

CREATING A MUSEUM FOR ALL

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art
International Design Competition



Search Statement

Nelson
Atkins
MUSEUM OF ART

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**THE NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART
INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION
SEEKS A GIFTED AND DEDICATED
DESIGN TEAM FOR A NEW EXPANSION TO
TRANSFORM THE MUSEUM AND ITS CAMPUS.**

This is an open search for an architect-led multidisciplinary team to design a new addition(s) and reconfigure and renovate existing spaces to position the museum to serve its growing and increasingly diverse audience and future generations. The competition runs in two stages, with the first stage deadline on October 29, 2024. During the second stage, a public exhibition of the finalists' concept designs will be held at the museum and the winner will be announced in Spring 2025.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of America's finest art museums, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art cares for a superlative collection of more than 42,000 art objects and is best known for its extensive Asian art, European and American paintings, photography, modern sculpture, African, Native American and Egyptian galleries.

Offering free admission to all and funded by private support, the museum, based in Kansas City, Missouri, is nationally and internationally acclaimed and serves a broad region within a 300-mile radius.

Rarely is a museum gifted with two architectural icons. Here, both are set in a beautiful and expansive sculpture park. The first icon – an original Beaux Arts monument – is in neoclassical revival style; its ceremonial set-piece Kirkwood Hall is a vast 40 foot-high space ornamented with 12 black Pyrenean marble columns.

Designed by Kansas City architects Wight & Wight, the 1933 building was funded by the visionary legacies of William Rockhill Nelson, founder of The Kansas City Star and civic leader, and Mary McAfee Atkins, an educator turned arts philanthropist. The museum's name honors both legacies.

The second icon, the much-admired and innovative Bloch Building by Steven Holl, was completed in 2007 following an invited design competition. The Bloch addition introduced a luminous presence: large, irregular glass sculptures with variable shifting visual aspects that descend the hilltop site in a series of lenses or pavilions. Outward views to the landscape connect the building to the park-like setting. A glowing, vibrant structure at night, the addition, which is partly submerged in the landscape, more than doubled the museum's footprint, added new galleries, and created a dramatic counterpoint to the original structure.

The Nelson-Atkins and Bloch buildings together were conceptualized by Holl as “the stone and the feather”. The original stone, neo-classical landmark building was designed to be an *opaque* “temple to the arts”. Its modern counterpart, the Bloch Building, is made of luminous glass – *translucent* in effect. In its next evolution, the Nelson-Atkins desires a building that is both physically and metaphorically *transparent*. A place that attracts and intrigues passersby with its interior energy, that makes them want to join and belong in a way they may not have felt or experienced previously.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rising attendance and a rapidly growing city indicate the Nelson-Atkins' audience will reach a million visitors per year within a generation. At the same time, its collections are growing exponentially. Accordingly, the museum needs to provide extra gallery, programming, and visitor spaces inside its generous campus. Like the museum's earlier icons, this expansion needs to be of world class architectural quality and intensely *of its time* – for visitor expectations and perspectives are changing rapidly and demand innovation and flexibility.

Vision

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art serves, represents, reflects, and celebrates wide and diverse audiences and perspectives. It needs, also, to flex to accommodate emerging artforms and new mediums. To build on recent successes, the museum's Board of Trustees commissioned a strategic plan in 2021 that underscores art as the core of its mission, supported by care for the people within the museum, a commitment to community, and dedication to responsible and ethical actions that will sustain the institution into the future. The museum embraces IDEAS (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Sustainability) as core values, and strives to contribute to the wellbeing of both individuals and the community.

Museum Director, Julián Zugazagoitia – who found his own calling exploring museums in adolescence – believes in the transformative power of art in everyday life to energize communities, challenge perspectives, and to achieve positive change. Together with the Board, he advocates for art that reflects diverse experiences and viewpoints and showcases the depth and complexities of humanity. In an age characterized by uncertainty and anxiety, art's ability to inspire joy, evoke empathy, offer escape, and offer solace and hope remains constant. Zugazagoitia champions the role that art and museums can play in supporting the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Specifically, the making of art and associated socializing can help lift mood and reduce depression and stress, among many other health benefits.

In expanding the conventions of an art gallery, the museum is intent on becoming a more dynamic, open and inviting place – a place where everyone feels they belong; a *Nelson-Atkins for All*.

The ambitious expansion project at the heart of this international competition will offer the community and visitors a new intuitive welcome and orientation experience as well as extra facilities to exhibit more art, serve more school children, and offer better amenities and hands-on art experiences for visitors of all ages. The project will integrate the campus, the Sculpture Park, and the two existing buildings into a cohesive new experience.

The competition program for this third evolution envisions a design that adds a new layer of transparency and welcome, to strengthen inclusiveness and belonging. This will reveal the museum's inner workings to the public, improve connectivity and flow indoors and out, and create highly animated and fluid spaces that integrate into the life of the city.

This will be a dynamic place where people are energized by art, inspired to be creative, and immersed in new experiences. As Lonnie G. Bunch III, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution says, "Not a community center, but a center for community"; a place to hang-out as much as an elevated art and cultural experience.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Space, budget and civic impact

A detailed space program by US museum architects and planners Cooper Robertson has identified priorities according to both the community's and the museum's needs within an estimated construction budget of \$160 million – \$170 million.

The competition program envisages an addition or additions that would add circa 61,000 square feet. Highlights include a primary entrance and welcome foyer; comprehensive photography center; new featured exhibition galleries; learning and engagement spaces for hands-on art activities; as well as a black box-style theater for digital art and experiential/immersive programming; and a restaurant for indoor/outdoor dining and events.

Also contained within the competition scope is the repurposing, reconfiguration and renovation of circa 74,000 square feet of the existing museum space, and activating and amplifying the outdoor spaces, specifically making the Donald J. Hall Sculpture Park more welcoming and accessible (see **Emerging Brief** on page pages 29–33 for full details).

