



PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

2023-2024 REVIEW





2024 PILLARS CLASS

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Travis Jennings, PE - BSE Structural Engineers

James Kendall, AIA - Clark & Enersen

Dan Osburn, AIA - HOK

Chelsea Powell, AIA - Travois

Annie Ringhofer, Assoc. AIA - KEM STUDIO

Audrey Swain - HNTB

Megan Strayer, Assoc. AIA - Clark & Enersen

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ABOUT PILLARS

The Pillars Leadership Training Program of the American Institute of Architects Kansas City prepares a representative cross section of the chapter's emerging leaders and individuals from the building community for their role in shaping the future of both the architectural profession and the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. The training program includes active participation in programs and exposure to community leaders and issues. Each class spends their time exploring core issues that affect our profession and the region within which we practice. Through discussions with leaders and colleagues, dialogue among themselves, tours and research the group will be able to understand and present to the AIA as a whole how we can make a positive change within our community. The AIA Kansas City Pillars program is a nationally recognized program for its originality and depth and has inspired similar AIA leadership studies in other US cities. The program continues to raise the bar of what young professionals want out of their profession and how we as professionals can make an impact on our built environment.



A ride on the Nelson-Atkins freight elevator



Pillars at Belger Arts Center surrounded by their latest glass exhibit

MAY: ARTS & CULTURE

In May, the Pillars Leadership Program immersed itself in the vibrant arts and culture scene of Kansas City. Our session offered a broad overview of the diverse locations, mediums, and scales that define the city's artistic landscape. We explored how exposure, education, and mentorship nurture and grow the local arts economy.

We kicked off with an engaging panel discussion at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, featuring respected representatives from three of Kansas City's premier art institutions: Matt Smith, Head Exhibition Designer at the Nelson-Atkins; Samantha Maloney, Exhibition Coordinator at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art; and Eileen Weir, Chair of the Community Engagement Committee for the Parade of Hearts. Their conversations provided valuable insights into the considerations, coordination, opportunities, and challenges involved in creating exhibits and public art installations. It was fascinating to hear their different perspectives, highlighting both commonalities and unique approaches of their respective institutions.

After the panel, we enjoyed a rare behind-the-scenes tour of the Nelson-Atkins Museum's art storage and maintenance facilities. This was followed by a glimpse into the production and design processes behind the museum's newest exhibit, showcasing the works of Niki de Saint Phalle.

Next, we visited the Belger Arts Center. We received an overview of the Glass Annex's capabilities and viewed the current exhibits. Staff members guided us through the Ceramic Studio, explaining the classes offered to the public and studio spaces available to artists of all skill levels. Our visit was culminated by meeting Michael Sims, who shared stories from his 40-year career in lithography at the Lawrence Lithography Workshop and demonstrated his studio process.

Our final stop was at Studios Inc., a facility in the Crossroads Arts District offering a residency program for mid-career artists at no cost. We met two resident artists, learned about their work and their experiences in the program. We wrapped up the day with a happy hour at Torn Label Brewing, conveniently located in the same building as Studios Inc.



Learning from artist Hong chun Zhang in her Studios Inc. studio