



Houston
Museum
of
Decorative
Arts

2024-2025
Annual
Report

Dear Friends,

This past year has been an exciting chapter for the Houston Museum of Decorative Arts. We are well into projects to restore our historic museum and expand our outreach and educational programs. We deeply appreciate our partners and the community as these projects continue in the coming year.

While our beloved 1890s home at 201 High Street undergoes long-awaited preservation and renovation, we are thrilled to invite visitors to our Pop Up Museum and Gift Shop. We opened this temporary facility in May 2024, inside the former Back Inn Café—right around the corner from our permanent building. At this temporary space in the Bluff View Art District, we share Anna Safley Houston's remarkable collection in a fresh, curated way, offering visitors a new perspective on the treasures she left to our community for education and enjoyment.

It has been a joy to welcome guests from Chattanooga, across the U.S., and around the world—from California to New York, and as far as Russia, Sweden, and Korea. This year we began offering optional self-guided tours, giving visitors the chance to explore at their own pace. This change ensures that even those with limited time can still enjoy the beauty and history of Anna's collection. Docent-led tours continue to be an option for visitors.

We are truly grateful to our partners and the community for their support as these endeavors progress into the next year. We can't wait to welcome everyone back to our newly restored and improved museum home soon!

With gratitude,

Pam Reed, *Executive Director*

Clare Hetzler, *2024–25 Board of Directors President*

Building on the Past

CAPITAL PROJECT: WITH PHASE I COMPLETED, PHASE 2 BEGINS

To date, the museum has raised just over \$3 million in capital funds to renovate and reimagine the museum at 201 High Street. In addition to support from the city and state, we had incredible support from local foundations and private donors. The Pop Up Museum's beautiful collection has helped spread the word about our exciting project, paving the way for our upcoming public kick-off.

- PHASE 1. We improved the building's foundation and removed a deteriorating add-on from the back of the house. Construction crews installed French drains and completed extensive foundation improvements.
- PHASE 2. During Phase 2 we are working to provide a strong exterior and build infrastructure. Exterior work includes repairing the roof and installing new electric, plumbing, heating, and air in the entire house. Crews are repairing the original floors, and we added a fire suppression system and a new security alarm system with cameras.
- PHASE 3. Phase 3 begins this fall. We will add an elevator, storage space in the basement for the collection, a new gallery on the first floor, and a beautiful second-floor classroom inspired by a Victorian conservatory. By the end of this phase the museum will be ADA compliant for the first time in history.



Above: Exciting times for the Houston Museum as construction begins in May, 2024.

Below: Add-on removed as work begins to stabilize the foundation of our Victorian era house.



Top: Clare posts a sign directing visitors to the Pop Up Museum, our temporary home during renovation of the house on High Street.

Bottom: Pam welcomes guests at the opening of the Pop Up Museum.





Above: Textiles from the 1800s (and so much more!) are on display at our Pop Up Museum.

Below: Members of the Chattanooga Symphony play for an evening event on the Bluff.



Expanding Into the Future

POP UP MUSEUM OFFERS A FRESH LOOK AT AN ESTABLISHED COLLECTION

Our temporary location during construction has been critical to fulfilling our mission to showcase and preserve the unique decorative arts collection of the late Anna Safley Houston.

- We have welcomed thousands of visitors to an engaging display of items from the larger collection. Visitors appreciate the creative use of a former restaurant and stately inn as a museum!
- Our gift shop sales have been wonderful, and the spacious shop holds interesting new items as well as antiques.
- We've introduced self-guided tours, something new for us. We're testing this new option at the smaller, temporary museum so that we'll be prepared to implement improvements when we reopen in the original location.

Growing Our Enrichment Programs

Anna Safley Houston intended the museum as a source of education and enrichment for the people of Chattanooga and visitors to our area.

SPECIAL EVENTS HIGHLIGHT THE COLLECTOR—AND THE COLLECTION

- We hosted the Chattanooga Symphony in October for a night of art and music in The Bluff. Participants enjoyed the sunset over the Tennessee River while visiting our Pop Up Museum and listening to beautiful classical music.

- We celebrated our holiday tea in December in partnership with our Bluff View neighbors, welcoming guests to Renaissance Commons for tea sandwiches and a special talk on the history of sugar and tea by docent Don Coleman.
- In February we celebrated our 51st Annual Antiques Show and Sale, welcoming hundreds of visitors to our preview party and weekend of shopping.
- In April we held a porch sale in honor of Anna's birthday, knowing just what Anna loved the most—shopping!

MUSEUM EDUCATORS STEP UP PROGRAMMING

Our education staff has had an incredible year. We partnered with many organizations to offer educational events in museums, schools, senior living facilities, and other places in our area. More than 5,000 participants enjoyed special initiatives during the 2024–25 year!

- Our staff and volunteers offer a popular Sunday Studio program once a month for children and families at the Hunter Museum of American Art, in conjunction with the Chattanooga Public Library. At Sunday Studios we offer unique art projects inspired by Anna Safley Houston's wonderful collection of decorative arts.
- At Chambliss Center for Children, we use art projects to teach kids about Anna's fascinating life, her art collection, and her dog, Sonny!
- Programs for all ages include tours for public and private school teachers and students, programs at local libraries, talks and activities at senior and assisted living facilities, presentations at civic organizations, and exchange programs with other museums in the area.