The project will be funded entirely by private donations – no public tax dollars are spent for the museum's capital projects or acquisitions – with a capital campaign due to start in 2025.

The project will also create an opportunity for the museum to connect more strongly with the wider urban network of cultural institutions, parks and other landmarks in Kansas City's Country Club Plaza area. For instance, an Art Walk is already in the works connecting the Nelson-Atkins' north-west corner with two of its neighbors – Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art and Kansas City Art Institute.

A thoughtful sustainability strategy will be crucial to reduce the museum's carbon footprint. This should also encompass enhancing nature in the Sculpture Park and creating eco-friendly facilities that will serve as a model for cultural institutions worldwide.

The capital campaign associated with this project will be the single biggest investment in the arts in Kansas City and contribute to the city's future dynamism and vitality. The museum aims to become a beacon of inclusivity, creativity, and social connections.

Kansas City is currently growing at a rate of two percent a year. Already celebrated for its art, cultural and culinary heritages, and sporting excellence, new projects are raising the city's profile as a great place to visit and live. The \$1.5 billion new terminal at Kansas City International Airport, which opened in 2023, will bring more tourism and investment, while the expanded KC Streetcar and extended biking paths will make Kansas Citians more mobile.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The city is home to back-to-back Super Bowl champions the Kansas City Chiefs as well as top-level professional baseball and soccer teams. It is the proud home of the first purpose-built stadium for women's sports in the world, where the KC Current soccer team plays. Kansas City will also host matches in the 2026 FIFA World Cup, bringing jobs – and a worldwide audience – to the city.

Kansas City also lays claim to being the birthplace of jazz music, the home of barbecue – with its famed local style – and the “city of fountains”. KC has over 200 fountains; the oldest of which is a Roman marble basin from 220 C.E. that occupies the Nelson-Atkins' Rozzelle Court.

Competition

This two-stage international competition seeks architect-led multi-disciplinary teams with an open call for submissions. The museum is open-minded about competitors, welcoming local, US, international, emerging and established studios.

No design is required at the first stage – rather teams will need to study this Search Statement and submit their approach to the project, team composition, and relevant experience, as well as company details through a digital form on the competition website: competitions.malcolmreading.com/nelson-atkins

At the second stage, up to five teams will be selected to engage with the museum further and prepare concept designs.

An exhibition of the finalist concept designs will be held at the museum in Spring 2025 and the schemes will also be available to view online, giving the community an opportunity to view the submissions and give their feedback. The museum's Architect Selection Committee will meet in Spring 2025 to interview the finalists and recommend a winner for the Nelson-Atkins Board of Trustees' ratification.

Each finalist team will receive a competition fee of \$75,000 at the conclusion of the process.

While the competition is open to all architects, including those registered in the State of Missouri, the role of the Architect of Record (AoR)/state-registered Executive Architect will be decided upon later in the process. The museum will determine the requirements for the AoR once the winning team is selected and will carry out a separate selection process for local firms. The museum is, therefore, expressly discouraging contact with potential firms for this role during the competition process.

The competition's first stage is open until 10:00 CDT (UTC-5) on Tuesday, October 29, 2024.



PROJECT AIMS & OBJECTIVES

PROJECT AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Strategic objectives

- ◆ Enhance and enliven the museum and campus to create an inviting, transparent, energizing and dynamic environment; achieve this through a design that expresses art's ability to bring people together, create a sense of belonging, and inspire human creativity
- ◆ Design an original new addition (or ensemble) of world class architectural quality and significance in dialogue, confidently and respectfully, with the site's existing icons
- ◆ Create a new and intuitive primary arrival/welcome experience – encouraging a wide and diverse public to access the collections – along with improved indoor/outdoor connectivity, and spaces that provide creative experiences for the community
- ◆ Design new spaces as well as remaking and configuring existing spaces to create new education, exhibition, event, hospitality and visitor amenities
- ◆ Affirm sustainable values – from design through to operations and use – achieving a near zero energy target, making design choices incorporating energy-saving, green technologies where possible, and respecting the natural environment
- ◆ Raise the profile of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art across the region, the US, and worldwide

Specific design objectives

- ◆ Consider the wider connections to the surrounding landscape and city
- ◆ Create a design that integrates with the existing campus – either contrasting or harmonizing
- ◆ Address multi-modal arrivals to the museum (vehicle, school bus, rideshare, Streetcar, bike, on foot, etc.)
- ◆ Identify one primary public entrance and one ideal school group entrance within the campus which may, or may not, be the same
- ◆ Enhance the museum's visual and sensory qualities through transparency, openness and materiality
- ◆ Create a new photography center (a suite of galleries, conservation, cold storage and study spaces)
- ◆ Add focused exhibition space that can support differently-scaled exhibitions and events



PROJECT AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Specific design objectives cont.

- ◆ Provide inspirational educational spaces that foster inventiveness and imagination across generations through hands-on art activities, including a school group entrance so that more students may be served
- ◆ Make the Donald J. Hall Sculpture Park more welcoming and accessible; activate and amplify the campus and create exceptional eco-friendly facilities
- ◆ Create exceptional spaces for events and programming including an experimental, black box-style theater for digital art and immersive programming, and a restaurant with indoor/outdoor seating
- ◆ Renew the museum's infrastructure, addressing renovation and operational challenges; upgrade power, data and technology; and modernize and relaunch the museum for the next 50 years



A future-proofed museum – operational and practical objectives

- ◆ Ensure the museum can comfortably and efficiently service the planned increase in visitors, and new programming ambitions
- ◆ Ensure security and safety for visitors, staff and artworks
- ◆ Ensure the experience of visiting and navigating the museum is equal for all
- ◆ Devise an addition(s) and remade spaces that are operationally efficient and are capable of displaying both international exhibitions and showcasing the museum's diverse collection in a way that engages audiences of today and tomorrow
- ◆ Increase revenue generation and visitor dwell time through enhanced welcome, respite, retail, restaurant and event facilities
- ◆ Outline a strategy for project delivery that can be accomplished in a way that allows the museum, or parts of the museum, to remain open during construction
- ◆ Design a building that meets US and State of Missouri building codes, standards and delivery capabilities, as well as international museum standards
- ◆ Anticipate local climate pressures and likelihood of extreme weather events
- ◆ Provide value for money for The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art Board of Trustees

THE MUSEUM

42,000+ ART
OBJECTS

600,000 EXPECTED
VISITORS (2025)

2,225 PROGRAMS
A YEAR

35,000 SCHOOL STUDENTS
A YEAR

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art is a world-class museum of fine art, gifted with an encyclopedic collection of visual culture spanning 5,000 years of human creativity and achievement. It serves the citizens of vibrant and growing Kansas City, Missouri, and beyond as one of the Midwest's most significant museums.

