



POCO
muse

2022

YEAR-END REVIEW

FREE, OPEN & *accessible*

\$0
ADMISSION FEE

6
DAYS PER WEEK THE
MUSEUM IS OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC

3
GALLERIES IN NEW BUILDING

1,453
SQUARE FEET OF
EXHIBIT SPACE

850
SQUARE FEET
OF COLLECTION
STORAGE SPACE

0
BARRIERS TO PEDESTRIAN
ENTRANCE

2
PUBLIC RESTROOMS (ONE OF
WHICH IS ADA-ACCESSIBLE)

A NEW HOME

The 2022 calendar year was a groundbreaking year in the history of the PoCo Muse. It marked the culmination of several years of transition toward the establishment of a new long-term museum home. During this time, the PoCo Muse faced considerable turmoil: the temporary closure in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the abandonment of a proposed capital project at 16 Indiana Avenue, and finally, the reinvestment in and move to its property at 20 Indiana Avenue.

The PoCo Muse focused on strengthening its identity. The staff continued to tell stories creatively across various platforms, they debuted the *PoCo Muse Magazine*, and they prioritized the long-term care of the collection. Trustees of the PoCo Muse Foundation solidified its relationship with the Porter County Commissioners and set an amended course for the Museum's future.

During the first quarter of 2022, the Museum renovated 20 Indiana Avenue, owned by the PoCo Muse Foundation since 2017, to become its fourth home. The new facility featured public galleries, collection storage,

and offices all under one roof. It is the first location to provide an ADA-accessible experience for visitors and a climate-controlled environment and high-density shelving for the collection. The new PoCo Muse was opened to the public on May 20 with the exhibition, *A Calumet Tapestry: Artistic Views of the Region*, a collaboration with the Field Museum of Chicago and other regional institutions. •

"Our new home at 20 Indiana Avenue has presented opportunities to prioritize quality over quantity. Our ability to tell meaningful stories has changed the way we operate as a museum."

Kevin Matthew Pazour
Executive Director



responsible STEWARDSHIP

694
NEW ACCESSIONS

5.69%
OF CATALOGED COLLECTION
NEWLY ACCESSIONED

3,975
OBJECTS INVENTORIED

33%
OF COLLECTION
INVENTORIED

7
ARTIFACTS LOANED TO
OTHER INSTITUTIONS

114
ARTIFACTS DISPLAYED

169
TOTAL STORAGE SHELVES
AND DRAWERS INSTALLED
IN NEW BUILDING

COLLECTIONS

In the winter and spring of 2022, PoCo Muse staff took on a monumental task to move the majority of the collection from the 1871 Porter County Jail to its new home at 20 Indiana. At the same time, they carried on with the day-to-day work of a museum, as artifacts continued to be donated and needed to be cataloged, inventoried, and cared for.

For the first time in museum history, the dedicated storage facility in 20 Indiana provided a climate-controlled environment for the proper preservation of the artifacts in our care. The staff developed a creative and cost-effective high-density storage solution to house the majority of objects. Outdated and inefficient shelving was replaced with space-saving and mobile units made from conservation-safe materials.

The relocation project was an arduous task completed entirely by museum staff. It required the assessment, packing, and labeling of objects before physically transporting them and assigning a space for them in the new building. A three-month gap between exhibits provided a period when renovation work and exhibition

installation could occur simultaneously at 20 Indiana. Staff took every precaution to ensure the safety of the collection from the contamination of construction materials.

The work continues to this day. Many of the items moved still need to be inventoried and documented in the collection catalog. Some items have yet to be relocated.

Asa Kerr, the Collection Manager who oversaw the relocation project and had been with the PoCo Muse since September 2017, ended his on-site tenure on May 20 to pursue a degree in secondary education (history and German) at the University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School. Sarah Berndt, who worked at the PoCo Muse in various capacities between June 2017 and January 2020, filled the vacated position on June 6.

