

Alexander Girard Legacy Fund

A Campaign for Generations





From Vision to Legacy

A legacy is a vision made real.

In 1953, Chicago philanthropist Florence Dibell Bartlett realized her vision of connecting audiences in the universal expressions of culture and creativity through folk art with the founding of the Museum of International Folk Art.

That same year, celebrated mid-century modern designer and folk art collector Alexander Girard established a home and studio in Santa Fe. Finding inspiration in his adopted city, he devoted his life here to expressing folk art's intersections with design. And like Bartlett before him, he, too, envisioned the museum as a space for showcasing the world's multicultural connections.



Over decades of traveling, Girard and his wife Susan assembled a premier collection of international folk art—some 106,000 objects from 100 countries on six continents. In 1978, they graciously donated the collection to the museum as a gift to the people of New Mexico, forming the core of the museum's holdings. They also gave a rich archive of Girard's travel photographs, exhibition files and research materials.

The Girard Foundation Collection and Archive transformed Bartlett's original vision into tangible new ways of engaging a diversity of visitors in one-of-a-kind exhibitions, opportunities for research and local-global museum experiences.

Girard's generosity was aspirational and inclusive. While his interpretation of folk art was uniquely his own, he understood that the museum must continually evolve to meet the world it seeks to reflect. His gifts set the stage for future generations of visionary participation and support.

COVER: Detail of Alexander Girard's installation of the 1977 Museum of International Folk Art exhibition, *Fantasy and Enchantment: Selections from the Girard Foundation Collection*, which anticipated the debut of *Multiple Visions: A Common Bond* in 1982. MOIFA Exhibitions (AR00004.170), Bartlett Library and Archives, Museum of International Folk Art. Photo by Art Taylor.

LEFT: Installation view of *Multiple Visions*, the preeminent example of Alexander Girard's exhibition design and a significant facet of his legacy.

ABOVE: Some 3.5 million multigenerational visitors have visited the Girard Wing since its creation in 1982.

All *Multiple Visions: A Common Bond* exhibition photos courtesy Museum of International Folk Art.

“My thought in this collection and exhibition is to present opportunities for connecting with people all over the world. What becomes interesting is seeing the differences as well as the similarities. That’s the real payoff, the third dimension.”

—Alexander Girard

Shifting Perspectives The Girard Foundation Collection

Growing up in Florence, Italy, in a family of antique collectors, Alexander “Sandro” Girard took an early interest in the international history of art, craft and folk art traditions. A hand-carved Pinocchio marionette he collected as a child is now on exhibit at the Museum of International Folk Art.

In 1982, Girard debuted *Multiple Visions: A Common Bond*, an installation showcasing more than 10,000 examples of his folk art, toys, textiles, miniatures and more within his singular modernist design. An exuberant experience of global cultures through color, texture and form, the exhibition put Girard’s experimental nature on full display, immersing viewers in the powerful visual language of folk art.

Guided by the Italian proverb “*Tutto il mondo è paese*,” or “All the world is hometown,” the exhibition was an invitation for reflection. “The whole world must know about itself,” Girard said, “and folk art tells us there are no foreigners.”

For the museum and its visitors, it was revolutionary.

Forty years later, *Multiple Visions* has been a destination for some 3.5 million multigenerational visitors who have experienced the wonder, spirit and whimsy of one of Girard’s last designed environments. Parents who discovered Girard as children now bring their families, while guests from around the world are inspired by his folk art universe.

RIGHT: Girard’s global travel experiences and the objects he collected informed his vision in creating *Multiple Visions: A Common Bond*. Here, his Harbor Scene features ceramic figures by the Aguilar Family of Oaxaca, Mexico, and a ceramic tower by Candelario Medrano of Jalisco, Mexico. Photo by Kitty Leaken.





“Alexander Girard took inspiration from absolutely everywhere, whether it was a walk in nature, a market or his extensive world travels.”

—Kori Girard and Aleishall Girard Maxon, grandchildren of Alexander Girard

A Life of Learning The Girard Foundation Archive

The educational value of folk art, the communities it represents, and its intersections with modern design was not lost on Girard. His life of learning is illuminated in the Girard Foundation Archive, a diverse collection of work and research materials that offers a deeper dive into Girard’s genius as a creative and a collector.

Travel was central to Girard’s creativity and collecting, and the archive contains color photographs taken between the late 1950s and 1970. The images document Girard’s travels throughout the Americas, including Mexico, Bolivia, Peru, Brazil and Argentina, where he photographed street life, architecture, marketplaces, festivals, rituals, everyday objects and more. Indigenous cultures, including the Pueblos of the American Southwest, also caught his eye, as did religious and secular slices of life from Africa, Europe and Asia.

