

**Executive Director**  
**Museum of Nebraska Art, Kearney, NE**  
[www.mona.unk.edu/mona](http://www.mona.unk.edu/mona)



The Museum of Nebraska Art, (MONA), in Kearney, Nebraska, with a mission to celebrate the history of Nebraska's visual art for diverse audiences, seeks a dynamic and engaging new Executive Director with a passion for regional art, strong management and fundraising skills, the capacity to inspire and support a dedicated staff, the desire to serve as the public face of the museum, and the ability to establish and implement a vision for MONA and lead the organization into the future. MONA opened in 1986 and is the only museum exclusively dedicated to telling the story of Nebraska through the art of the state, and by extension it also tells the story of America. The museum is housed in Kearney's 1911 Post Office, a neoclassical building listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which was expanded in 1991 to accommodate MONA's growing collection. The 38,000 square foot space includes galleries for permanent collections and changing exhibitions, education and program space, a library and research center, sculpture garden, and museum shop.

The collection of over 5,000 works by artists of local, national, and international acclaim reflects nearly 200 years of history. MONA serves as the cultural center for Nebraska art and artists by providing quality exhibitions and programs to audiences in Kearney and statewide. Approximately 21,000 people visit the museum each year—admission is always free—and an additional 22,000 participate in its outreach programs. MONA is a private nonprofit museum affiliated with the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK). MONA has an operating budget of \$1.5M, a \$4.4M endowment, and a staff of 7 full time and 8 part time employees.

**Opportunities of the Position**

- Lead a museum that is unique in its focus on art and artists connected to Nebraska, is in a strong and stable financial position, and has exciting plans for the future. Guide the development and implementation of these plans.
- Oversee a robust and growing collection that serves as the basis for an ambitious exhibit schedule.
- Explore options for reaching new audiences locally and statewide through the development of new programs or events.
- Partner with UNK faculty and administrators to strengthen and expand the connection between the two organizations.
- Lead and inspire a hardworking and dedicated group of staff and volunteers.
- Be part of a community that works collaboratively to support the arts and culture and has a strong philanthropic presence; be part of the statewide arts community as well.
- Live and work in a safe, family-friendly university community with a diverse and thriving economy, excellent school and healthcare systems, and opportunities for both cultural and outdoor recreation.

## **Principal Responsibilities**

### ***Administration***

Based on the MONA's Institutional Plan, develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to assure quality programming, local and statewide involvement, strong finances, and positive Board, University, staff, and community relationships.

- Develop and implement policies and procedures affecting all areas of the museum.
- Develop and monitor the museum's operating budget.
- Hire and supervise paid and volunteer staff, ensuring that sound policies and procedures are in place and followed.
- Attend Board, Committee, Guild, and ad hoc committee meetings, and serve as a liaison among the groups.
- In collaboration with appropriate staff at UNK, ensure that MONA has a strong buildings and grounds management plan that includes long-term and regular maintenance needs.
- Work closely with MONA's Board and UNK administration to develop a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship.
- Keep current on existing and prospective legal issues affecting museums and their donors and with best practices in the museum profession.

### ***Collections***

Provide for the stewardship of the collection in accordance with the highest professional standards.

- Develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures for acquisition and deaccession.
- Supervise research on collection artists and artworks.
- With the appropriate committee(s), identify and work to obtain new acquisitions.

### ***Exhibition, Interpretation, Education***

Lead the development of exhibition, programming, and interpretive philosophies and strategies and oversee their implementation.

- With staff, establish a well rounded and attainable exhibition schedule, with accompanying programs, both in-house and outreach.
- Support staff in the development of exhibitions, educational programs, interpretive materials, and publications.
- With staff, evaluate all exhibitions and programming.

### ***Marketing and Development***

With staff and appropriate Board members and committees, create development and marketing plans. Assist with implementation as needed.

- Develop relationships with donors, including individuals, corporations, foundations, and government agencies. With the Board, identify and cultivate new potential donors.
- With the Director of Development, create a fundraising plan. Seek out grants, sponsorships, and donations for general operations, special programming, and endowment.
- With the Marketing Coordinator, develop an annual marketing plan. Assist with writing appropriate promotional materials as needed.
- Serve as a spokesperson and advocate for the museum locally and statewide to enrich MONA's public image and expand awareness and support.

## **Required Knowledge, Experience, and Abilities**

- Master's degree in Museum Studies/Arts Administration or similar field, with a background in art history. Knowledge of American art preferred.
- Minimum of five years' leadership experience in an art museum or similar setting. Experience in a community-based or regional museum desirable. Familiarity with academic museums helpful but not required.
- Demonstrated leadership skills, including the ability to establish a vision for the museum, and the practical knowledge to implement it.
- Outstanding verbal and written communication skills.
- Excellent organizational and planning skills; ability to manage multiple complex projects simultaneously.
- Ability to manage, inspire, and motivate staff and create a collaborative, team-oriented work environment.

