

20  
23



# ANNUAL REPORT





March 4, 2024



## From the Director

The end of 2023 marked a special milestone in the legacy of Open AIR, our first five years! From the sparkle of an idea to a full-fledged, robust organization serving Western Montana and beyond, it has been humbling to watch the overwhelming support come from our community and individuals like you to champion creativity, community, and collaboration.

Last year, as part of our anniversary, we sat down with important stakeholders, like our site partners and artists, to learn about the impact of our work from their perspective.

Here are my five favorite reasons folks love our work and think we are here to stay:

1. We provide valuable opportunities and exposure for artists with diverse art styles, mediums, and practices- particularly for more 'unsung' disciplines and less-known artists.
2. Flexibility and openness are incorporated into Open AIR's innate structure. We focus on collaboration and diversity without bureaucratic constraints.
3. We are committed to making art accessible and available to everyone.
4. We pay great attention to logistical details in all of our program planning.
5. Our positive relationship-building supports the potential for long-term partnerships, promoting sustainability and growth.

On a personal note, my husband and I brought a child into the world in the summer of 2023. In the midst of an often bewildering world, I am grateful to know our son will be offered refuge in the arts through Open AIR—emboldened, expanded, and nourished by the conversations between the arts, environment, culture, history, creativity, and one another.

Thank you for supporting the arts and a brighter, more creative tomorrow. Please join us this year for many more compelling and inspired happenings with Open AIR.

In gratitude,

*Stoney Samsoe*

co-founder, Executive Director

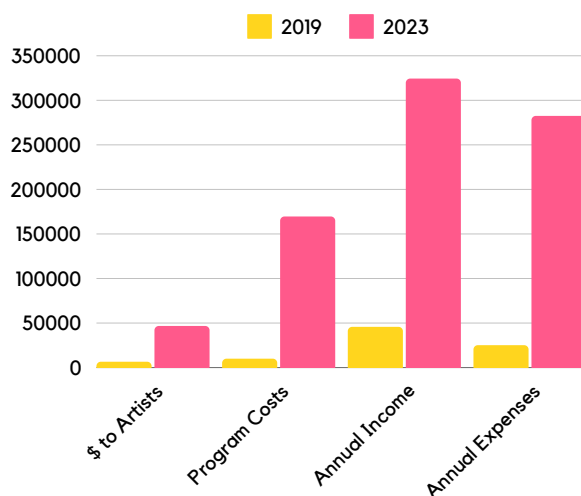
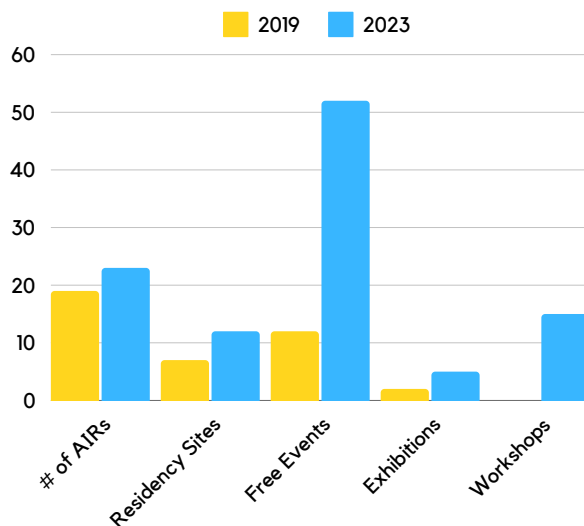


# Open AIR

Our first 5 years  
in review

## Delivering on our Mission and Vision

- To enrich communities by connecting people with creativity and place.
- To strengthen the creative capacity and wellbeing of Montana through arts-based cross-sector collaborations.



- Provided over \$100k in direct financial support to artists
- Raised over \$800k to support the arts & arts programming

In our first 5 years we have...

- Placed over 100 artists in unique month-long residency opportunities
- Offered over 168 free public programs
- Engaged thousands of communities members
- Incubated initiatives centering Indigenous Artists
- Hosted over a dozen art exhibitions showcasing hundreds of artists' work to thousands of people
- Worked with dozens of community partners to support artists

# Creation

painting, music,  
composition, writing,  
sculpture,  
textile, printmaking,  
& dance

20  
23



"Since graduating from school, I haven't had the chance to dedicate so much time for solely developing my art practice. This experience allowed me to think a lot about the kind of art I hope to continue making in the future. It gave me the confidence to try out some new ideas and processes that I haven't been able to tackle yet."