Girard’s extensive research process is captured in a large assortment of notebooks pertaining to various categories of objects and countries represented in the Girard Foundation Collection, including bills of sale and acquisition notes. Listings of object loans to exhibitions, as well as articles, newspaper clippings, gallery brochures and museum catalogs demonstrate Girard’s influence in generating interest in folk art in Santa Fe and far beyond.



TOP: Girard’s trove of travel photographs, including scenes of daily life from around the world, are part of the Girard Foundation Archive. Detail from the series “Fiesta de Cristo Rey, Patamban, Michoacán, Mexico, 1972,” by Alexander Girard. Alexander Girard Collection, AR.00019, Bartlett Library and Archives, Museum of International Folk Art, image no. 16061. ©Girard Studio, LLC.

BOTTOM: The Girard Foundation Archive includes Girard’s exhibition files and research materials, which are available for public use. Photo by Andrew Kastner.







“I look at the Girard Wing, and it is such a genre-bending, definition blurring, joyous celebration of how people are creative, of how they encode their lives in their art, of how they bring that to their children and to future generations.”

—Keith Recker, Author, Editor in Chief of *TABLE Magazine*

Impacting Generations An International Destination

For 40 years, the Girard Foundation Collection and Archive has helped solidify the museum’s influential educational role in representing the world’s folk art cultures and creators for people of all backgrounds and ages.

Today, the museum’s 100,000 annual visitors include 4,800 area schoolchildren and their teachers. A museum-based curriculum connects students to *Multiple Visions’* globally inclusive themes, engaging their curiosity about the world’s diversity, differences and shared experiences.

A 2017 museum survey of visitors ages 18 to 65 and older showed that adults are also drawn to *Multiple Visions’* unique design style, cultural breadth, and many avenues of experience and interpretation. An extraordinary 97% of visitors said they would like to see the exhibition again.

The popularity of *Multiple Visions* has made the museum an international destination for devotees of folk art, craft, design and Girard himself. Yet with shifting cultural mores and new technologies, visitors’ expectations change, requiring continual reassessment and reinterpretation of Girard’s vision.

Today, opportunities abound for making his installation, collection and archive even more relevant and inclusive in connecting multiple audiences old and new.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: *Multiple Visions: A Common Bond* is a journey of discovery for visitors of all ages who, at every turn, are immersed in the art, story and traditions of cultures from around the world. Photo by Kitty Leaken

LEFT: Dymkovo figures, detail from *Russia Scene*. Photo by Blair Clark.

“Alexander Girard wouldn’t want the museum to stand still. There are opportunities for even greater impact.”

—Charlene Cerny, Director Emerita, Museum of International Folk Art

40 Years Forward The Alexander Girard Legacy Fund

The 40-year anniversary of *Multiple Visions* is a perfect time to look backward and forward at the legacy of Alexander Girard, and to ensure his continued impact on generations of museum visitors to come.

With a goal of \$5 million, the Alexander Girard Legacy Fund does just that, creating a permanent source of financial support for the Girard Foundation Collection and Archive and the *Multiple Visions* installation.

This endowment is the final phase in a series of fundraising projects leading up to Girard’s 40th anniversary year. Since 2018, these have resulted in the museum hosting the retrospective *Alexander Girard: A Designer’s Universe* from Germany’s Vitra Design Museum; a scholarly symposium on Girard’s influence in design and collecting; work on a forthcoming anthology of writings on Girard as a 20th-century icon; and the intensive stewardship, care and conservation of objects and displays in the *Multiple Visions* installation.

The success of these projects signaled deep interest in Girard’s life in art and design, and especially, in his pioneering role in the history of the museum. The initiatives also led to the realization that, without an endowment to provide for the needs of the future, this important work to honor and protect Girard’s contributions for future generations remains unfinished.



TOP: An extraordinary intersection of objects and design, Girard’s *Multiple Visions* installation is in itself a work of art.

MIDDLE: The 2019 Vitra Design Museum exhibition *Alexander Girard: A Designer’s Universe* explored Girard’s significance as a modernist and one of the most influential interior architects and textile designers of the 20th century. Photo by Blair Clark.

BOTTOM: A 2018 refresh of *Multiple Visions* restored the brightly lit interior of the cathedral overlooking Girard’s vignette of the village of Acatlán, Mexico. Photo by Kitty Leaken.







“The overall design is in itself a progressive visual exercise in connections, which is just an extension of what the collection is.”

—Alexander Girard

Work in Progress Capacity, Stewardship, Engagement

As a mid-century collector and a designer, Alexander Girard responded to his place and time. His creative output at the museum was an extension of that—a work in progress reflecting a world in progress.

