



John Michael Kohler Arts Center

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Nov. 21, 2022

John Michael Kohler Arts Center Receives \$1M Award from Ruth Foundation for the Arts



Ruth DeYoung Kohler. Photo courtesy of John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

Sheboygan, Wis. — The John Michael Kohler Arts Center (JMKAC) in Sheboygan, Wis., announced today that it has received a \$1 million grant from Ruth Foundation for the Arts (Ruth Arts).

The grant will support JMKAC general operations such as exhibition and programming development, artist commissions, and digital-asset management systems. The award comes from Ruth Arts' newly formed RDK Legacy Fund, which honors and continues Ruth DeYoung Kohler II's (1941–2020) steadfast support of regional and craft-based organizations and artist-built environments. Kohler dedicated five decades of her remarkable life to leading and nurturing the growth of the John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

Ruth Arts is a Milwaukee-based foundation supported by a bequest from the late Ruth DeYoung Kohler II. Kohler served as JMKAC's director from 1972–2016, having started as a volunteer in 1967, then holding the position of assistant director from 1968–1972.

"This generous award will go a long way in furthering JMKAC's work to generate a creative exchange between artists and the public, and to engage in meaningful conversations with artists, fellow grantees, and our community. We look forward to partnering with Ruth Arts to keep Ruth Kohler's passion for art making and community building alive," said Amy Horst, JMKAC director.

Through Kohler's guidance, JMKAC grew from a local arts center to an internationally recognized institution presenting contemporary art, the work of vernacular artists, performing arts, and the work of art-environment builders. In 2016, when she left the directorship of the Arts Center, the board of directors honored Ruth by naming her director emerita of the Arts Center. It was a testament to her tremendous contribution to the fields of art environments and self-taught and folk art as well as contemporary art—and to her great success in guiding the Arts Center to become the renowned institution it is today.

The crown jewel of Kohler's legacy at JMKAC is the Art Preserve, where the Arts Center's unrivaled collection of art environments is on public view and available for researchers and artists to study and respond to year-round. The Art Preserve, which opened in June 2021 and is also located in Sheboygan, was the focus of Kohler's work during the last few years of her life.

More information about the John Michael Kohler Arts Center and the Art Preserve can be found at jmkac.org.

Ruth Arts announced a total of \$11.5 million in grants to 138 arts organizations on November 18. For more information, visit RuthArts.org.

ABOUT THE JOHN MICHAEL KOHLER ARTS CENTER

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center, located north of Milwaukee in Sheboygan, Wis., is known for promoting the understanding and appreciation of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists through exhibitions and commissioned works of art.

Founded in 1967, JMKAC has preserved, studied, and exhibited artist-built environments, earning a worldwide reputation. Art environments involve an individual significantly transforming their surroundings into an exceptional, multifaceted work of art.

The Arts Center's downtown Sheboygan facility includes eight galleries, two performance spaces, a café, a retail shop, and a drop-in art-making studio. Among its program offerings are community arts projects; artist residencies; presentations of dance, film, and music; a free weekly summer concert series; classes and workshops; an onsite arts-based preschool; and approximately twelve original exhibitions of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists annually.

JMKAC also administers the renowned Arts/Industry residency program, which is hosted by Kohler Co. Arts/Industry offers artists the time and space to focus on the creation of new art by working with industrial materials and processes in studios located in the Kohler Co. factory. This remarkable collaboration between industry and arts will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2024.

ABOUT THE ART PRESERVE

In 2021, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center opened the Art Preserve, the world's first museum to focus entirely on work from art environments. Located in Sheboygan, three miles from the Arts Center, the 56,000-sq.-ft., three-level building holds more than 25,000 works in JMKAC's world-renowned collection, which includes complete and partial environments by more than 30 self-taught, vernacular, and academically trained artists.

Visitors experience unprecedented access and insight into the display, preservation, conservation, and interpretation of the Arts Center's premier collection through tableaux as well as a unique system of curated, visible storage of the works of art.

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center (608 New York Ave.) and the Art Preserve (3636 Lower Falls Rd.) are located in Sheboygan, Wis. Admission is always free. For information, call (920) 458-6144 or visit jmkac.org.

ABOUT THE RUTH FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

The Ruth Foundation for the Arts (Ruth Arts) is a new grantmaker based in the Midwest and dedicated to meeting the evolving needs and lived experiences of artists, communities, and arts organizations whose work is anchored by visual arts, performing arts, and arts education. Based in Milwaukee and national in scope, the foundation reflects the culture and spirit of the Midwest, which long inspired its namesake and benefactor Ruth DeYoung Kohler II. The foundation is a responsive and adventurous new force in the realm of arts philanthropy.

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Arts Center and Art Preserve Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Thursday: 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.
Saturday, Sunday: 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Location

John Michael Kohler Arts Center: 608 New York Avenue, Sheboygan, WI
Art Preserve: 3636 Lower Falls Road, Sheboygan, WI