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### ***KIRKLAND MUSEUM OF FINE & DECORATIVE ART AND DENVER ART MUSEUM MERGE***

**Denver, CO – May 9, 2024** – Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art (Kirkland Museum) and Denver Art Museum (DAM) announced today a transformative merger that will enhance the cultural landscape of Denver and beyond. Located just steps away from the Denver Art Museum at 1201 Bannock Street, Kirkland Museum will become the Kirkland Institute of Fine & Decorative Art at the Denver Art Museum, adding its renowned collection of decorative arts, specific focus on Colorado artists and extensive holdings of artist Vance Kirkland to the DAM’s world art collection and widely recognized program serving a broad spectrum of audiences.

The merger brings together DAM’s extensive expertise in audience engagement and curatorial excellence with Kirkland Museum’s distinctive focus on celebrating Colorado artists, including the art and legacy of Vance Kirkland, and decorative arts spanning from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to today. This alliance was born out of a shared commitment to enriching the cultural experience for visitors and the community at large. Combining the unique strengths of both institutions will amplify the positive impact on artistic exploration, scholarship, and engagement.

“Our strategic alignment of missions and values sets the stage for new opportunities in artistic programming and education,” remarked Christoph Heinrich, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the Denver Art Museum. “The vision that Merle Chambers and Hugh Grant have realized at Kirkland Museum is significant and together with the DAM, we are poised to curate one of the nation’s most extensive collections of decorative arts, further enhancing the cultural vibrancy of our city.”

Central to this merger is the commitment to optimizing resources to deepen visitor engagement and extend the reach of educational programming. Uniting design collections and

leveraging the expertise of both institutions will enhance the visitor experience and bolster the Golden Triangle Creative District's role as the City's cultural core.

Integral to the new Kirkland Institute of Fine & Decorative Art at the Denver Art Museum experience is preserving its intimate atmosphere and vignette-style exhibitions. Additionally, the significance of Vance Kirkland's three-room studio building, a cherished aspect of the museum's visitor experience, will continue to be a hallmark of the merged organizations.

This merger also marks a significant milestone in the collective power of distinctive architecture across the combined campus. Housed within a bespoke structure crafted especially for Kirkland Museum by esteemed architect Jim Olson, FAIA, Design Principal at Seattle-based Olson Kundig, the new Kirkland Institute of Fine & Decorative Art at the Denver Art Museum promises to extend the distinctive and complementary aesthetic for which the Denver Art Museum is known.

"This merger represents a bold step forward in our collective mission to honor our shared heritage, foster creativity, and cultivate a deeper appreciation for the arts," said Merle Chambers, Kirkland Museum Co-founder and Board Chair. "Together, we are charting a course toward a more dynamic cultural future."

The full integration of both organizations will take place over the next 12-18 months. This ambitious undertaking will involve a phased implementation of services and programs, ensuring a seamless transition and the most comprehensive offerings for art lovers in Denver and beyond. The process of aligning the organizations will begin immediately, with the aim of finalizing key operational integrations by September 30, 2024. Members of both organizations will enjoy reciprocal access beginning this summer.

Recently retired Founding Director & Curator of Kirkland Museum, Hugh A. Grant, devoted the majority of his life to curating, preserving, and promoting the works of Vance Kirkland and countless other artists. "As we celebrate the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Kirkland Museum and reflect on our thriving presence in this new building for the past six years, I believe it's the opportune moment to gracefully pass the torch of leadership. Kirkland Museum stands in excellent shape, a testament to the dedication and passion of our incredible team," Grant said. "Now, it's time to entrust fresh minds and innovative perspectives with the task of charting a new path for the next vibrant chapter in our journey. I have every confidence in the bright future that lies ahead."

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For more information, including images, please visit [KirklandMuseum.org](http://KirklandMuseum.org) and [DenverArtMuseum.org](http://DenverArtMuseum.org)