From the beginning, the idea of art and culture enriching public life has been at the core of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art's mission. Today, the museum is committed to creating a sense of belonging for all people, advocating for the power of art to uplift, surprise, challenge and transform, and providing avenues for exploring the world, past and present, for informing our future and creating a better society.

Since 2002, the museum has offered free admission to all. The museum has fully rebounded from the COVID-19 pandemic, and in 2025 annual attendance is expected to be around 600,000. Within one generation, attendance is forecasted to reach one million as the city grows and the museum diversifies its programs and exhibitions to attract wider audiences.

A central part of the community, in a single year the museum welcomes around 35,000 students on group tours and workshops, and averages 2,225 programs (including festivals, lectures, tours and workshops). Included in these is the annual Mary Atkins Lecture, presented since 2011 by architects and other art world leaders.

The museum serves a region with an approximate 300-mile radius and its facilities engender a mandate to be encyclopedic. With over 270,000 volumes, the Spencer Art Reference Library is the largest Art Library in the Central Plains region.

nelson-atkins.org

THE MUSEUM

Background

The museum opened its doors in December 1933 as the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art and Mary Atkins Museum of Fine Arts. Received with immense public support and national and international press coverage, the museum's opening realized the aspirations of two deceased Kansas Citians – William Rockhill Nelson and Mary McAfee Atkins – to establish a public art museum in the city.

Remarkably, this aspiration was realized during the Great Depression, bringing pride to the city and national press coverage during otherwise challenging times.

Stipulations in the two wills led to the museum being initially designed as separate but connected galleries that shared a campus, a division reflected in the original name: the “William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art and the Mary Atkins Museum of Fine Arts”. In 1982, in preparation for the museum's 50th anniversary, the name was changed to: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

Subsequent major developments to the campus include the installation of Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen's iconic *Shuttlecocks* in 1994 and the 2007 Bloch Building designed by Steven Holl. The shuttlecock has since become the most celebrated and recognizable icon of Kansas City.

More information about the museum's origin can be found here: [High Ideals and Aspirations: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1933-1993 \(Churchman and Erbes, 1993\)](#)

Architecture

Designed by local architectural firm Wight and Wight, the original Beaux Arts-influenced museum is a monumental neoclassical building on a grand stone podium – as was the norm for many new American museums of the time.

Faced with Indiana limestone (a reference to Nelson’s home state), the museum’s vast façade stretches 390 ft long and 175 ft high. Accentuating the sense of grandeur, the original building was constructed on a hill that declines gently south of the main façade, creating an uninterrupted view down a great lawn (designed by local landscape firm Hare and Hare).

Twenty-three sculpted panels designed by Charles Keck feature across the façades, depicting chapters of US history. Inscribed on the friezes around the building’s rectangular footprint are adapted quotes by Michelangelo, Goethe, Plotinus and others that emphasize art as a source of enduring beauty and eternal reason. The friezes are discussed in detail in [Episode Three of the museum’s podcast, “A Frame of Mind”](#).

The grand architectural style, together with the striking placement of the building at the end of a great processional lawn, earned the museum the moniker a “temple of art”.

Presciently, Wight and Wight left two-thirds of the Nelson Gallery wing unfinished, allowing the museum to grow and respond to the evolving city and changing demands of contemporary museums; by 1974 all of the museum was in full use.

In the late 1990s, plans were set in motion for an architectural competition to design a new extension. The winning concept – by US architect Steven Holl – envisaged a new wing that did not compete with the grandeur of the original neoclassical structure. The contemporary addition was light, blended interior and exterior, and responded to the campus’s gardens and the daily cycle of natural light.

Holl’s much-admired design provided around 150,000 sq ft more space in five interconnected “lens” structures home to sequential galleries. Opening as the Bloch Building in 2007, Holl’s galleries house featured and traveling exhibitions and display the museum’s contemporary, African, and photography collections.

THE MUSEUM



The Collection

The museum's collection totals more than 42,000 art objects, largely thanks to donations of works and funds from generous patrons. Celebrated collections include photography – the largest collection with more than 16,000 works – Asian art (especially Chinese; one of the largest such holdings outside of Mainland China), European and American paintings, modern sculpture, Native American art, and African art.

The museum's founding Trustees recognized that bringing together the two founders' endowments would form a museum more impressive than either could realize individually. To create a new collection, selected advisers and assistants spent three years traveling the world, developing a diverse collection of objects that documented human creativity and achievement.

By the time of opening in 1933, the Trustees had built an encyclopedic collection of over 5,000 objects, covering the ancient civilizations of Egypt, the Middle East, Greece and Rome, Japan and China. Also included were artworks by canonical European Old Masters like Rembrandt, Hals, El Greco and Titian; in addition to more modern works by Van Gogh and Courbet, and a strong representation of the work of American painters.

Key among the museum's recent donors is the Hall Family Foundation, which gave the Hallmark Photographic collection of over 6,500 works spanning the medium's history as well as 84 sculptures, including works by Henry Moore and Mark Di Suvero.