Likewise, as a self-reflective institution with a successful history of Girard-related activities, the museum has continually reassessed the visitor’s experience of *Multiple Visions* in the context of our collective place and time. Through the decades, we’ve learned that, while some visitors embrace the installation’s purely visual approach, others want different modes of access and understanding.

If working at the museum today, Girard would surely welcome the opportunity to connect his unique vision to contemporary audiences utilizing the creative inspirations, technological innovations and social conversations of the 21st century.

Your contribution to the Alexander Girard Legacy Fund will provide permanent funding for the museum to protect and advance all of our Girard resources in ways that both respect Girard’s original intentions and respond to visitors’ evolving expectations of the museum today and tomorrow.



CAPACITY

The ongoing vitality of the Girard Foundation Collection and Archive involves a range of museum professionals who curate, manage, promote and program a robust year-round calendar of educational outreach and Girard-related programming.

A new Cultural Advisory Network is guiding the efforts of museum staff in integrating visitor feedback and centering local experiences into the presentation and interpretation of Girard's legacy.

Through your generosity and foresight, the Alexander Girard Legacy Fund will provide permanent support for museum staff in this critical collaborative process and in all of their professional activities.

STEWARDSHIP

Forty years after its creation and installation by Girard, *Multiple Visions* is one of only a few remaining examples of his designed environments in existence.

Significant resources are required to provide responsible stewardship for the installation, which comprises only 10 percent of the Girard Foundation Collection. The greater collection, which is utilized for other exhibitions at the museum and beyond, also requires ongoing protection and care.

With contributions from donors like you, the Alexander Girard Legacy Fund will support the Girard installation, collection and archive in such ways as:

- ◆ Redesign and expansion of storage space for the Girard Foundation Collection and Archive
- ◆ Restoration and reinterpretation of the *Multiple Visions* installation and its environment
- ◆ Photo documentation of each distinct display utilizing new image technologies, including 3-D and virtual reality

ENGAGEMENT

The Girard Foundation Collection and Archive reflect Girard's appreciation of folk art as an educational, experiential window on the world.

With your commitment to our community of museum visitors, the Alexander Girard Legacy Fund will expand our educational reach through innovative technologies, increasing audience accessibility, impact and relevance for all ages in such ways as:

- ◆ Digitize collections objects, photographs and other archival materials, enabling greater access to the Girard Foundation Collection and Archive through expanded engagement and virtual programming
- ◆ Assess and implement new in-gallery technologies, such as augmented reality, QR codes and new audio and multimedia experiences
- ◆ Create an orientation video on the history and highlights of *Multiple Visions*

Additionally, the Alexander Girard Legacy Fund will support these ongoing needs:

- ◆ Recurring printing costs for promotional and educational materials related to Girard and *Multiple Visions*
- ◆ Establish annual educational programming, such as a lecture series and/or symposia
- ◆ Convene an annual meeting of the Cultural Advisory Network for ongoing interpretive reassessment

PREVIOUS SPREAD: A joyful detail of the Peruvian Village town set embodies the overall spirit and magic of *Multiple Visions: A Common Bond*. Qolla Dancers by Santiago Rojas Alvarez, Cuzco, Peru. Photo by Blair Clark.

OPPOSITE FAR LEFT: A student in the museum's Folk Art to Go program is captivated by a musical expression of life in Peru. Photo by Amber Paz-Csibi.

OPPOSITE LEFT: Italian Villa by Giancarlo "Tunsi" Girard, Florence, Italy. Photo by Kitty Leaken.

“Seeing Multiple Visions for the first time changed my life. You look, you see things differently. Perspectives change and shift, and a new understanding of the world emerges.”

—Connie Jaquith, Girard Legacy Campaign Co-Chair

Meet the Moment Secure the Future

The Alexander Girard Legacy Fund is your opportunity to preserve and enhance Alexander Girard’s life-changing gifts of art, imagination and scholarship.

This important endowment initiative meets the moment of the 40th anniversary of *Multiple Visions*, highlighting our past accomplishments and securing its future.

Our \$5 million goal includes \$1.5 million in cash to be used for immediate impact and an additional \$3.5 million in planned gifts. By contributing cash, or naming the museum in your will or estate plan, you will connect more visitors from around the world to the artistic legacy of Girard.

With your philanthropic support, Girard’s creative vision will continue to inspire and endure for generations to come.



ABOVE: Partnerships with schools and class visits to *Multiple Visions* offer unique opportunities for hands-on learning and cultural literacy with the museum’s talented and bilingual education team. Photo by Patricia Sigala.

RIGHT: Detail of African River Scene. Photo by Kitty Leaken.

LEFT: Installation view of *Multiple Visions*, demonstrating Girard’s introduction of color, texture and the integration of folk art into all aspects of his design practice.

BACK COVER: A bird’s-eye view of *Multiple Visions*. Photo by Polina Smutko.







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