Us, image courtesy of SPACES



“Holistic Safety & Black Liberation,” a community-driven event during *A Color Removed*, image courtesy of SPACES

# CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

**SPACES** brings experimental art directly to community members who either can't easily get to us or who prefer to experience art outside of the gallery setting.

## **Empowering Youth Through Art**

We work with schools, universities, and organizations with youth programming to connect groups to SPACES for age-appropriate activities. Through *Create it Forward*, we introduced students in the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention to professional artists, who teach them art-making skills. The students, in turn, gave their art projects to low-income hospice care patients at Malachi House. *Write, Rinse, Repeat* is an annual project that encourages the use of art to make statements of empowerment for groups like Bellefaire JCB's Social Advocates for Youth. Finally, school-aged kids told us what they really think about the exhibitions at SPACES in *Kid Art Reviews*.

## **SPACES In The Community**

In 2018 we offered arts programming at 6 key sites throughout the greater Cleveland area, to make the ideas our artists explored and our mission more accessible, including: A Place for Us, Malachi Center, Lakeview Terrace (Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority), YWCA of Greater Cleveland, Haven Home, and Applewood Center at Jones Home.

## **SPACES For Artists**

Hingetown Culture Works is a neighborhood alliance supporting the commissioning, coordination, and implementation of cultural activities that serve the diverse populations living in and visiting this area of Ohio City. Spearheaded by SPACES, additional members include representatives from The Music Settlement, Cleveland Museum of Art, Transformer Station, Hingetown LLC, LAND studio, Ohio City Incorporated, ICA - Art Conservation, Cleveland Tea Revival, Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, and local residents. Additionally, in 2018 SPACES developed efforts to support artists making projects in the public realm through The Urgent Art Fund and The Satellite Fund, which will materialize in 2019 at sites throughout Cuyahoga County.



Joey Strunk, *Open Book*, commissioned by Hingetown Culture Works for Open Streets, image courtesy of SPACES

# STRATEGIC PLAN

The SPACES strategic planning process was focused on gaining clear stakeholder insight, developing a vision for our role on the world stage, and developing a practical implementation plan.

SPACES has experienced significant growth and change since our 2010 Strategic Plan, including a new Executive Director and Board President; real estate acquisition, renovation, and relocation; the establishment of a Creative Engagement Campaign; greater visibility in the community; and resulting need for expanded staff structure. Our ongoing capital campaign has led to heightened interest in SPACES, taking the form of new institutional partnerships, increased press coverage, the backing of local and statewide elected officials, and the largest gifts in our history. Externally, events over the past several years in Cleveland have contributed to a national acknowledgment of the dynamic community in which we live, presenting an opportune time to further the development of our mission.

As we celebrated our 40th anniversary in 2018, SPACES board and staff endeavored to develop a useable plan that will guide us into 2022. Working with local firm Strategy Design Partners, SPACES developed an actionable strategic plan that focuses on:

- **Redesigning our programming model** to balance residencies, exhibitions, and community engagement efforts that better position SPACES as a resource for both artists and audience members.
- **Reorganizing our governance and staffing models** to support the growth and long-term sustainability of the organization.
- **Rebuilding our organizational brand** by creating compelling communication channels that activate diverse audiences locally and globally.

The full strategic plan can be accessed online: [bit.ly/SPACES2019strategicplan](https://bit.ly/SPACES2019strategicplan)



*Interplay performance during James Webb's It's not what it looks like, image courtesy of Marissa Glorioso*

# HOW WE DID IT

OVER  
**\$114,000**

PAID DIRECTLY TO  
ARTISTS

**34%**

OF ALL  
EXPENSES WERE  
FOR PUBLIC  
PROGRAMS

**20%**

INCREASE IN  
OPERATING REVENUE  
FROM 2017

**44%**

INCREASE IN  
GRANT  
REVENUE

## INCOME

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Grants	\$440,558
Net Assets (grants booked in previous years, released in 2018)	\$105,717
Individual + Corporate Contributions	\$32,028
Donated Goods & Services	\$16,497
Special Events	\$61,709
Artwork Sales	\$15,216
Facility Income + Other	\$9,468

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TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	\$681,193
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## EXPENSES

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Occupancy	\$106,829
Administrative	\$87,312
Personnel	\$181,521
Program Services	\$82,177
Artist Salaries & Commissions	\$114,142

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TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$571,981
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# COULDN'T HAVE SAID IT BETTER...

Each year we honor outstanding individuals who have made SPACES a better place for all of us. In 2018, one of our honorees, Peter Galvin, reminded us of our humble beginnings.

In the late 1970s, our company bought the Stouffer Building at 1375 Euclid Avenue. That building, 40 years later, is now known as "Ideastream." I was in charge of leasing the building and my partners never really knew how I went about filling up the vacant space.