Other major donors include the Enid and Crosby Kemper Foundation and the Ever Glades Fund, which developed the museum's American art collection; the William T. Kemper Collecting Initiative, for contemporary art; and Marion H. and Henry W. Bloch's donation of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works; along with other generous and passionate Kansas City collectors.

THE MUSEUM

Curatorial

The museum presents over 5,000 years of art in traditionally encyclopedic, categorized galleries. As the museum's first curator of Asian art and second director Laurence Sickman proclaimed, the museum has always believed in the "equal validity of the arts of all people and times"¹

Curatorially, the museum aims to offer exciting ways to engage with art. Flexible galleries will enable differently scaled exhibitions and events, inspiring guests to return to the campus and discover something new.

Through refreshed interpretation, the museum can encourage cross-cultural dialogue, learning and understanding.

Guests should be able to explore the museum on their own terms, rather than by a prescribed route. Fundamentally, art will always be at the core. Thoughtful curatorial work will open up different levels of engagement: intellectual, personal, social, and emotional.

Endowment

The museum is funded by private support. No public tax dollars are spent for the museum's capital projects or acquisitions. The new expansion project will see a capital campaign due to start in 2025.

2021 Strategic Plan

The museum's strategic plan outlines the key objectives for the next decade: to continue to provide free access to all, and to offer more paths to experience art.

It underscores art as the core of its mission, supported by care for the people within the museum, a commitment to community, and responsible and ethical actions that will sustain the Nelson-Atkins into the future. The museum embraces IDEAS values – Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Sustainability – as integral to its service and strives to contribute to the wellbeing of individuals and the community.

nelson-atkins.org/about/2021-strategic-plan

¹ *The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art: Culture Comes to Kansas City*, K. C. Wolferman, p.84

THE SITE & CONTEXT



THE SITE & CONTEXT

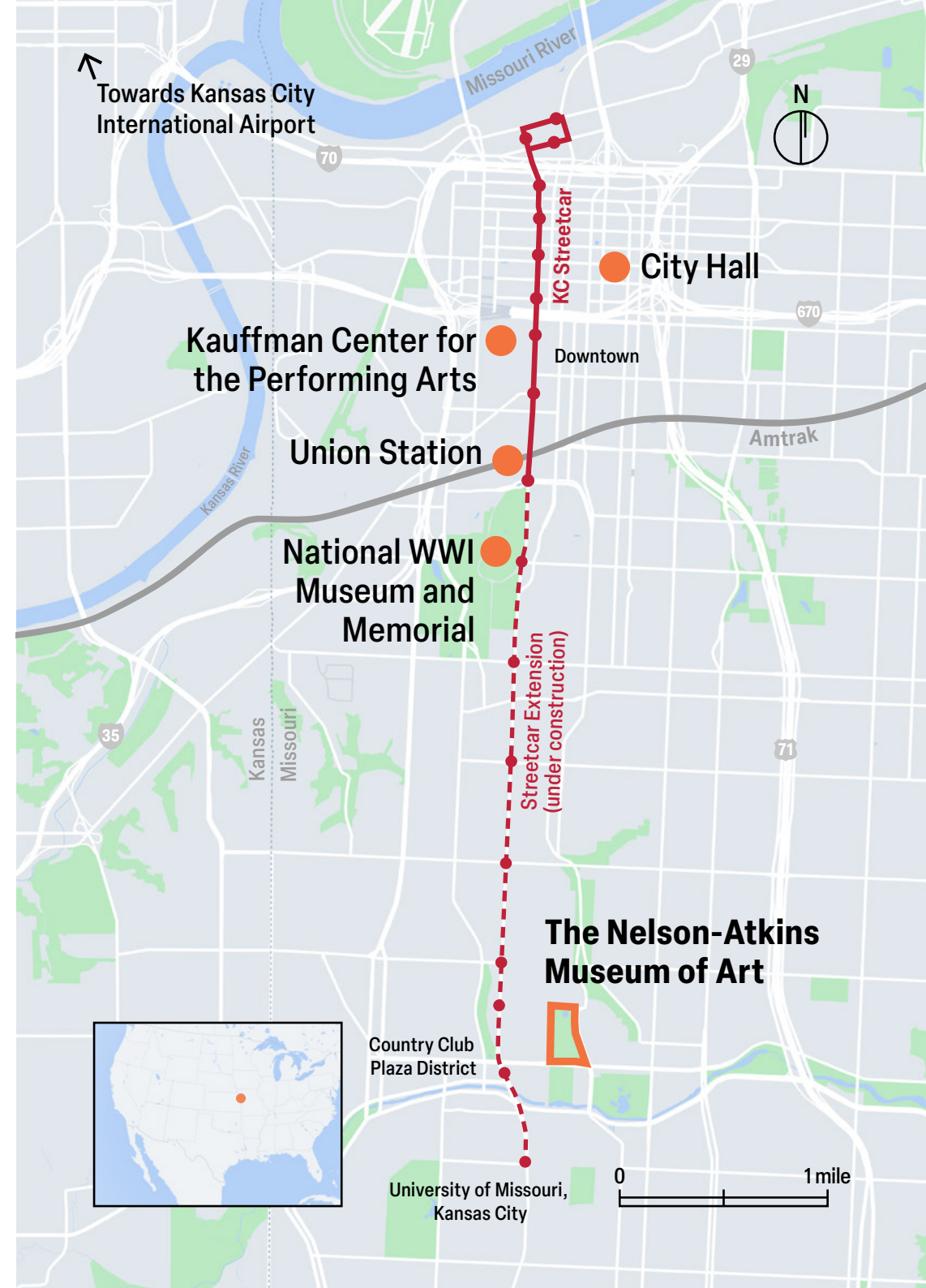
Kansas City, Missouri

The Kansas City area was part of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, and Americans began moving there in greater numbers after the organization of the Missouri Territory in 1812 and further forced removals of Native Americans. Located at the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri rivers, Kansas City was first a staging post in the westward expansion of the United States. The city developed through rail – the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad arrived in the 1860s – and then was shaped by urban planners inspired by American-hosted Expos and the City Beautiful movement. Now the largest city in the State of Missouri, and the second-largest Midwestern economy, Kansas City continues to be a gateway to the American West. 'KC' has seen strong population and economic growth in recent decades – it is poised to become a major player on the national stage.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art stands on the homelands of Native American peoples. In recent years, these nations have included the Missouria, Oto, Kansa, Osage, Shawnee, and Delaware. Currently there are more than 98 Native American tribes in the Kansas City area².