The PoCo Muse also welcomed two Collection Interns during 2022. Valparaiso University student Kaelie Eberhart started her internship as an incoming senior on June 6. After completing her internship, she assumed the staff position of Collection Assistant on August 14. Another



Valparaiso University student, Emily Graves, spent her fall semester with the PoCo Muse and completed her internship on December 16. Both interns helped with the ongoing inventory project, and contributed to exhibitions and publications with research, writing, and installation. •



meaningful STORYTELLING

6
EXHIBITIONS DURING 2022

23
ARTISTS REPRESENTED

114
ARTIFACTS DISPLAYED

3,242
VISITORS TO THE MUSEUM

6,610
VISITORS TO THE POP-UP
AT THE PORTER COUNTY FAIR

9
CONTRIBUTORS TO POCO
MUSE MAGAZINE ARTICLES

349
MAGAZINE SUBSCRIBERS

EXHIBITIONS & PUBLICATIONS

The year 2022 opened with the final two months of the exhibit *Designing 50 Years: Architecture + Community* in the Montague/Urschel Gallery at 20 Indiana. This retrospective display explored the history of the architectural firm Design Organization (DO) from its 1971 founding in Valparaiso to its present operation as a branch of Shive-Hattery, a nationally prominent engineering company.

From 2018 through 2022, the PoCo Muse collaborated with 18 other local history institutions, including the Field Museum of Chicago, to present a four-part exhibition series across the Calumet Region. This series, called *Calumet Voices, National Stories*, explored the region's natural, cultural, and industrial history. The third part of the series, *A Calumet Tapestry: Artistic Views of the Region*, was hosted at the PoCo Muse from May 20 through September 30 in collaboration with the Westchester Township History Museum and the Brauer Museum of Art at Valparaiso University. A members' preview of this exhibit on May 19 was the first official event at the new PoCo Muse at 20 Indiana. The final part of this series opened at the Field Museum on November

11, and it features selections from the collections of the partner institutions.

In July, the PoCo Muse hosted a booth at the Porter County Fair and presented the *Prehistoric Pop-Up* exhibit, a completely redeveloped version of an earlier exhibit. The *Prehistoric Pop-Up* tells the story of the American mastodon remains that Myron Benedict found on his Porter Township farm in 1949. In ten days at the Fair, 6,610 visitors viewed the exhibit. The *Prehistoric Pop-Up* returned to the PoCo Muse at 20 Indiana in the Eunice Slagle Gallery between October 7 and 30, and then in the Montague/Urschel Gallery from November 10; it will remain there through April 16, 2023.

The fall quarter of 2022 saw three new exhibits open. October 7 marked the official dedication of the Robert Cain Gallery which displays rotating artwork from the collection, including at least one of the namesake's works at all times. On November 10, the first permanent exhibit at 20 Indiana opened in the Eunice Slagle Gallery with *Connections*. This exhibit gathers pairs of objects from the collection that share surprising relationships and cover a wide range of topics. On

December 10, in commemoration of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the World War II Lowenstine Roll of Honor was installed at 20 Indiana.

The PoCo Muse publication cycle maintained its rhythm in 2022. Each quarter the *Muse News* newsletter featured updates, events, short historical stories, and highlights from the collection. Two issues of the *PoCo Muse Magazine* were created. Issue No. 3 was released in March with a focus on architecture, featuring a biography of Charles F. Lembke, a summary of the Design Organization retrospective exhibit, and highlights of architectural features from the collection. Issue No. 4 was released in September and featured stories of interdisciplinary regional artists, including nature photographer William D. Richardson and local artist and teacher Robert Cain, to commemorate the exhibit *A Calumet Tapestry*. One special publication that detailed five impactful fires in downtown Valparaiso was released in February. •



