

# FUTURE NOW

## VIRTUAL SNEAKERS TO CUTTING- EDGE KICKS

FEBRUARY 7 - JUNE 7, 2026



THE KALAMAZOO INSTITUTE OF ARTS PRESENTS

**100**  
KALAMAZOO INSTITUTE OF ARTS  
**100**

# ABOUT

The Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (KIA) is thrilled to present the groundbreaking exhibition, *Future Now: Virtual Sneakers to Cutting-Edge Kicks* from February 7–June 7, 2026.

*Future Now* examines contemporary advancements in footwear and the sneaker's role in the wearable tech movement. Cutting-edge technologies, unlikely and new materials, and fresh ideas are all having a transformative effect on how individuals put their best foot forward. The exhibition includes digitally designed and 3D-printed shoes, sneakers made from mushroom leather and reclaimed ocean plastics, and footwear created for the daily grind and virtual reality alike.

*Future Now* features some sixty state-of-the-art designs from the Bata Shoe Museum's impressive collection of over 13,000 pairs of shoes, in addition to items on loan from select institutions, collectors, designers, and inventors. Footwear designers represented in the show include **Salehe Bembury**, **Steven Smith**, **RTFKT**, **Mr. Bailey**, **Zaha Hadid**, **Nike ISPA**, **Safa Şahin**, **EKTO VR**, **Saysh**, **Benoit Méléard**, **SCRY**, and dozens more.

In the nineteenth century, shoemaking in the West was influenced by the advent of industrial production and the development of new synthetic materials. This resulted in artisan shoemaking—the trade of the cobbler—taking a cultural backseat to mass production. Though it increased affordability and access to reliable footwear, mass production posed a new dilemma: predetermined sizes, styles, and colors limited consumer options and eventually led to worker exploitation and environmental waste. The designers represented in *Future Now* grapple with this complex history, prioritizing sustainability and style in equal measure.



SCRY  
Undercurrent, 2022  
Collection of the Bata Shoe Museum



*Future Now* explores how cutting-edge technologies, unexpected materials, and new ideas are transforming footwear today. The exhibition demonstrates how footwear embodies cultural histories, personal memories, and aspirations for the future. *Future Now* is oriented around four distinct categories: **Innovative**, **Virtual**, **Transformative**, and **Sustainable**.

Nike  
MAG, 2015  
Courtesy of the Department of Nike Archives



# SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sponsoring *Future Now* gives you an opportunity to bring this one-of-a-kind exhibition to West Michigan for the very first time. Sponsors receive both prominent recognition and special invitations to experience the exhibition. At the KIA we believe that Art is for Everyone, and in sponsoring *Future Now* you help make that a reality.

## Presenting Sponsor // \$50k (1 available)

- » Prominent recognition on the KIA website, digital newsletters, social media, *Sightlines* publication, and all exhibit promotional materials
- » Name and logo recognition in the gallery on/near title wall
- » A private tour with the Executive Director or Director of Curatorial Affairs for up to 8 people
- » 50 guest passes
- » 2 tickets to the Director's Circle Event



Hanan & Sons. Celluloid heel embellished with rhinestones. Courtesy American Federation of Arts and the Bata Shoe Museum.

## Innovative Sponsors // \$25k (2 available)

*Innovation has long driven footwear design, with each new material and production method meeting shifting needs and stoking desires. Today, innovation continues unabated. Cutting-edge technologies are being used by forward-thinking creators in startling ways, from responsive smart shoes to 3D-printed heels.*

- » Prominent recognition as a top sponsor on the KIA website, digital newsletters, social media, *Sightlines* publication, and all exhibit promotional materials
- » Name and logo recognition in the gallery on/near title wall
- » A private tour with the Executive Director or Director of Curatorial Affairs for up to 8 people
- » 25 guest passes
- » 2 tickets to the Director's Circle Event



Jeff Staple x RTFKT; Meta-Pigeon K-Minus, 2021  
Collection of the Bata Shoe Museum, gift of RTFKT; Image courtesy of RTFKT

## Virtual Sponsors // \$10k (3 available)



*The metaverse is a new frontier, a compelling place for creators that offers infinite potential for virtual footwear. From NFT sneakers to virtual try-ons, the futurists working in the metaverse are blurring the boundaries between the physical and virtual worlds.*

- » Prominent recognition on the KIA website, digital newsletters, social media, *Sightlines* publication, and all exhibit promotional materials
- » Name and logo recognition in the gallery on/near title wall
- » A private tour with the Executive Director or Director of Curatorial Affairs for up to 8 people
- » 10 guest passes
- » 2 tickets to the Director's Circle Event

Zaha Hadid x United Nude, NOVA, 2022, first designed in 2013. Collection of the Bata Shoe Museum. Image © 2023 Bata Shoe Museum. Courtesy American Federation of Arts and the Bata Shoe Museum.