Cultural standouts include the National WWI Museum and Memorial, Union Station, and the Moshe Safdie-designed Kauffman Center for Performing Arts.

² [visitkc.com/visitors/things-do/trip-ideas-tools/discover/diversity/native-american-culture-kansas-city](https://www.visitkc.com/visitors/things-do/trip-ideas-tools/discover/diversity/native-american-culture-kansas-city)





SITE & CONTEXT

Location

The Nelson-Atkins is three miles south of KC's downtown, located between the Southmoreland and Rockhill neighborhoods. To the museum's west and south are green spaces – Southmoreland Park and Frank A. Theis Park – emblematic of the City Beautiful movement that transformed late-19th century Kansas City. In 1974, Kansas City's historical Park and Boulevard System, spearheaded by George E. Kessler, was selected as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The museum's long southern lawn looks down to Brush Creek, a tributary of the Blue (and then Missouri) river.

Nearby landmarks include the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, designed by Latvian-American Gunnar Birkerts; the Kansas City Art Institute; and the Country Club Plaza – a retail and dining destination inspired by the architecture of Seville, dating back to 1922 and the crown jewel shopping area for many decades. The Country Club Plaza is recently under new ownership with strong public support to return the center to the destination it once was.

Museum Site

Since its opening in 1933, the museum has occupied 22 acres of parkland that was formerly Nelson's personal Oak Hall estate. More than 1,400 x 950 feet (at its widest point), the rectangular site is bounded by East 45th Street and Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard to the north and south, and on the west and east by Oak Street and Rockhill Road – built at Nelson's expense to service the Rockhill neighborhood he had developed.

The original Nelson-Atkins building sits towards the northern end of the site and leads out onto the expansive Donald J. Hall Sculpture Park. The Bloch Building stretches across the site's eastern edge from the original building into the Sculpture Park.

The museum buildings occupy the site's highest point, with a commanding view over an open landscape. The area to the north, including the North Sculpture Park and Plaza Drive form a level forecourt for the campus. To the south, the Sculpture Park was designed as a series of terraces and steps that ease the circa 65 ft drop down to the Boulevard. On either side, the lawn is framed by rows of mature trees and pedestrian paths.

The dedicated Sculpture Park collection began in 1986 and includes the four iconic *Shuttlecocks* by Oldenburg and van Bruggen, as well as works by Henry Moore, Roxy Paine and Robert Morris.

The museum's facilities also extend to four grand houses and a small parking lot north of East 45th Street, and a green space to the east. Please note that these areas are outside of the competition scope.



Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art

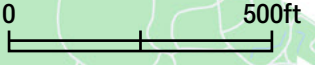
Kansas City Art Institute

Streetcar Stop (under construction)

— Competition Boundary

— Original Building

— Bloch Building



Mill Creek Park

Robert Gillham Park

Main St

Southmoreland Park

Oak St

E45th St

Bockhill Rd

Emanuel Cleaver II Blvd

Frank A. Theis Park

Kauffman Legacy Park and Institute

27

Brush Creek

SITE & CONTEXT

Neighborhood

The museum site is in the Southmoreland and Rockhill neighborhoods – both predominantly low-rise residential areas first developed by William Rockhill Nelson. Parts to the museum’s west have now been redeveloped into mid-rise, mixed-use neighborhoods.

Already free to use, the Kansas City Streetcar is undergoing a major expansion that will link the Nelson-Atkins to downtown. Set to open in 2025 with 15 new stations, the Streetcar line will extend to UMKC (south of the museum). The “Art Museums” stop on 45th & Main Street will provide walkable access to the Nelson-Atkins, Kansas City Art Institute, and Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art. Additionally, the city has recently invested in improved bike lanes surrounding the museum.



EMERGING BRIEF

\$160–170 MILLION

CONSTRUCTION BUDGET

61,000

SQUARE FEET
NEW ADDITION(S)

74,000

SQUARE FEET
RENOVATION

EMERGING BRIEF

Overview

The emerging competition brief covers three typologies: new expansion, reimagining of existing spaces, and engagement with the museum's public realm.

As set out in Project Aims & Objectives the new expansion needs to be an original new addition (or ensemble) of world-class architectural quality and significance that is in dialogue, confidently and respectfully, with the site's icons.

Holistically, the new addition together with the repurposing of the existing buildings needs to enhance and enliven the museum campus to create an inviting, transparent, energizing and dynamic environment – a design that expresses art's ability to bring people together, create a sense of belonging, and inspire human creativity.

While the elements specified below will all contribute to this, there are three interventions that will be crucial.

Firstly, creating a new and intuitive arrival/welcome sequence will encourage a wide and diverse public to access the collections. Secondly, improved indoor/outdoor connectivity will make the spaces feel less formal and more engaging and open. Finally, the desired overall effect is to create a series of spaces that become a "third space" for the community. That is – a place to come and hang out regularly that is the opposite of a revered "temple" of art, a typology perceived as only being for scholarly or elite audiences and unwelcoming to broader audiences.

For strategic, specific, and practical design cues, please refer to the Project Aims & Objectives (pages 12–15).

