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Krasl Art Center | 707 Lake Boulevard St. Joseph, MI 49085 | 269-983-0271

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## Who we are; what we do

“We wanted to do something for the community and to make life more worthwhile. I’m happy to be able to do this”, Olga Krasl.

The foundation of the Krasl Art Center is based on celebrating people’s creative expression and providing opportunities for all people in our community to explore, learn and discover creativity. Beginning with the first Art Fair on the Bluff (1962), to the first Art Center (purchased in 1972) to the building of the Krasl Art Center as we know it today in (1980), the organization has sought ways to bring people and art together.

Arts and cultural are essential to strong communities, rich lives and an appreciation for diverse culture. Krasl Art Center strives to help all people find an avenue for creative exploration.

## Collect Art

The Krasl Art Center currently boasts a collection of 40 objects; 27 of which are sculptural works of art placed in public spaces in communities throughout Berrien County. Featured artists include Dale Chihuly whose sculpture *Beacon Gold Chandelier* welcomes guests to the Krasl Art Center, Richard Hunt’s *And You, Seas* is a monumental sculpture which has become an icon for the lakefront community and George Rickey, whose dynamic *Three Lines Diagonal* delights passers by in Lake Bluff Park.

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-Olga Krasl



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### Show Art

Temporary exhibitions are featured in the KAC galleries five to six times a year. Exhibitions are selected for their artistic integrity, ability to inspire local community, educational merit and diversity of style and origin.

The **artlab** inside the Krasl Art Center is a space dedicated to bringing art off the walls and off the pedestal. The **artlab** fosters experimentation and introduces the local art community to current trends in the visual arts including sound, light and multimedia presentations.

Krasl Art Center works as a public sculpture advocate; placing artwork on loan in public spaces throughout the cities of St. Joseph and Benton Harbor. Public art improves people's sense of civic pride; acts as an economic driver, promotes cultural tourism and creates a unique sense of place. It is free to the public, fosters outdoor recreational activities and provides unique experiences to individuals and groups.

### Make Art

Regardless of background, people connect to one another and to the world around them through creative expression. Krasl Art Center provides hands-on artmaking experiences and creative expression in its studio classrooms. Students ages 4 to 104 have opportunities to learn from teaching artists near and far on foundational fine art topics and techniques. Tours in the Krasl Art Center galleries provide exposure, broadening students' perspectives and experiences within the arts and the resources of the community. Outreach further deepens Krasl Art Center connections, and includes artmaking opportunities for local civic organizations including scout groups and retirement communities, as well as medical patients specifically at the Marie Yeager Cancer Treatment Center and on Lakeland Hospital's pediatric floor.

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## **Sculpting Community**

In 2012, the Krasl Art Center Acquisition Committee began discussing a major sculpture acquisition for the KAC permanent collection, originally slated for 2015. The goal of the acquisition was to obtain a museum quality site-specific sculpture by an established artist that is engaging, guides visitors from the bluff across the street to the KAC grounds and is envisioned by the artist. As dialogue ensued, it was determined that in addition to a sculpture commission, the grounds themselves required redevelopment to truly make the site welcoming and inclusive. The committee shared its recommendations with the KAC board and a case statement was drafted in 2013. However, the artist for the project remained to be determined.

In 2014, following a public program at the Richard Hunt Studio Center in Benton Harbor, Michigan, a young boy brought to his mother's attention a sculpture which intrigued him. The mother got the attention of a KAC board member who got the attention of the KAC Curator, and shortly a small group had formed around the sculpture, discussing it in relation to the KAC's vision for a new commission. A few short months after, the Acquisition Committee made the recommendation to the KAC board to work with American sculptor Richard Hunt on the commission.

The same year, the KAC formed a Master Planning Committee comprised of staff, board and a member of the acquisition committee, to clarify the KAC's needs. It was determined that the grounds and sculpture commission went hand-in-hand and there are further plans to re-install the KAC's permanent collection in a later phase of the project.

In 2015, the KAC secured Wightman and Associates, Inc. to develop master plans for the KAC grounds and sculpture commission. This plan will be finalized in October 2015. Wightman and Associates, Inc. culled current community feedback from recent discussions led by both the City of St. Joseph and the City of Benton Harbor, in addition to the Krasl Art Center staff, board and committee. This feedback informs how the Krasl Art Center yard will truly become a place. WAI's concept plan has been presented to the Master Plan Steering Committee and will be presented to the Krasl Art Center's membership and stakeholders during three October meetings. Additionally, Wightman and Associates will solicit feedback

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Rick DYER, *President* | Marjorie ZIBBEL, *Vice President* | Paul FLETCHER, *Secretary* | Vern BREUKER, *Treasurer*

Suzanne BERBERET | Lori BOEKELOO | Juli GAST | Tim GLEASON | Jim HAHN | Carol HAKE | Anne MESZKO | Eric MISTEROVICH | Patrick SCHIAVONE | Sharon WARREN



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from invested parties to inform the final iteration of the grounds renovation and sculpture acquisition.

### **Why Richard Hunt**

Richard Hunt is an internationally acclaimed sculptor. He has completed over 130 major public art commissions and his work is in prestigious museum collections nation-wide. In 1971, at the age of 36, Hunt received his first retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 2009, he won the coveted Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Sculpture Center.

A resident of Chicago, Illinois, Hunt has maintained a second satellite studio in Benton Harbor, Michigan for 20 years, since 1995. In 2002, his monumental stainless steel sculpture *And You, Seas* was dedicated on the South Pier of Silver Beach in St. Joseph, Michigan. In 2008, his sculpture *Silver Linings* was placed prominently at Lakeland Hospital, also in St. Joseph, as part of its healing environment.

Hunt's career is firmly established and his work is both critically and popularly recognized. Commissioning Hunt for the signature artwork in the *Sculpting Community* project is a truly unique opportunity that blends outstanding art with an artist who has ties to our immediate community.

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## The Big Vision

The new Krasl Art Center sculpture park and entrance hall will welcome and engage members of the community and visitors alike through shared creative experiences and connection with others. The space will include world class sculptures, green space and opportunities for interactive play all to create intentional engagement.

One of the long term measures of success is the sustainability of the arts and culture as a recognized, valued, and expected part of our community and everyday life. The *Sculpting Community* project will increase access to the arts and increase membership to the art center. This is a gathering place for families and people from all walks of life, a place for reflection and expression, a place to reduce stress and energize. *Sculpting Community* is a fun and enjoyable place that creates lasting memories. The opportunity to connect arts and culture with closely held values of family, wellbeing and self improvement is the ultimate expectation.

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## **Krasl Art Center Audiences**

Through the Strategic Planning process and development of cohesive marketing initiatives, the KAC has developed the following to identify audiences and subsets of each group who comprise our audience. This informs our programming and marketing efforts.

Krasl Art Center currently has 875 patrons, 89% whose addresses are in southwest Michigan or northwest Indiana.

1. Individuals in St. Joseph, Benton Harbor and Stevensville to include
  - Seniors
  - Culturally concerned, educated, professionals
  - Families
  - School students
  - Second home owners
  - Vacationers/Day trippers
  
2. Individuals within 25 miles of KAC to include
  - Seniors
  - Culturally concerned, educated, professionals
  - Families
  - School students
  - Second home owners
  - Vacationers/Day trippers
  
3. Critical, academic, culturally astute patrons from Michigan, Illinois and Indiana
  
4. Media including local and regional print, radio and tv and national art publications

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# SCULPTING --- COMMUNITY

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