- Jasmine Gutbrod (Rhodes Island)  
@ the Flathead Lake Biological Station

**Open AIR provides crucial support for artists before, during, & after their residency.**

We function as an  
organizer,  
connector of entities,  
advocate, ally, and liaison,  
studio champion,  
media/marketing support,  
social liaison,  
curator &  
supporter of creative  
professional development.

23

**Artists-in-Residence**

13

**MT Artists**

All residencies are free of charge to artists and we award stipends to every participating Artist-in-Residence.

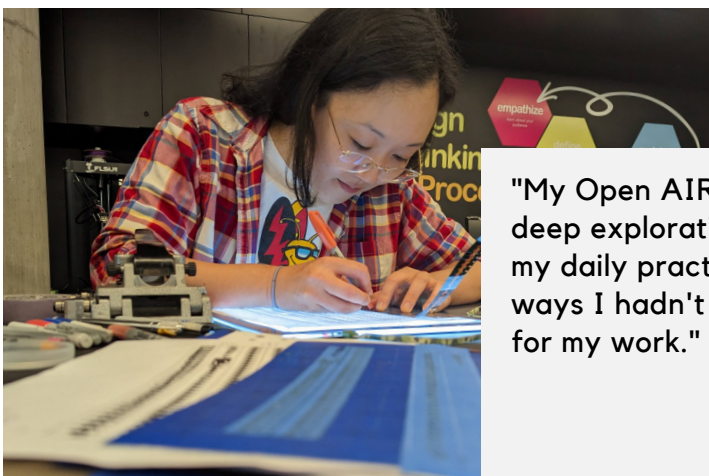


4

**Sessions**

13

**Residency Sites**



"My Open AIR experience was a time for free and deep exploration without the usual constraints of my daily practice. It allowed me to experiment in ways I hadn't before, opening up new avenues for my work."

- Justine Lai (Queens, NY)  
@ the Missoula Public Library





# Collaboration

## 2023

## Residency Sites

### Missoula

- Missoula Public Library
- Montana Natural History Center
- Home ReSource
- Moon Randolph Homestead
- Garden City Harvest
- Missoula Butterfly House + Insectarium

### and Beyond

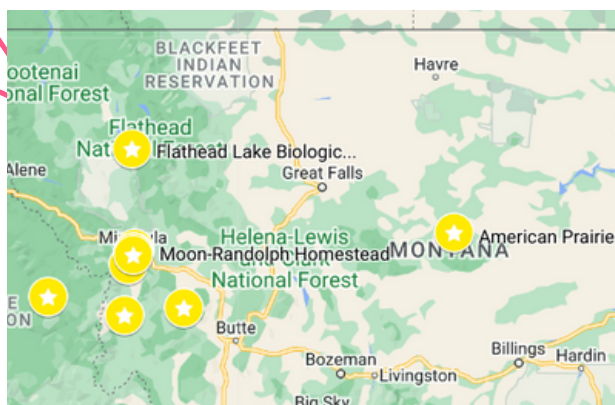
- Flathead Lake Biological Station
- Travelers' Rest State Park
- Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Wilderness Foundation
- Hamilton, MT
- Philipsburg, MT
- American Prairie



*Students at Open AIR's Art & Science Conference at FLBS, Fall 2023*

**"Partnering with Open AIR has been great because it's expanding our community and also how we think about the world."**

**- Tom Bansak, Associate Director, Flathead Lake Biological Station**



**"The lookout's not-so-easily-accessible location allowed for a natural flow between daily living and creating without typical distractions. The space and time away from familiar routines and environments allowed for a shift in attention and redirection of energy back into my own making practice."**

**- Erin DiGiovanni, Castle Butte Lookout in partnership with the Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation**

# 52

## Presentations

Public Presentations:

Attendees: 2000+.

Free to the public

At over 2 dozen sites



# 24

## Workshops

Artist led + designed

Workshops: Bookmaking,

Drawing, Laser Cutting,

Wearable Art, Quilt Care +

376 Attendees (all ages)

@ 9 different sites



# 6

Online Events

## Indigenous Initiatives

Led by Open AIR's Indigenous Leadership Committee with a focus on Indigenous artists and community-building.