Above: The 51st Annual Antiques Show and Sale was held in February, hosting thousands of attendees.



Left and below: Our education efforts include programs at the Chambliss Center for Children and at the Hunter Museum of American Art's "Sunday Studio."



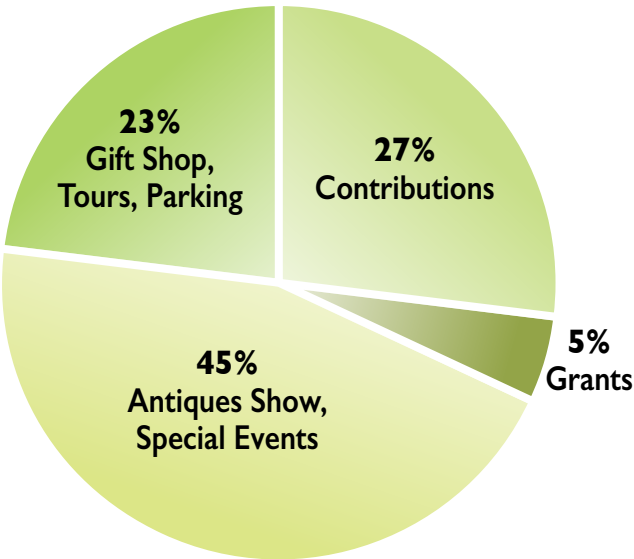
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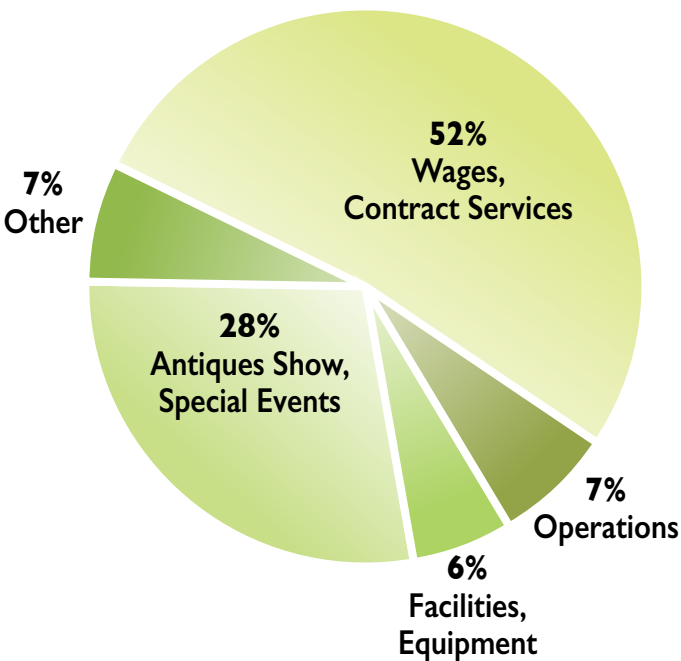
\$223,838*



*Total does not include capital campaign contributions.

EXPENDITURES

\$234,692



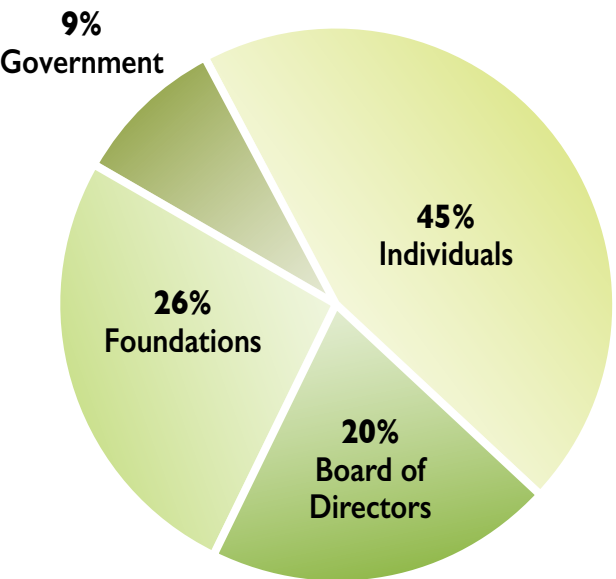
Looking Forward
to Next Steps

Our October event featured the Chattanooga Symphony Orchestra and an appearance by our third annual artist-in-residence Heather Turner.

This fall we'll unveil a new logo, a dynamic new website, special plans for our holiday tea, and our plans for the 2026 Antiques Show & Sale to be held February 20-22, 2026 at The Signal event space.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

\$3,253,435*



*Total as of October 14, 2025

The final phase of our capital campaign, a public appeal, began in October. This phase coincides with a construction phase that focuses on completing the interior and exterior of the museum revitalization project.

We are thrilled to have obtained contributions and pledges that nearly fulfill our goal of \$3.5 million. We anticipate a grand reopening of the Houston Museum in the summer of 2026.



Renovation renderings from
River Street Architecture. Construction
by New Blue Construction.



Houston Museum

of Decorative Arts

201 High Street, Chattanooga, TN 37403
423.267.7176 | TheHoustonMuseum.org

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*The Houston Museum of Decorative Arts
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