We were about to lose the building, as the rent roll wasn't sufficient to cover the mortgage payments. We made an arrangement with our lender, that if we were able to increase the rent roll in two years, we could keep the building; otherwise, our loan would be foreclosed. Further, any extra income we received during that period had to be paid to the lender.

This gave us the opportunity to be very creative in structuring deals. We could give free rent during that two-year period, which would enable newer entities like SPACES to get started, using their working capital for costs other than rent.

We also began to feel that if we could start to bring the arts back to Playhouse Square, it would help us with our rental program. So, by giving two years of free rent, we helped start NOVA (New Organization for the Visual Arts); The School of Cleveland Ballet (which became the Cleveland Ballet Company); Nina Gibans' Cleveland Area Arts Council, which was responsible for eight downtown murals; The Center-Rep Theatre Company; and An Alternative Space for the Arts, which became known as SPACES. Free rent was the early incentive to get each of these organizations off their feet. Playhouse Square was reborn and SPACES was one of the early players.

Here we are today, 40 years later, and, other than Playhouse Square, the only one of these organizations that is still alive and well is SPACES, and I'm really very proud that we helped them get going.

- Peter Galvin, November 3, 2018



2018 SPACES guests of honor, Barbara & Peter Galvin and Marilyn Ladd-Simmons, with Christina Vassallo and Mark Simmons, image courtesy of Jerry Mann

# BELIEVERS IN SPACES INCLUDE:

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS** Amber J. Anderson | Elizabeth Brooks | Jeffrey Chiplis | Michael Christoff | Lisa Holly | Samuel Hubish | Mimi Kato | Per Knutås | Qian Li | Shannon V. McCue | Deidre McPherson | Angelica Pozo | Eric Rippert | Kristin Rogers | Hilary Spittle | Thomas Starinsky, Board President | David Tarditi, Treasurer | Arnie Tunstall | Christina Turner, Secretary | Laila Voss **STAFF** Karl Anderson, Program Coordinator | Megan Young, Program Coordinator | Michelle Epps, Community Engagement Coordinator | Lauren Davies, Development Assistant | Sarah Oles, Deputy Director | Christina Vassallo, Executive + Artistic Director

**FOUNDATION & GOVERNMENT FUNDERS** The City of Cleveland's Cable Television Minority Arts & Education Fund | The Cleveland Foundation | Cuyahoga Arts & Culture | Eaton Charitable Fund | Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation | FRONT International | The George Gund Foundation | Leonard Krieger Fund at the Cleveland Foundation | John P. Murphy Foundation | National Endowment for the Arts | The Nord Family Foundation | Ohio Arts Council | Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors: NoVo SEL Fund | The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts **MAJOR DONORS** James S. Anderson & David W. Wittkowsky | Jeffrey & Cynthia Chiplis | Rebecca Dunn | Howard Freedman & Rita Montlack | Peter & Barbara Galvin | Stewart & Donna Kohl Fund at the Cleveland Foundation | Toby Lewis Philanthropic Fund | Linda & Jack Lissauer, M.D. | Mandel Foundation | Shannon V. McCue | Charles & Patricia Mintz | Ohio Savings Bank | Shannahley Foundation | Joan Tomkins & William Busta | Wood-Lee International Art Handler **FRIENDS** Pete & Donna Anderson | Michael & Sherle Berger Foundation | Timothy C. Beyer Fund | Fred & Laura Ruth Bidwell | Elizabeth Brooks | Thomas Buford & Diane Fedak | Joseph D. Carney & Associates | Maria Cashy | Thomas & Anita Cook | John Corlett | Carol Farver & Robert Needlman | Jim & Cynthia Gascoigne | M. Gentile Studios, Inc. | Paula Grooms & William Kvorlak | Tom & Kirsten Hagesfeld | HEDGE Gallery | Samuel Hubish | Per Knutås & Tim Young | Joyce L. Leighton | Jonathan Logan & Scott Shafer | Christopher & Dr. Gaylee McCracken | Srinivas & Jessica Merugu | Paula Mindes | Montlack Realty, LLC | Susan Murray & Donald E. Harvey | Gosta & Ninna Pettersson | Kristin Rogers & Pita Brooks | Robert & Margo Roth | Karen Sandstrom & Carlo Wolff | Terry Schwarz & Peter Bohan | Hilary & Jim Spittle | Thomas & Katharyne Starinsky | David Tarditi | Christina & Daniel Turner | vocon. | Jeanne & Patrick Walker **COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS** Bigmouth Donut Company | Blick Art Materials | City Roast Coffee | The Cleveland Bagel Co. | Dave's Markets | The Distillata Company | FORM | Great Lakes Brewing Company | Jerry Mann Photography | L'Nique Specialty Linen Rental | Marigold Catering + Events | Mason's Creamery | Mitchell's Ice Cream | OYO/Midwest Spirits | Riot Creative Imaging | Step2 | Vedda Printing+ | WONGFACE



SPACES Is 40 & Fabulous, image courtesy of Jerry Mann