

Arts MSU



From its founding, Michigan State University has had a transformational impact on higher education in the United States. Dubbed “an experiment” by the university’s first president, MSU was a leader in democratizing education and advancing knowledge through an uncommon will to make a difference.

MSU has designed a university-wide arts strategy with the aim of integrating the arts into our educational experiences, our research activities, our outreach, and our campus culture.

This strategic approach to the arts was shaped by a collaborative process in 2019 and implemented in alignment with the *MSU 2030* strategic plan in 2021. In 2023, an identity for Arts MSU came to life.

We see our large campus as a large canvas. Arts on our 5,200-acre grounds—located right in the heart of Michigan—are everywhere, embedded and embraced across spaces and disciplines. Our Spartan community brings together exceptional art and performances, surprising moments where the arts can be discovered, unique interdisciplinary collaborations where arts meet research, and experiences that celebrate diversity while elevating our collective strength. And rooted in our historic mission, the arts at MSU are equitable, accessible, and extend their impact far beyond the bounds of the university.

Just as MSU has transformed higher education, the arts continue to transform MSU.

**THE ARTS DRIVE US TO
INNOVATE.
IMAGINE POSSIBILITIES.
SPEAK UP.
THINK DIFFERENTLY.
CONNECT.
EMBRACE CURIOSITY.
EXPLORE.
TRY NEW THINGS.
EXPERIMENT.
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

**Arts
MSU**

OUR MISSION

Arts MSU foregrounds creativity and exploration, igniting innovation and connecting campus and communities through the arts.

**Arts
MSU**

OUR VISION

Guided by the belief that the arts are essential to a vibrant university community that is resilient, inclusive, collaborative, and globally minded, Arts MSU advances the impact and amplifies the presence of the arts on campus and beyond. Integrating the arts across MSU's missions will lead to innovative practices of discovering, connecting, exploring, and remembering.

**Arts
MSU**

OUR VALUES

Inclusive

Connective by nature, arts on campus will be accessible, relevant, and intentionally support the diverse communities we serve.

Committed

Guided by a deeply rooted sense of social responsibility, arts on campus must be dedicated to advancing the common good.

Impactful

The arts merge the critical with the creative, providing the skills necessary to approach 21st century problems with empathy, resourcefulness, and an openness to think differently.

Transformative

Woven into the fabric of university life, engagement with the arts will catalyze empowering and lasting change to our campus culture.

Risk-Taking

Arts on campus will be bold and experiment with ways of addressing issues and ideas, modeling and encouraging the risk-taking inherent in learning.

Globally Minded

Reflecting the international focus of MSU, the arts promote exploration and engagement with diverse modes of understanding and expression.

**Arts
MSU**

OUR PILLARS

Three big ideas ground this strategic framework.

Each of these ideas has opportunities that will achieve immediate and sustained impact.

**Arts
MSU**

INTEGRATE THE ARTS INTO THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

fostering a more holistic approach to learning and problem-solving.

Why it Matters

Creative inquiry and expression are integral to advancing knowledge, the cornerstone of the university's mission. The arts strategy supports the university's strategic goals to better support students holistically, creating increased opportunity and more equitable educational outcomes. Engagement with the arts can lead to diverse modes of understanding and expression that can help every student succeed. The arts at MSU are bold, modeling and encouraging the risk-taking inherent in learning. The arts strategy elevates the ways in which art is an essential part of our culture, and therefore essential to the educational experience.

Actionable Outcomes

- Existing areas of excellence at MSU will meaningfully engage with and connect to the arts.
- Curricular innovation will embed the arts more deeply in every student's experience—as a vital component of integrative learning.
- Cross-disciplinary learning and engagement with the arts will be incentivized academically and socially.
- Arts opportunities will be more visible and accessible to students.
- Ways to measure and assess student curricular and co-curricular engagement in the arts will be designed.

Sustained Impact

By including the arts in curricular and co-curricular experiences, we can transform the intellectual and ethical habits of students, leading to an expanded, inclusive sense of community and an understanding of how curiosity and empathy drive innovation and change. The result is that the arts are woven integrally into the fabric of an MSU education, supporting an exceptional experience that prepares students for the next chapters of their lives.

**Arts
MSU**

INTEGRATE THE ARTS INTO THE RESEARCH ENDEAVOR

driving innovation and openness to new ways of knowing.