hands-on LEARNING



29
FREE 30-MINUTE TOURS

47
TOTAL TOURS, PROGRAMS
& OPENINGS

16
THURSDAY EVENINGS
WITH EXTENDED HOURS

79
ACTIVITIES COMPLETED
BY VISITORS

136
EXHIBIT-RELATED BUTTONS
AWARDED TO VISITORS

863
TOTAL PROGRAM
ATTENDANCE

PROGRAMS & TOURS

The opening of the new PoCo Muse at 20 Indiana Avenue marked a return to regular public programs, events, and tours. These offerings, along with the museum's easily-accessible new entrance, were the main drivers of museum attendance and engagement. The museum saw 3,242 total visitors at its new home in 2022. While this was lower than pre-pandemic attendance figures, much of this can be attributed to a general cultural change in museum attendance due to the Covid-19 pandemic and to the fact the museum was closed to the public for three months. It's notable that the number of walk-in visitors attracted by the museum's convenient and accessible new entrance has increased greatly. In addition, the 6,610 people who visited the *Prehistoric Pop-Up* exhibit at the Porter County Fair provided a boon for outreach engagement.

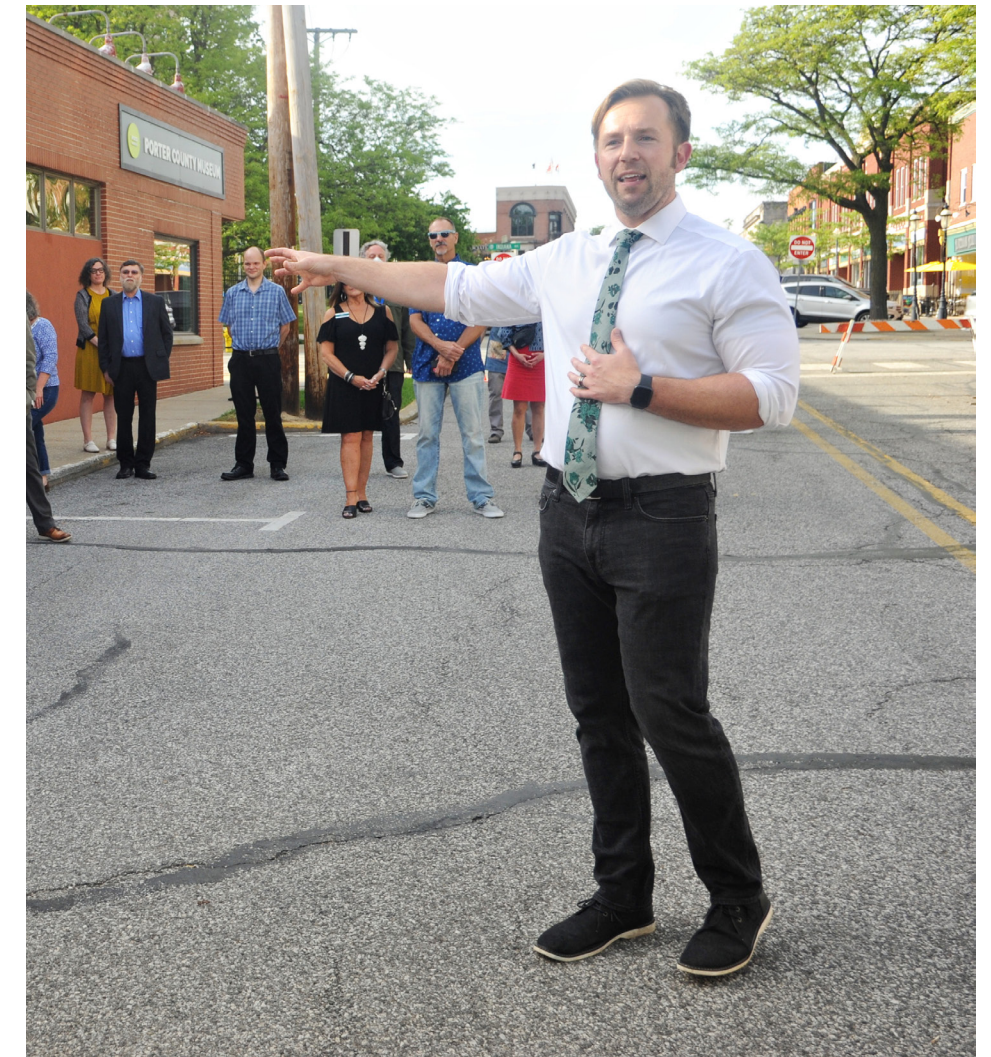
In conjunction with the *Designing 50 Years* exhibit, the PoCo Muse hosted a tour with Design Organization founder Douglas Pierce on February 15 which had fifteen attendees. For the younger audience, an interactive "Imagine You're an Architect" scavenger hunt provided creative engagement. At the closing of the exhibit, self-guided

downtown Valparaiso architecture "scavenger hunts" were offered, and there were two "micro-tours" along the courthouse square.

