

Mel Watkin
One-Page Biography

(Please see melwatkin.com for detailed resume.)

I have been involved in the arts as an artist, curator, and arts director since graduating from college in 1978. My work has been shown nationally with solo exhibitions at Franklin Furnace Archives, New York, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, Laumeier Sculpture Park, St. Louis, and the Addison/Ripley Gallery, Washington, DC. Recent group exhibitions include the American University Museum of Art, Washington, DC, the Grand Rapids Art Museum, Michigan and Longue Vue House and Garden, New Orleans.

My 2020–2023 exhibitions include “Revolving” at the Sheldon Art Galleries, Saint Louis, “Trees Bark” at the Kranzberg Foundation for the Arts, Saint Louis and “Art Along the Rivers” at the Saint Louis Art Museum.

During this time, the Hyde Park Art Center in Chicago **commissioned** three map-based works and Southern Illinois Healthcare Cancer Institute commissioned eight small works on paper. My work is in the collections of the Saint Louis Art Museum, the Illinois State Museum, Spencer Museum of Art, Kansas, the Book Art Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Franklin Furnace Archives, among other venues. In 2010, I was among 9 artists selected to create a permanent public artwork with Franz Meyer Glassworks of Munich, Germany for the “C” Concourse at Lambert St. Louis International Airport.

Grant awards include a 2007 and 2022 Illinois Arts Council Fellowship, a Critical Mass grant, a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Fellowship, and a Pyramid Atlantic artist’s book award. I have completed a number of residencies including the Ucross Foundation in Wyoming, Ragdale Foundation, Lake Forest, Illinois, and Palazzo Rinaldi, Noepoli, Italy.

Other professional work and community service:

Since graduating from Bennington College in 1977 and getting an MFA from the University of Montana in 1981, I’ve maintained a serious art practice while also working full-time or freelance. Starting by organizing exhibitions of other artist’s work, I moved on to my first **curatorial/director** position at The Brunswick Gallery in Missoula, Montana. From there, I was hired by Jock Reynolds at the Washington Project for the Arts in Washington, DC in 1984 and held a curatorial position from 1986–1990. After freelancing for two years, I worked as a curator under Betsy Millard at the Forum for Contemporary Art, (now the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis) from 1992 to 2003. My curatorial focus on identity issues gave me the opportunity to work with artists from many backgrounds, including Adrian Piper, Nancy Spero, Ida Applebroog, James Luna, Kara Walker, Barry McGee, Shahzia Sikander, and Enrique Chagoya, among many others. In 2004, I **founded** the Public Policy Research Center’s Photography Project at the University of Missouri St. Louis, a community-based photography program. My publications include numerous exhibition **catalog essays and reviews** for arts organizations and publications including *Art in America* and *Art Papers*. In my role as a curator, I served on regional and national grant, residency, and fellowship panels. In 2013, I expanded my studio practice to full-time.