Why it Matters

The arts merge the critical with the creative, providing the skills necessary to approach 21st century problems with empathy, resourcefulness, and an openness to think differently. As we pursue excellence in service to the common good, we must also recognize art's essential role in advancing research that generates meaningful solutions. The arts have a transformative impact on learning and complex problem-solving, providing the tools to experience the world through diverse perspectives, engage with the most pressing issues of our time, and explore what it means to be human.

Actionable Outcomes

- MSU will develop an understanding of art as research—a significant form of generative inquiry that helps us all better understand our world through their work.
- Exhibitions, performances, and art programs are recognized as scholarly outputs.
- The evaluation and accolade process for faculty and graduate students will become more flexible to encourage cross-disciplinary research and collaboration with the arts.
- More grants will encourage collaborative arts efforts.
- MSU's world-renowned reputation in research will be strengthened through the celebration of the creative work taking place on campus.

Sustained Impact

The sorts of co-discovering and co-creating driven by the arts strategy will empower the identification of new and complex problems—laying the groundwork for creative solutions and amplifying the broader impacts of knowledge generated at MSU towards the common good. The result is more deliberate opportunities for active engagement among the arts and across other disciplines, leading to thoughtful and creative scholarship that elevates the impact of MSU's global research impact.

**Arts
MSU**

INTEGRATE THE ARTS INTO THE CAMPUS INFRASTRUCTURE

nurturing a sense of place, belonging, and community.

Why it Matters

The arts at MSU are distinct because they happen here. Grounded in MSU's historic mission but reflective of its global focus, the arts strategy advances the university's goal to remain among the most socially impactful and accessible universities by producing arts experiences that are uniquely possible on this campus. Art not only drives connection to place, but also to one another. Experiencing and making art together empowers dialogue across difference, fosters connection to shared experiences, and helps us feel like we are a part of something larger than ourselves.

Actionable Outcomes

- The arts will be intentionally embedded into the physical and cultural landscape of the university.
- Connective by nature, arts at MSU will be accessible, relevant, and intentionally support a strong sense of belonging for the diverse communities we serve.
- Arts on campus will serve as an important tool of placemaking, fostering a sense of belonging and MSU pride.
- We will diversify the ways that students, faculty, staff, and our surrounding communities can meaningfully engage with the university.
- The arts will be more fully integrated into MSU's public presence and brand promise.

Sustained Impact

By rethinking how public art functions on campus and creating new forms of engagement for various audiences, we will build stronger ties to MSU, to one another, and to our neighboring communities. Woven into the fabric of university life, engagement with the arts will catalyze empowering and lasting change to our campus culture. The result is that the arts are recognized as a ubiquitous feature of the campus and the Greater Lansing experience.

**Arts
MSU**

IMPLEMENTATION

Units across campus are providing opportunities for artistic engagement already—it's time we connect the dots. By strategically advancing the impact and amplifying the presence of the arts, we're creating a more vibrant, resilient, and inclusive campus culture.

**Arts
MSU**

PRIORITIZE

We're positioning the arts at the heart of MSU.

The arts must be essential to the everyday fabric of MSU life, and integral to the educational approach, research activities, and the day-to-day experience of the university.

- Signature initiatives connecting the arts with areas of excellence at MSU will lead to novel approaches to understanding and solving wicked problems.
- Curricular innovation will embed the arts more deeply in every student's experience—as a vital component of integrative learning.
- The arts will be intentionally embedded into the physical and cultural landscape of the university.

AMPLIFY

We're marketing, branding, and communicating the arts more intentionally.

The arts must be a visible presence on campus, to the community, and within MSU's public profile.

- We will develop effective, sophisticated, and unified platforms for sharing arts information.
- The arts will be more fully integrated into MSU's communications and brand promise.
- MSU will better communicate the impact of arts on campus.
- New modes of wayfinding and digital engagement will facilitate arts experiences for campus and community.

INCENTIVIZE

We're creating incentives and rewards for arts engagement and collaboration.

There must be academic and social reward structures that support cross-disciplinary collaboration and engagement in the arts.

- We will design ways to measure and assess the impact of student curricular and co-curricular engagement in the arts.
- The evaluation and rewards processes will become more flexible to encourage cross-disciplinary research and collaboration with the arts.
- More internal grants opportunities will facilitate cross-disciplinary arts efforts, leading to larger and more competitive external awards.

The logo for Arts MSU, featuring the word "Arts" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font above the letters "MSU" in a similar but slightly smaller bold, black sans-serif font.