- Strong financial management skills.
- Ability to identify and cultivate funding sources; experience with capital campaigns helpful.
- Knowledge of current trends in marketing and public relations, including the use of social media.
- Familiar with facilities management; experience with building expansion and renovation a plus.
- Ability and desire to represent the museum in the community and across the state and collaborate with local, statewide, and national organizations.
- Knowledge of best practices in the museum profession.
- Willingness to travel regularly to the state capital, Lincoln, and to Omaha to attend events and meet with supporters, donors, and government leaders.

## More about MONA and UNK

### MONA

The museum’s history dates to 1976, when the Nebraska Art Collection Board of Directors began with fewer than 30 pieces of art and a dream to create a collection to celebrate Nebraska’s unique artistic heritage. In 1979 the Nebraska Legislature recognized the fledgling collection as the official collection of the state. A national endorsement came later that year when the NEA provided funds to broaden the collection to include the work of contemporary artists. A locally initiated effort to provide a home for the collection culminated in the purchase and renovation of the 1911 Kearney Post Office. The Museum of Nebraska Art (MONA) opened to the public in October 1986. Today MONA collects, preserves, researches, exhibits, and interprets the work of artists who were born, lived, trained, or worked in Nebraska or who created artworks that reflect the culture of Nebraska.

**MONA’s permanent collection reflects the history and culture of the state** and includes paintings, works on paper, photographs, sculpture, textiles, collage, and archival and ephemera materials. Works range from 19<sup>th</sup>-century artist-explorers like George Catlin, Albert Bierstadt, and Thomas Worthington Whittredge to the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century American master and Cozad, NE resident Robert Henri, to American regionalist Thomas Hart Benton. Contemporary Nebraska artists represent a significant and growing part of the collection. MONA also owns one of the nation’s premier collections of wildlife art by John James Audubon. Native American materials include 19<sup>th</sup>-century objects created and used by the tribes of the Great Plains as well as works by living Native American artists. The Cliff Hillegass Sculpture Garden provides a quiet spot to enjoy the outdoor sculpture collection. A \$2.6M endowment fund designated for acquisitions enables MONA to regularly acquire new works.



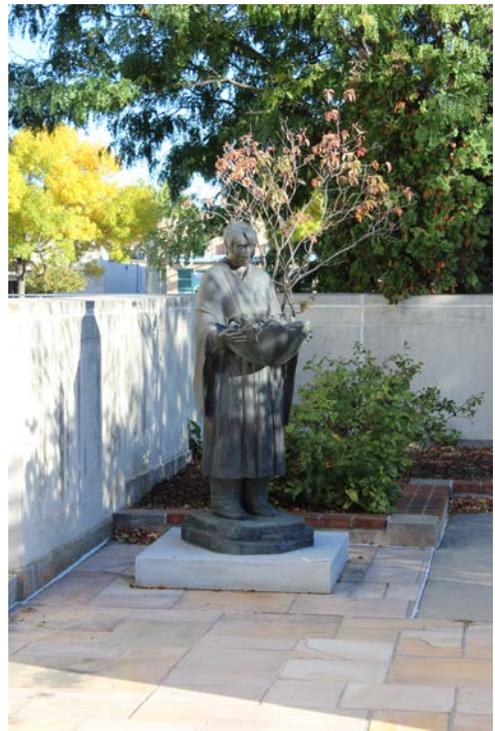
*Clouds Coming Over the Plains*, n.d. Albert Bierstadt.



*Buffalo and Sunflower*, 1946.  
Thomas Hart Benton.  
(Illustration for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of Francis Parkman’s *The Oregon Trail*.)



*Joan and Dix (Eulabee Dix's children)*, 1918. Eulabee Dix, one of a group of women artists who were instrumental in the miniature revival at the turn of the 20th century.



*Beauty of the Harvest*, 1995. Martha Pettigrew, in the Cliff Hillegass Sculpture Garden.



*Vernon*, c. 1946-50. William E. Artis, born in North Carolina and taught art at Chadron State College, Chadron, NE.



*Hastings Visit to the Great Plains*, 1979. Sheila Hicks, Nebraska native and internationally renowned fiber artist.

**MONA serves visitors onsite and through outreach with a variety of offerings.** The active **exhibition program** of approximately 20 shows annually includes long-term and changing exhibits that highlight the permanent collection, materials on loan from other museums, and works by living artists from across the state. The **Nebraska Now** changing exhibition series features works of contemporary artists. A new series, **Compelled to Tell**, explores what drives artists to create. To reach residents outside of Kearney, **ARTreach** makes exhibitions of original works from the permanent collection and interpretive information available to venues throughout the state. The program typically reaches two dozen communities annually and is often the only chance that residents of rural areas have to experience a museum exhibit. Selected Nebraska artists and craftspeople also sell their works in the Anne Thorne Weaver Museum Shop, a favorite shopping spot for locals and visitors.