Spatial requirements

1. New Expansion	
circa 41,000 sq.ft. Net Floor Area/61,000 sq.ft. Gross Floor Area	
<p>Lobby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new, welcoming, main entrance (either as part of the new expansion, or within one of the existing buildings) • An orientation area within the new expansion for gathering and events 	<p>Galleries and Exhibitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Galleries that accommodate contemporary art installations, collection display, and special exhibitions with flexible materials and finishes that can easily and regularly transform
<p>Photography Center Suite</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photography galleries • Object Viewing/Study Room – a space for scholars, donors, and visitors to engage with, screen and view art • Combined Photo and Paper Conservation studio • Matting and Framing Shop and Storage • Collection storage: cold storage and temporary holding space 	<p>Visitor Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual restaurant with external patio • Back of house catering kitchen • Ordering access from the Sculpture Park (depending on the restaurant’s positioning) • Service counters in other areas, such as the Learning Commons
<p>Programs, Education, Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning & engagement spaces, including flexible art making spaces/hands-on maker spaces • Additional classrooms for artmaking and collaboration • Relocation of the Library’s Circulation/Help Desk and Learning Commons; an evolution of a traditional Reading Room • Immersive Black Box-Style Theater (and support spaces) 	<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff workspaces (food services and library staff, among others) • General storage & building services

2. Refurbishment of the Nelson-Atkins building

- Rozzelle Court – reimagined as a flexible, multi-use space for respite, light snacks, school group dining, and special events; please note: renovation/replacement of the Rozzelle Court skylight is planned, but is not part of the project scope
- Renovation of the western range of galleries, levels 1 and 2
- Upgrades to M/E/P services, elevators and fire suppression system for the western range of galleries

3. Public Realm

- Entrance(s) to the new expansion, which may or may not be the museum’s primary visitor entrance. A school group entrance also needs to be designated, which may be separate from the public entrance.
- Landscape works to the Donald J. Hall Sculpture Park including improved visitor amenities, event storage and access to food and beverage and to public restroom facilities
- Drawing on pedestrian, cycling and public transport networks, including the Art Museums Streetcar stop to the west (anticipated to open in 2025) and the new improvements of Emmanuel Cleaver II Boulevard that will improve connections to Frank A. Theis Park to the south
- Relationships between the Nelson-Atkins and other local cultural and educational institutions, including Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City Art Institute, the Kauffman Foundation, and the Linda Hall Library at the UMKC campus
- Improved disability access/ADA compliance: including the north entrance to the Nelson-Atkins building

Sustainability

Sustainability is a key project goal: upgrades to building services will reduce fossil fuel consumption in line with the museum's aim to decarbonize by 2040. This year, the museum (in partnership with the Linda Hall Library) was awarded a \$300,000 grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities to study climate impact and plan for a climate-resilient future. The study will consider topics including resilience/preparedness for natural disasters, upgrades to the mechanical systems and external envelope, landscape and reducing waste.

Designers should affirm sustainable values – from design through to operations and use – achieving a near zero energy target, incorporating energy-saving, green technologies where possible, and respecting the natural environment.

Infrastructure and Renovation

Included in the emerging brief is a partial renovation of the original Nelson-Atkins building, including:

- Reimagining Rozzelle Court, with improvements to the space's acoustic, light, and air handling qualities (the museum also intends to replace the skylight, outside of the project scope)
- Rationalizing circulation and wayfinding: horizontally, between the new expansion through to the Bloch Building's visitor reception; and vertically, with an upgrade of the stairs and elevators serving all levels
- Improving the building fabric in the western range of galleries, including fire and life safety systems and the building envelope
- Ensuring ADA-compliant accessibility, including a new ramped access to the north entrance for direct access to Kirkwood Hall
- Upgrading the Central Plant to modernize the mechanical plant systems

COMPETITION DETAILS



Client

The client for the project is The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, in Kansas City, Missouri, USA.

Competition Management

Malcolm Reading Consultants (MRC), an independent expert organizer of design competitions and procurement processes with over twenty-five years' experience, will lead and manage this two-stage competition process on behalf of the Nelson-Atkins.

malcolmreading.com

Architect Selection Committee

The Architect Selection Committee – comprised of current and former Trustees, and the Director – will lead the competition process on behalf of the museum. The Committee is responsible for establishing core tenets for the project and criteria for selection, reviewing competition materials, reviewing the stage one submissions, and participating in the final interviews at stage two. The Committee will assess the competition submissions and recommend a winner to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

The Committee comprises the following members:

- Evelyn Craft Belger, Board Chair
- Rick Green
- Valerie Chow MD
- Linda Woodsmall-DeBruce
- Paul DeBruce
- Bill Gautreaux
- Don Hall, Jr.
- Shirley Bush Helzberg
- Neil Karbank, Board Secretary
- Sandra Lawrence, Board Treasurer
- Greg Maday
- Ramón Murguía
- Mark O'Connell
- Kent Sunderland
- Julián Zugazagoitia, Director & CEO of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

COMPETITION DETAILS

Stage One

The first stage of the competition is an open call for submissions – a Request for Qualifications – including proposed team composition, relevant experience, company details, and an initial reaction to the project aims and objectives. No design submission will be required at stage one.

All submissions will be reviewed by the Nelson-Atkins and its advisors, including MRC. All competitors (successful and unsuccessful) will be notified of the outcome of the first stage.

Stage Two

A shortlist of up to five teams will be selected to compete at stage two and prepare concept designs. These finalists will receive a detailed program and will be invited to attend a site visit and briefing workshop. A virtual design workshop will be held halfway through the design period. All finalists will participate in a site visit December 11–13, 2024, that includes public engagement sessions as part of the competition design process.

The stage two submission requirements are anticipated to include presentation boards, a design portfolio, a technical proposal (including an area schedule and scaled drawings), a physical model, a video presentation, and a commercial proposal.

An exhibition of the finalist concept designs will be held at the museum in Spring 2025 and the schemes will also be available to view online, giving the community an opportunity to view the submissions and give their feedback.

Competitors will present to the Architect Selection Committee, who will interview each team and recommend a winner to the Board for final approval.