# 4

## Exhibitions

Collaborations brought contemporary art to audiences around Montana.

Exhibition partners included:



## Online Catalog

We record all of our Residency and Indigenous Art, Indigenous Minds presentations and post online.

Scan the QR code to  
**Subscribe & watch:**



# Connection





In the Fall of 2023, visual artists Delia Touche & Brandon Reintjes, and writer Melissa Kwasny set out for a two-week residency at American Prairie, a vast prairie outside of Lewistown, MT. For the first half of their journey, they stayed in a yurt in a cottonwood grove on the PN. They then migrated to the The Enrico Science and Education Center at Sun Prairie to observe the Bison and learn more about the research that takes place at American Prairie.

# In-Situ

at American Prairie



**AMERICAN  
PRAIRIE**

"My experience at American Prairie was more than time set aside for writing. It was art camp and field school and research institute. It was like living in one's own private nature preserve. It was magical and bewildering. Bewildering, because how does one understand and respond deeply to a place...?"

- Melissa Kwasny, American Prairie

# In Numbers

## 2023 Expenses

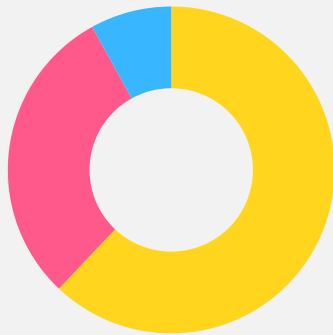
Total Expenses  
**\$282,510**

Program Costs  
**\$169,605**

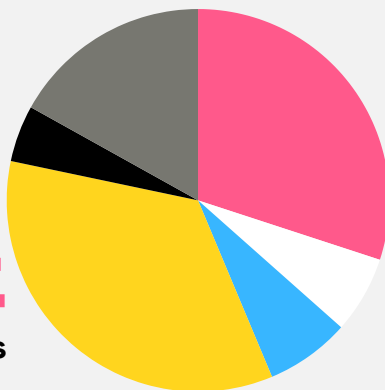
Average Cost  
Per Artist  
**\$7,000**

**\$46k**  
to artists

Program Fundraising Admin

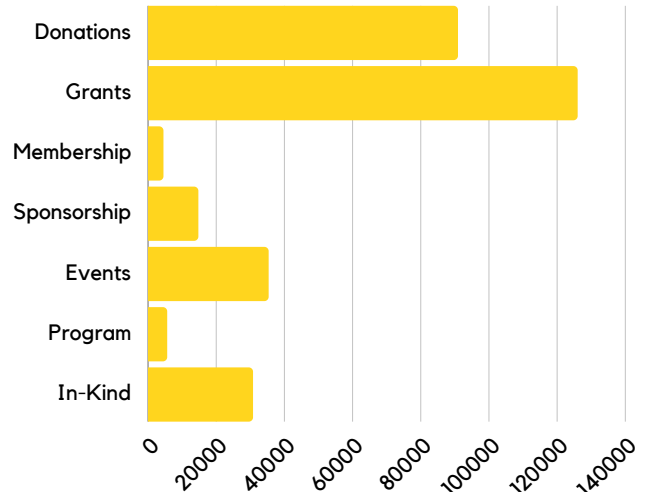


\$ to Artists Studio Space Lodging  
Staff Support Food + Travel  
Operations



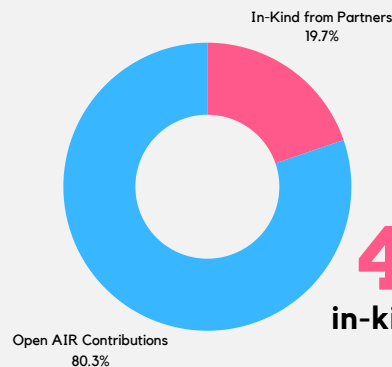
## 2023 Income

Total Income  
**\$324,430**



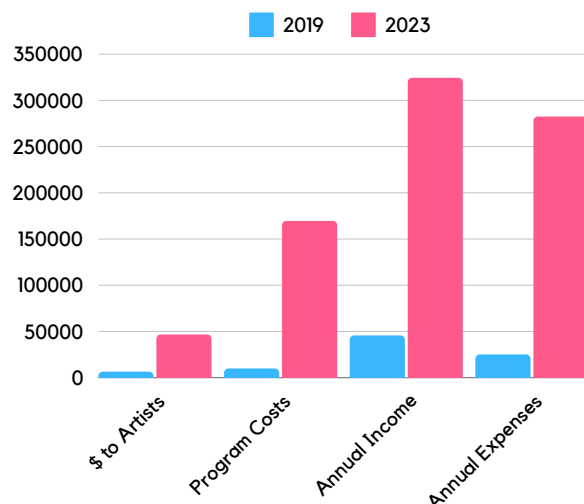
## In-Kind

Total In-Kind  
**\$30,800**



**480hrs**  
in-kind staff supportt

## 5 Years of Growth



**Collaboration = Shared Resources**

*Significant support for Open AIR is generated through partnerships. This means we do more with 'less,' prioritize supporting artists, and ensure your donations go the distance!*



## Open AIR Artists in-Residence

Sage Friss  
Ryn Stafford  
Cameron Decker  
Aspen Decker

Shelby Baldrige  
Michelle Boulé  
Justine Lai  
BT Livermore

Erin Digiovanni  
Brooklyn Draper  
Beth Godley  
Nancy Fitch  
Kerri Rosenstein

Sarah Jones  
rocki Swiderski  
Nicole Banowetz  
Melissa Kwasny  
Lauren Boilini  
Jasmine Gutbrod  
Hannah Allen  
Delia Touche  
Charlie Dov Schon  
Brandon Reintjes

