

INSTITUTE OF
CONTEMPORARY
ART / BOSTON

ICA

Strategic Plan A Radical Welcome

2016-2021 SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES



A Radical Welcome

A Radical Welcome represents the changes the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston wants to see in the world, within our museum, in our communities and in our collective futures.

Read the ICA's [2016-2021 Strategic Plan: A Radical Welcome](#) here.

Goals

Goal I: Inspire audiences and artists in their pursuit and desire for learning, growth, and community, contributing to the body of knowledge in our field, in our city, and in our society.

Goal III: Strengthen the institutional infrastructure—staff, facility, governance, and technology—to achieve goals, leverage opportunities, and prepare for the decade ahead

Goal II: Extend a radical welcome to deeply engage and support audiences

Goal IV: Ensure public access to contemporary art and education for future generations



Outcomes

To achieve these goals, seven outcomes were identified that would meaningfully contribute to this change:

1. Change the landscape for presentation of and access to contemporary art in Boston and become a community resource
2. Build long-term financial sustainability
3. Expand and deepen relationships with and support of artists
4. Directly address gaps in the art historical canon
5. Improve care of our collection
6. Increase educational equity
7. Grow and diversify audiences for contemporary art and ideas

The intentions of this plan were clear: to serve present-day needs in the ICA's myriad communities, including support for artists, audiences, and staff; increase educational equity; diversify audiences; and invest in the future through changing the historical narrative, caring for the collection, and growing the endowment.

Simultaneously, we solidified and deepened our work with artists and our position in the field, through artistic and educational programs and by making major acquisitions, commissioning new works of art, convening peers and constituents, and launching the Watershed. The ICA engaged new and increasingly diverse audiences through coordinated investments and efforts in programs and marketing, working across departments.





Summary of Activities

Here are some of the highlights of what was accomplished—the programs, policies, investments and initiatives from 2016 to 2021:

- Renovation and activation of the Watershed, plus its unexpected use as food distribution site
- Supported artists through exhibitions, acquisitions, performances, residencies, teaching jobs, and commissions
- Invested in staff equity through paid compensation increases; training; professional development; investments in diversity, equity, accessibility, inclusion, and belonging (DEAIB); and maintaining full employment throughout the pandemic
- Fostered audience engagement and learning through expanded investment in visitor assistant training and digital resources
- Formed meaningful partnerships with community cultural, educational, health and social service organizations
- Created an Artist Advisory Council
- Merger of Summer Stages Dance into the ICA
- Expanded ICA Collection and moved to a new storage facility
- Served and supported teens and the museum education field on- and off-site
- Added \$25 million to our endowment and increased its impact on our operating revenue by 97%

- Hosted *Building Brave Spaces*, an unprecedented national conference on teens arts education, and published *Brave: Reimagining Teen Arts Education*
- Invested in and advocated for workforce pipeline development for the field
- Invested in major exhibitions and publications: *William Forsythe: Choreographic Objects*; *Art in the Age of the Internet, 1989 to Today*; *When Home Won't Let You Stay: Migration through Contemporary Art*; and *Virgil Abloh: "Figures of Speech"* to contribute to audience and community engagement

In this five-year period there were **30** exhibitions in the galleries; **four** rotations of the collection on view; **four** different artists presented on the Sandra and Gerald Fineberg Art Wall; and **11** exhibition catalogues published.

New works were commissioned from artists including Okwui Okpokwasili, Jason Moran, Nina Chanel Abney, Firelei Báez, John Akomfrah, and Faye Driscoll, among others. There were **55** dance and music performances in our Barbara Lee Family Foundation Theater and audiences enjoyed **39** free Harborwalk Sounds concerts and **25** DJ Nights.

Education programs served thousands through ICA Forums, hands-on art making for all ages, and free access to art and artists. In this period, there were **26** The Artist's Voice talks and more than **50** Play Dates, including a first-ever family day in East Boston in partnership with community organizations.



The collection saw unprecedented growth and as of June 30, 2021 was **354** works strong—adding an average of nearly **30** works each year. During this time, the Barbara Lee Collection of Art by Women was established and the Acquisitions Circle donor program was launched. Collection storage was relocated to a new and upgraded facility, securing the museum's future.