Please note: while the competition is open to all architects, including those registered in the State of Missouri, the role of the Architect of Record (AoR)/state-registered Executive Architect will be decided upon later in the process. The museum will determine the requirements for the AoR once the winning team is selected and will carry out a separate selection process for local firms. The museum is, therefore, expressly discouraging contact with potential firms for this role during the competition process.

Competition Fee

The Nelson-Atkins will pay a competition fee of \$75,000 to each shortlisted design team, following the selection of the winner.

It is the intention that the winning team will enter into contract with the museum for design services related to the project (for more details see page 41).

The competition fee will be paid directly by the museum. Competitors who are disqualified from the competition, or who withdraw prior to its conclusion, may not be eligible for full payment of the competition fee.

Questions

All inquiries relating to the competition should be sent by email to nelson-atkins@malcolmreading.com

There will be two Q&A logs published on the competition website during stage one:

Q&A LOG ONE

Questions to be submitted by Tuesday, October 8, 2024.

Log published by Friday, October 11, 2024.

Q&A LOG TWO

Questions to be submitted by Tuesday, October 22, 2024.

Log published by Friday, October 25, 2024.

All Q&A will be published, unless questions are deemed commercial in confidence. Please note that telephone inquiries will not be accepted.

During the competition period, no contact should be made with the client, or members of the Architect Selection Committee, in respect of this competition. Failure to comply with this restriction may compromise your position within the competition.

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

Stage One Launch	Tuesday, October 1, 2024
Stage One Deadline	10:00am CDT (UTC-5) Tuesday, October 29, 2024
Stage Two Launch	Late November 2024
Site Visit	December 11–13, 2024
Stage Two Deadline	February 2025
Winner Announcement	Spring 2025

TEAM REQUIREMENTS

The competition warmly welcomes local, international, emerging and established studios.

Stage One

The museum is seeking an integrated multidisciplinary design team (led by an architect) capable of providing the full range of professional input and services for the project, and including:

- Lead Design Architect
- Landscape Architect
- Engineering disciplines, including structural, services and sustainability
- Heritage advisor, if central to the team's approach

Teams may include additional consultants deemed necessary to the design approach if required.

Stage Two

At stage two, teams may propose additional consultants to enhance their design concept including:

- Exhibition Designer
- Lighting Designer
- Catering Specialist
- Access Consultant

Please note: an Owners Representative for cost consultancy and project management services related to this project will be procured separately by the client and do not form part of this procurement process. Competitors will be expected to independently validate their cost assumptions at the second stage.

The final selection of the Architect of Record will be made by the museum after the competition, in consultation with the winning team.

TEAM REQUIREMENTS

Sub-Consultants

Some or all of the disciplines noted above may be provided by one company and are not required to be proposed by individual companies. Sub-consultant companies may enter with more than one design team if they wish to do so. However, in the event that a sub-consultant company is shortlisted on more than one team, that company will be required to name different senior individuals for each team and will be expected to comply with the requirements for non-collusion, which may include the requirement to sign confidentiality agreements and to supply a management policy for potential conflicts of interest.

Individual companies, including those with multiple offices, may not lead more than one design team bid. Companies may lead one bid and subconsult on additional bids, providing different individuals are proposed.

Eligibility

Employees of the museum (including staff, volunteers and Trustees) and members of the Architect Selection Committee, as well as representatives or officers of the relevant consent authorities, are ineligible to enter the competition.

Associates and direct family members of the above-mentioned organizations may also be ineligible to enter the competition. Please contact Malcolm Reading Consultants for verification in this case.

Finalization of the Design Team

The museum reserves the right to determine the final composition of the design team appointed for the project, and this may include the appointment of sub-consultants that are not suggested within the bid.

In addition, the museum is not obligated to contract with all subconsultants suggested by the winning design team. For the avoidance of doubt, this is to ensure the correct mix of skills and expertise and will not be imposed unreasonably.

PROJECT DETAILS

Budget

The estimated project budget is circa \$160m–\$170m in construction costs, to be raised entirely through private stakeholders.

Anticipated Scope of Services

The scope of services for the winning team is anticipated to include full design team services for the development of the full implementation design, from inception through to completion of construction.

Insurance Requirements

Competitors should also note that, should they be successful, they must have or be willing to obtain insurance coverage in accordance with the requirements of the Nelson-Atkins:

- Commercial General Liability Insurance (CGL)
- Professional Liability Insurance
- Excess Liability or Umbrella Liability

The detailed terms of such coverage shall be negotiated and/or validated upon contract award.



STAGE ONE REQUIREMENTS & CRITERIA

UNDER THE BIG TOP

After World War II, the American Southwest was the site of the most important literary movement since the 1920s. The novel *Under the Big Top* by the author of *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck, is a landmark work of American literature. It is a story of a group of performers who travel across the country in a traveling show, from the mountains of the West to the plains of the Midwest. The novel is a story of a group of performers who travel across the country in a traveling show, from the mountains of the West to the plains of the Midwest. The novel is a story of a group of performers who travel across the country in a traveling show, from the mountains of the West to the plains of the Midwest.

The first stage of the competition is focused on team composition, relevant experience, and an initial project response. Competitors are also required to submit company information (including legal and financial standing).

Please use your stage one submission to convince the museum that you understand the opportunities and challenges of the project and that you can articulate an approach that meets its ambitions.

The stage one submission comprises three parts:

- 1. Submission Template**
- 2. Company Information Form**
- 3. Media Statement and Images**

Further detail on each submittal is provided below.

Stage one submissions will be received via the online entry form – please see page 48 for details.

1. Submission Template

Format: 7-side submission saved as a PDF (maximum file size: 15 MB)

Please complete the seven-side submission template provided in Appendix B. The template is provided in InDesign format, with related guidelines for completion.

The template requests the following information:

A. PRACTICE PROFILE (ONE SIDE)

Provide a summary of the details for the lead design firm expressing an interest in the project. Highlight your practice background, design philosophy, key individuals who would be involved in the project if successful, and design awards and peer recognition.