Stoney Samsøe  
Kelli Sinner  
Kaisha Gerhardt  
Sasha Bell  
Erika Fredrickson  
Eileen Rafferty

## Other Community Partners

Emlen Evolutionary Biology Lab  
Philip Wright Zoological Museum  
UM School of Visual and Media Arts  
Westside Theatre

# 20 23

## This work is made possible in part by support from...

Laura Grace Barrett Family Foundation  
The National Endowment for the Arts  
Patt and Terry Payne  
The Llewellyn Foundation

## Jurors

Julia Galloway  
Anne Holub  
John Knight  
Kailyn McCord  
Carrie Richer  
Sigrid Sheie  
Taylor Stein  
Christina Tripp  
Janaina Vieira-Marques

## Board of Directors

Addie Palin (Board Chair)  
Carl John McKay (Treasurer)  
Sally Jo Beck (Secretary)  
Katie Van Dorn  
Liz Dye  
Anne McNallen  
Sami Stanley  
Janel Woodworth  
Amy Sings In The Timber  
Carrie Richer (Artist Rep)  
Michelle Boulé  
Rick Legon  
Mitchell McCabe

## Founding Members

Kevin Bateman  
Urban Bear Don't Walk  
Dana Boussard  
Sunni & Merrill Bradshaw  
H. Rafael Chacón &  
Andrew Laue  
Hadley & John Ferguson  
Reagyn Germer &  
Monte Mills  
Jana Hood  
Jen Leutzinger  
Barbara Liss  
Sandra Marker  
Carl John McKay  
Leah & Sam Ore  
Addie Palin & Jason Sloat  
Dawn & Tim Payne  
Celeste Payne  
Nicole Rush  
Bill & Barb Samsøe  
Stoney & Erik Samsøe  
Sandy Sheppard  
Amy Sings In The Timber

## Luminary Sponsors

Blackfoot Communications  
Bare Bait Dance

Staff

# Support + Connect



**openairmt.org**

## Get involved

- Read artist interviews
- Sign up for a workshop
- Attend a presentation
- Volunteer
- Donate

**Be a Friend of Open AIR**

**ENGAGE | INSPIRE  
EMPOWER | TRANSFORM**

"It was such a rewarding partnership to work with Open AIR and a joy to host artists on this vast and inspiring landscape. It was a joy to share its beauty, wildlife, and culture with them, & see them engage with this place through their observant, absorbent, creative thinking and processes."

- Corrie Williamson

Senior Outreach Manager, American Prairie

**WHERE ARE YOU  
INSPIRED?**

'Adopt an artist' by sponsoring one of our residency sites through Friends of Open AIR!

**Perks include** personal pairing, special events, making a significant impact in the lives and practices of artists, and more.

**Learn more and Register:**

**[openairmt.org/friends](https://openairmt.org/friends)**



*Lauren Boilini, Artist-in-Residence at the Missoula Butterfly House & Insectarium*