**Many MONA exhibitions offer students a chance to display their art or to curate an exhibit.** At the **Student Art Show**, held each spring, MONA highlights the creativity of artists in grades K – 12 from Kearney and surrounding school districts. An opening reception brings relatives and friends of the student artists to MONA; for many it is their first visit to a museum. The recent exhibit *Kindred* featured the work of UNK’s Art and Design program faculty, emeriti, alumni, and students. An auction of the artists’ works helped raise money for the program. The **Junior Curator program** enables a select group of high school students to work with MONA staff to create an exhibit of artworks drawn from MONA’s collection.



*Dwayne Wilcox: Visual/Language* featured the work of Oglala Lakota tribe member Dwayne Wilcox.



*Adornment* examined how individuals and communities can alter their appearances through art.



Works by 2016 recipients of the NE Arts Council Visual Artist Fellowships.



A young visitor and his grandfather enjoy the art.

**Programs and classes**, both in-house and off-site serve all ages. Several thousand school students from Kearney and the surrounding communities visit the museum annually for tours and hands-on activities led by MONA's dedicated group of docents. For those who can't visit the museum, a series of lesson plans that meet state curriculum standards are available to teachers. MONA's smart phone App also provides additional information on some items in the collection. Adult programs include *Collection Connection*, which explores various aspects of the permanent collection; *Not Just A Book Club*, and the *MONA Showcase* series, which features visual, performing and literary artists. For those who just can't make it to a program, videos of many are available through iTunes. Art classes for adults and children offer a chance to create your own work of art. Scholarships are available for students who may need them. The Cliff Hillegass Sculpture Garden provides the perfect setting for the *Sounds of Summer* concert series.



Students enjoy a tour led by a museum docent.



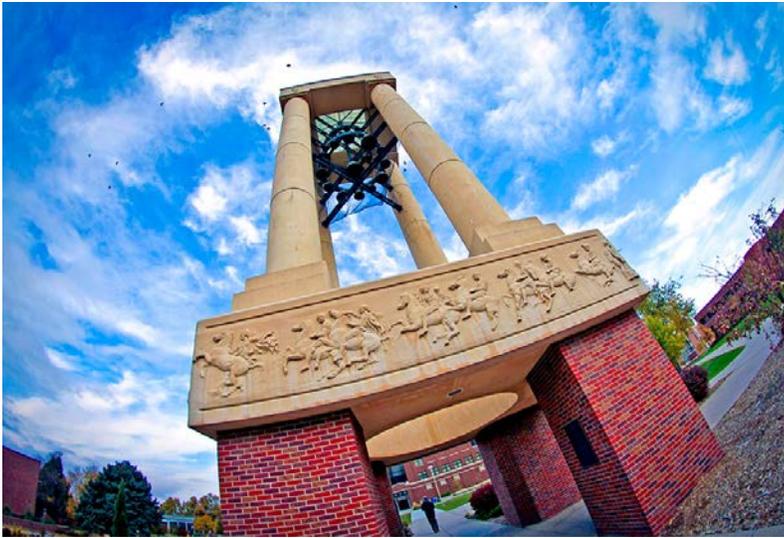
A young scholar studies the art.

**Special Events and support groups regularly raise funds for MONA** The biennial fundraiser **Spirit: A Celebration of Art in the Heartland**, is a weekend of spirited events celebrating the art of Nebraska and featuring the work of Nebraska's finest artists. 2019 marked the inaugural **MONA Goes...** event—in this case MONA went West to North Platte—where arts organizations in other parts of the state partner with MONA to host a daylong celebration of art and artists in their region. The **Bison Society** is dedicated to understanding life in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Nebraska by supporting research relating to American artistic discovery and revelation in that era. MONA's **Guild** supports and promotes the museum through educational programming, fundraising, social events, and promoting public awareness.



*Spirit* attendees examine a work of art during the auction preview.

## The University of Nebraska at Kearney



Founded in 1903, UNK is one of four distinct university campuses comprising the University of Nebraska system. The student population of approximately 4,500 undergraduate and 1,800 graduate students includes scholars from over 50 nations. MONA and UNK are closely connected; UNK contributes approximately \$345,000 in direct and indirect support of MONA's operating budget annually, and eligible MONA staff members enjoy UNK's extensive benefit plan.

*Left:* The Bell Tower on the UNK campus. Photo courtesy of UNK.



MONA also partners with faculty and students in the Art and Design Department, a part of the College of Arts and Sciences, to offer classes, internships, exhibitions, performances, and other opportunities. MONA and UNK officials are currently exploring ways to strengthen the bond to further benefit both organizations.