The Radical Welcome was extended to ICA staff, teens, and the wider field. To advance pay equity, the base hourly wage was increased to \$15 an hour (outpacing the Commonwealth's deadline to do so), and lower-paid full-time staff saw a 10% salary increase, seeded by significant foundation support. The ICA created a curatorial fellowship for emerging scholars of color and led a national effort for paid internships in art museums. Staff and Board Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Inclusion and Belonging (DEAIB)

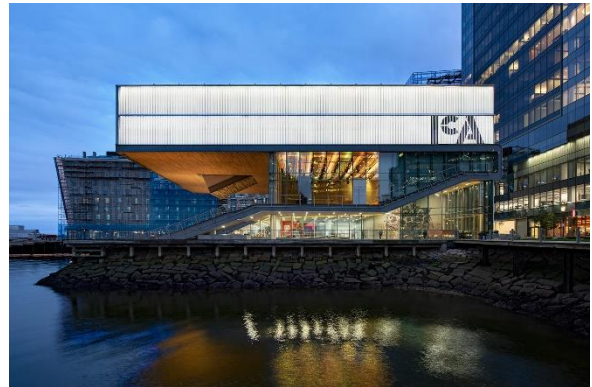
groups were established, senior leadership continued to diversify, and there was a concerted focus on hiring practices, belonging, and accountability. Teens participated in leadership development, and a groundbreaking national conference on teens and museums brought long-term findings to the broader field.

Through this strategic plan, six new staff positions were created to build capacity across the museum, including a Senior Advisor for Human Resources to lead DEAIB. Governance also saw increased diversity, adding to our excellence through new members of the Board of Trustees and Advisory Board and the creation of an Artist Advisory Council. Importantly, the ICA built community partnerships of depth and consistency with community-based organizations, academic institutions, and community advisors for exhibitions, education, and public programming.



About the ICA

Founded in 1936, the Institute of Contemporary Art champions artists and audiences to center contemporary art in civic life. Through exhibitions, performances, education and a collection focused on women and artists of color, the ICA embraces its responsibility to ensure that everyone can see themselves in our galleries and on our stage, that contemporary art and art education are accessible to all, and that the museum broadly shares the beauty and power of visibility, representation, and a wide diversity of artistic voices.



Mission

The Institute of Contemporary Art strives to share the pleasures of reflection, inspiration, provocation, and imagination that contemporary art offers through public access to art, artists, and the creative process.

Images

COVER

ICA Watershed. Photo by Florian Holzherr.

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Artist Nari Ward (left) installing his piece *We The People* with members of the ICA's Teen Arts Council as part of his 2017 exhibition *Nari Ward: Sun Splashed*. Photo by Ernesto Galan.

William Forsythe, *The Fact of Matter*, 2019. Installation view, *William Forsythe, Choreographic Objects*, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2018–2019. Photo by Liza Voll. © William Forsythe

ICA Teens during the 2018 *Building Brave Spaces: Mobilizing Teen Arts Education* convening.

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Ruth Erickson in conversation with Mark Dion. Photo by Caitlin Cunningham.

Visitors participating in the *Bridging Creativity* installation in the Bank of America Art Lab. Photo by Lauren Miller.

DJ Nights on the harbor. Photo by Ali Campbell.

Installation view, *i'm yours: Encounters with Art in our Times*, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2020–2021. Photo by Mel Taing.

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Installation view, *John Akomfrah: Purple*, ICA Watershed, Boston, 2019. Courtesy Lisson Gallery. Photo by Meg Elkinton. © Smoking Dogs Films

Eva LeWitt, *Untitled (Mesh Circles)*, 2021. Installation view, *Eva LeWitt*, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2021. Courtesy the artist and VI, VII, Oslo, Norway. Photo by Ernesto Galan. © Eva LeWitt

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Jason Moran and the Bandwagon performing at the ICA in 2018. Photo by Liza Voll.

Simone Leigh, *Cupboard IX*, 2019. Stoneware, raffia, and steel armature, 78 × 60 × 80 inches (198.1 × 152.4 × 203.2 cm). Acquired through the generosity of Bridgitt and Bruce Evans and Fotene Demoulas and Tom Coté. Courtesy the artist. © Simone Leigh

Performers at ICA First Fridays. Photo by Ally Schmalig.

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Installation view, *Tschabalala Self: Out of Body*, Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2020. Photo by Mel Taing. Courtesy the artist. © Tschabalala Self

Installation view, *LOVE IS CALLING*, Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2019. Photo by Ernesto Galan.

Food distribution at the ICA Watershed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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ICA/Boston. Photo by Chuck Choi.