B. TEAM COMPOSITION (ONE SIDE)

Provide an overview of the proposed integrated, multidisciplinary design team, including all key disciplines as noted on page 39. This section of the response should include a summary of the expertise and experience of the company; the role proposed on the project and how this is integrated into the wider team; and the skills and attributes of the key individuals proposed. Hyperlinks to company websites can be provided within this section.

C. RELEVANT EXPERIENCE (THREE SIDES)

Please provide details of three previous projects completed (built or design finalized*) as relevant examples.

These should be projects of an urban setting involving existing buildings that demonstrate a public/cultural context and make an important contribution to civic and social life. Your response should identify relevance to the Nelson-Atkins project outlined in this document. The scale/value is not an issue – we encourage a creative selection.

STAGE ONE REQUIREMENTS & CRITERIA

Two of the example projects must be from the firm proposed as the lead designer.

*The definition of “design finalized” is that all the design documentation is complete in preparation for either tendering the contract or commencing the construction of the project.

D. PROJECT UNDERSTANDING AND APPROACH (TWO SIDES)

Present your understanding of the project as set out in this document and through any primary research you undertake. Outline your initial response to the project and set out how you would approach a project of this type and complexity.

We are not seeking design concepts, but a synthesis of the issues and opportunities you see as central to the emerging project scope and program. Refer to the Aims and Objectives for guiding principles (see pages 12–15).

You are encouraged to use a mix of narrative (minimum font size 10pt.), imagery, and sketches. Please note that the medium of presentation and review at this stage is digital.

2. Company Information Form

Format: complete form saved as a single PDF including all appendices (maximum file size: 10 MB)

Please complete the Company Information Form provided in Appendix A. This form is provided as a Word file and is not available in any other formats. This form should be completed by all members of the design team.

Competitors are permitted to redesign the form, and present the requested information in any suitable manner, provided that all requested information is supplied.

3. Media Statement and Images

Format: Text submitted using text field in online form; images in .jpeg format (maximum 5MB per individual file).

Please provide a 150-word snapshot of the design team. This statement should include the lead consultant's website (if applicable).

This statement can include some or all of the following: practice history/background, overview of built projects, awards, publications, exhibitions and design philosophy.

Include two .jpeg photographs of the lead designers (individuals) from your proposed team. Please include all necessary copyright and caption information in the space provided.

Please note: the summary may be edited, and the images cropped, for media purposes without prior agreement. To clarify, this will only be done for editorial purposes.



EVALUATION CRITERIA

Expressions of Interest will be scored in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out below.

Submission Template

Criteria	Total Score Available (for this section)	Weighting (of total submission)
Practice Profile	10*	25%
Team Composition	10*	15%
Relevant Experience	10*	25%
Project Understanding and Approach	10*	35%

*Scored in accordance with the Scoring Approach on page 47.

Company Information Forms

Any competitor who fails to meet the minimum requirements as specified in the Company Information Form will be rejected.

Scoring Approach

Score	Classification of response	Reason for classification
1	Unacceptable in whole or part	No answer has been provided or the response fails to answer the question provided; all elements of the response are not justified or unsupported by evidence where required; fails to demonstrate any understanding of the question or the context.
2	Poor and significantly below requirements	Very significant gaps or lack of justification/evidence in response where required; responses given are very generic and not relevant in whole or part; fails to demonstrate considerable understanding of the question or context.
3	Poor and below requirements	A lack of content or explanation in one or more aspects of the question; significant gaps or lack of justification/evidence in response where required; responses given are generic and not relevant in whole or part; a degree of failure to demonstrate understanding of the question or context.
4	Satisfactory response but does not meet all requirements	The question is answered satisfactorily overall but some key aspects lack sufficient detail or explanation.
5	Satisfactory response that meets most requirements	The question is answered satisfactorily for the most part but some aspects lack sufficient detail.
6	Satisfactory response that meets most requirements and is a good response in some areas	The question is answered well for the most part and in areas is particularly clear and justified.
7	A strong response that is very satisfactory in all areas and exceeds expectations in some areas	The question is answered very well for the most part and in areas is particularly clear and justified.
8	A very strong response	The question is answered very well throughout and in all areas is clear and justified.
9	Outstanding quality response	The question is answered in an outstanding way throughout, meets all requirements and in all areas is extremely clear and justified.
10	Exceptional response that exceeds the requirements	The answer demonstrates an exceptional response that meets all requirements and exceeds the level of quality required in some key areas.

HOW TO ENTER

Stage one submissions should be made in digital format only, via the upload form on the competition website:

competitions.malcolmreading.com/nelson-atkins

Please read and take note of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) associated with the online form.

Please allow adequate time when uploading your submission. Competitors are responsible for ensuring your submission has been received.

Upon completion of the upload, the form will display a screen indicating your upload reference number. Please keep a separate record of this reference number and quote this in any correspondence regarding your submission. If this reference number is not displayed, your upload has not been successful.

You should receive an automatic email confirming receipt of your entry within two hours. If this is not received, please firstly check your spam folder, and only then email:

nelson-atkins@malcolmreading.com

Please note: the form will close automatically after the deadline. Entries received after the deadline may not be eligible for consideration.



COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS

By submitting an entry to stage one of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art International Design Competition – Creating a Museum for All, competitors confirm that they accept and will comply with the conditions noted in Appendix C – Competition Terms and Conditions.

All interpretations and decisions relating to these terms and conditions will rest with The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and MRC. All decisions will be deemed final.

APPENDICES

A. Company Information Form

B. Submission Template

C. Competition Terms and Conditions

Typefaces used

Elza

Blackletter, São Paulo

GLACIER

Adam Lock, Kansas City

Piazzolla

Huerta Tipográfica, Buenos Aires



Nelson 
Atkins
MUSEUM OF ART

MALCOLM
READING
CONSULTANTS