After the opening of the new PoCo Muse at 20 Indiana in May, additional programming resumed. A free weekly 30-minute guided tour with Quinn Albert, Visitor Experience Associate, attracted forty-eight total attendees. From Memorial Day through Labor Day, an anonymous donation funded expanded Thursday evening hours, bringing eighty-eight more visitors through museum doors.

Also during the summer, local artist Corey Hagelberg gave a gallery talk about his work for fifteen attendees in the Eunice Slagle Gallery. Three special Behind-the-scenes tours were given of the new facilities on June 10-12 for twenty-two participants. On August 27, Ian Baker and other living history reenactors pitched their tents on the front lawn of the former sheriff's residence to celebrate the bicentennial of Joseph Bailly's arrival to Porter County. Fifty-one people participated and then visited the PoCo Muse afterwards.

After its successful run at the Porter County Fair, the *Prehistoric Pop-Up* arrived at the PoCo Muse in the final quarter of 2022. Thirty children participated in exhibit-related activities. A walking tour of Union Street Cemetery on October 25 had twenty-five attendees. During Valparaiso's Holly Days events on December 2 and 3, the PoCo Muse stayed open until 6p and saw sixty additional visitors. As a free giveaway and marketing tool, the PoCo Muse provided souvenir buttons which featured museum logos and images of artifacts; 136 were distributed. •



collaborative COMMUNITY



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McMillan
Porter County
Government
Joanne & Dan Urschel

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Douglas Watkins

Matt & Sami Welter

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Aylesworth
Suzanne & Wesley
Baker
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Scott Bocock
Melvin Bohlmann
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Diana & Craig
Moorman
Gerald & Mary Lou
Munger
Bob & Mary Kay Philips
Jody Stowers
Thursday Morning Bible
Study Ladies

394
TOTAL POCO MUSE
SUPPORTERS IN 2022

2
INTERNS DURING 2022

100%
OF 2022 STAFF STARTED
AS POCO MUSE INTERNS

18
REGIONAL PARTNERS FOR
CALUMET VOICES, NATIONAL
STORIES EXHIBIT SERIES

4
PARTNERS, INCLUDING
THE FIELD MUSEUM, FOR
A CALUMET TAPESTRY



Address

20 Indiana Avenue
Valparaiso, IN 46383

E-mail

info@pocomuse.org

Phone

(219) 510-1836

Website

pocomuse.org

Social Media

@pocomuse

POCO MUSE

Hours: Tuesday-Sunday, 11a-4p

The award-winning PoCo Muse maintains free general admission as this area's oldest institution devoted to the history and culture of Porter County.

Visit our newly-imagined and fully-accessible building—the fourth home of the Porter County Museum since 1916.

MISSION

We engage Porter County's rich past with its evolving present to educate, enrich, and inspire our communities.

VISION

We believe our work of interpreting this area's history and culture empowers Porter County residents to form a strong and purposeful sense of place, identity, and community.

VALUES

Free, Open, and Accessible

We meet the needs of our communities as a welcoming and inclusive gathering place.

Meaningful Storytelling

We connect stories with artifacts to encourage imagination, introspection, and empathy.

Hands-on Learning

We create opportunities to learn from interactive and intergenerational experiences.

Collaboration

We work together with people and organizations aligned with our mission and vision.

Responsible Stewardship

We uphold the collection and history of our institution with integrity and accountability.

STAFF & BOARD

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Kevin Matthew Pazour

Director of Exhibits & Publications

Jake Just

Visitor Experience Associate

Quinn Albert

Collection Manager

Sarah Berndt

Collection Assistant

Kaelie Eberhart

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Albert Photographic