## Transformative Sponsors // \$5k (4 available)

*Change occurs when the status quo is disrupted. From striving to build a more inclusive future to pushing the boundaries of design, the most visionary creators in the footwear industry are reimagining the future by breaking old molds and inventing new possibilities.*

- » Prominent recognition on the KIA website, digital newsletters, social media, *Sightlines* publication, and all exhibit promotional materials
- » Name and logo recognition in the gallery on/near title wall
- » 10 guest passes
- » 2 tickets to the Director's Circle Event



EKTO One Robotic VR boots, 2021  
Collection of Brad Factor  
Image courtesy of Brad Factor

## Sustainable Sponsors // \$2,500 (5 available)



*Around the world, more than twenty billion pairs of shoes are manufactured every year, and the majority are discarded as quickly as they are consumed. The environmental impact of such fast, cheap fashion has many concerned creators developing more sustainable materials and production methods to push the footwear industry ever closer to a more circular economy.*

- » Recognition on the KIA website, digital newsletters, social media, *Sightlines* publication, and all exhibit promotional materials
- » 5 guest passes
- » 2 tickets to the Director's Circle Event

## Friends // \$1k (unlimited)

- » Recognition on the KIA website
- » 2 guest passes

Goodyear Rubber Manufacturing Company Sneakers American, 1890s  
Collection of the Bata Shoe Museum  
Image © 2023 Bata Shoe Museum  
Courtesy American Federation of Arts and the Bata Shoe Museum

**For more information about sponsoring *Future Now: Virtual Sneakers to Cutting-Edge Kicks*, please contact Donor & Corporate Relations Manager, Josiah Solis, [josiahs@kiarts.org](mailto:josiahs@kiarts.org)**

# ADOPT A SHOE!

With over 60 unique shoes featured in *Future Now*, we are thrilled to launch our Adopt a Shoe initiative. This exclusive opportunity allows you to adopt a single shoe or a pair of shoes from the exhibit, playing a direct role in supporting these amazing pieces of art.

As a shoe sponsor, your name will be proudly displayed on the label of the adopted works, and you will receive 2 complimentary tickets to **Future: REMIX** event in Spring 2026.

**Adopt a Pair of Shoes** // \$500

**Adopt a Single Shoe** // \$250

All shoes will be available for adoption at the members preview event on February 6, 2026.

Sales Bembury x Crocs  
Pollex Clog, 2021  
Collection of the Bata Shoe Museum



## FUTURE NOW PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Sponsor a  
single event  
or program  
for \$500

As part of *Future Now*, the KIA will offer learning opportunities for all ages through Museum Education Programming and the Kirk Newman Art School, such as:

**ArtBreaks:** Lunch time programming with exhibit and museum focused lectures and experiences

**Artful Evenings:** A monthly gathering tied to the exhibition led by artists with interactive workshops

**Wonder Walks:** A chance for young children to engage with art

**Book Discussions:** Monthly free book discussion focused on art and exhibit related books

**Art Detectives:** A monthly gathering where Arty the Art Detective guides young learners through reading, making, and looking!

There will also be special programming, including **Family Nights**, **Community Days**, **Film Screenings**, a **Silent Disco**, a **Book Swap**, and more!



# SAVE THE DATE!

*Future Now. Virtual Sneakers to Cutting-Edge Kicks*  
**Member's Preview | February 6, 2026**



Picture by Eric Hennig

As a member of the KIA, you can be among the first people in all of Michigan to view the *Future Now* exhibit at a special members only preview night. Come mingle with fellow members, hear from the exhibit curators, and have an opportunity to adopt a shoe or pair of shoes from the exhibition.



## BECOME A KIA MEMBER TODAY!



The exhibition is organized  
by the American  
Federation of Arts and the  
Bata Shoe Museum



[kiarts.org](http://kiarts.org)

**Kalamazoo Institute of Arts**

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**On the Cover:**  
Mr. Bailey, Octopus shoe, 2018, Collection of  
Mr. Bailey.  
Courtesy American Federation of Arts and the  
Bata Shoe Museum.