*Left:* Students in a printmaking class taught by Professor Victoria Goro-Rapoport create art in one of the Art & Design Department studios. Photo courtesy of UNK.

To learn more about UNK, visit [www.unk.edu](http://www.unk.edu).

## More about Kearney and the Region



**Kearney, located on the scenic Platte River in the center of America's heartland, is a vibrant community of more than 35,000 people. It often makes national "top places to live" thanks to a great quality of life.**

Kearney offers excellent public and private school options, diverse neighborhoods, two major healthcare facilities, a thriving economy, and numerous cultural and recreational opportunities. Kearney is looking ahead and growing but is passionate about preserving its traditions.



The Bricks—Kearney’s historic business district—still has its original brick paving stones, and its businesses and restaurants welcome residents and visitors. Whether you like ethnic food, international cuisine, or local specialties, you will find it, along with breweries and tap houses. Community events like *Rockin’ the Bricks Summer Concert Series*, *Trick-or-Treating on the Bricks*, *Holiday Open House*, *Shop Small Saturday*, *the Christmas Walk*, and other public events also take place there.

*Downtown Kearney at Dawn.* Photo by Andrea Kelley.

Kearney is a 1½-hour drive from the state Capital, Lincoln, and 3 hours from Omaha, the largest city, with a population of close to 500,000. To the west, Denver is a half-hour flight away for a weekend getaway and easy air access to cities on either coast. To the southeast, Kansas City is a five-hour drive away.

**Kearney residents are enthusiastic supporters of the arts, and the city is home to a variety of organizations and venues that offer cultural opportunities. Museums include something for everyone.** If history is your thing, be sure to visit UNK’s [G.W. Frank Museum of History and Culture](#), a Richardsonian Romanesque mansion designed by local architect G.W. Frank, Jr. in 1890 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. [The Archway](#), an interactive family-friendly museum, pays tribute to the pioneers who passed through Nebraska on the Oregon Trail. The [Buffalo County Trails and Rails Museum](#) also explores the great transportation routes of the past. Nearby [Fort Kearny](#) was a stage station, home station for the Pony Express, and outfitting depot for Indian campaigns. Children will enjoy the [Kearney Area Children's Museum](#) and the Nebraska Wildlife Encounter-Zoozeum. You don’t have to travel too far to find quality art museums; both the [Joslyn Art Museum](#) in Omaha and the [Sheldon Museum of Art](#) in Lincoln have connections to MONA.

**Performance venues** include the [Merryman Performing Arts Center](#) and [The Viaero Center](#), which also has skating and hockey rinks. The [Crane River Theater](#), [Kearney Community Theatre](#), [Kearney Concert Association](#), and the [Kearney Symphony Orchestra](#), affiliated with UNK, offer a range of theatrical and musical performances. The [Kearney Arts Council](#) promotes the arts in the community through free summer concerts in the park, scholarships for art students, and funding for local arts events. It also maintains a calendar of arts events.



A performance of *Seussical the Musical* by the Crane River Theater.

**For outdoor lovers**, the City of Kearney features over 18 miles of trails for walking, rollerblading, mountain biking or wildlife viewing as well as the Kearney Water Trail, a 2.3-mile float down the Kearney Canal. City parks offer disc golf, water parks, sport complexes, and golf courses. The Kearney Farmers' Market offers fresh produce, baked goods, and other treats in the summer months. For six weeks each year, from late February to early April, more than 80% of the world's population of Sandhill Cranes converges on the Platte River, making Kearney the Sandhill Crane Capital of the world and a destination for thousands of visitors who come to see them. The [Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary](#) is a prime viewing spot.



Sandhill Cranes at Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary.



The City's [Yanney Heritage Park](#) offers outdoor art, gardens, walking trails, a playground and splash pad, fishing, a marina with access to the water trail, an overlook tower, an amphitheater, an Environmental Resource Center, Kearney's Senior Activity Center, and more.

**To learn more about Kearney**, see the [Kearney Visitors Bureau](#), the [Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce](#) or the [City of Kearney](#). For more about Nebraska, see [www.visitnebraska.com](http://www.visitnebraska.com).

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### **To apply for the position:**

**Apply via email** with cover letter, résumé, salary requirement, and names and contact information for three professional references to Executive Search Consultant Gail Nessell Colglazier at [gncolglazier@gmail.com](mailto:gncolglazier@gmail.com).

**Application deadline: August 12, 2019.** It is the policy of UNK not to discriminate based upon age, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, pregnancy, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, veteran's status, marital status, religion or political affiliation. UNK is an Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity employer. Veterans and persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

**Nominations are welcome.** Please send names of potential candidates to [gncolglazier@gmail.com](mailto:gncolglazier@gmail.com).