

FUTURE NOW

VIRTUAL SNEAKERS TO CUTTING- EDGE KICKS

FEBRUARY 7 - JUNE 7, 2026



THE KALAMAZOO INSTITUTE OF ARTS PRESENTS

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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 P Virtual Prototype, 2022, Collection of the Bata Shoe Museum, Image © 2023 Bata Shoe Museum, Courtesy American Federation of Arts and 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, Nike MAG, 2015, Image 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, *Detail of celluloid heel embellished with rhinestones*, American, 1920s, Collection of the Bata Shoe Museum, Image © 2023 Bata Shoe Museum, Photo: Kailee Mandel, 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, Photo: Ron Wood, 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

SAVE THE DATE!

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

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 and hear from exhibit curators.



**BECOME A KIA
MEMBER TODAY!**



Salehe Bembury x Crocs, Pollex, 2021,
Image courtesy of Salehe Bembury.



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 **Book Swap**, and more!

Guest speakers during *Future Now* will include **Delicia Matthews**, Associate Professor of Textile and Apparel at the Wilson College of Textiles, and **Wilson Smith**, former designer at Nike.

FUTURE: REMIX

MARCH 20, 2026 | 7-10pm

The Kalamazoo Institute of Arts' annual "REMIX" event is an opportunity to get creative in connecting with the community around art and activation.

Grab your favorite kicks for the next REMIX at the KIA! Show off your fabulous footwear and join us for an evening with DJs spinning, cash bar, savory bites and sweet treats, dancing, and a "kicks contest" inspired by the KIA's next exhibition *Future Now: Virtual Sneakers to Cutting-Edge Kicks*.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Platinum Sponsor // \$6k (1 available)

- » 8 tickets to Future: REMIX
- » Platinum Sponsorship recognition on all printed and digital materials if secured prior to December 16, 2026.
- » Recognition with business logo on all promotional materials including printed program, website, social media, digital media and Sightlines publication after the event.*
- » Name and logo prominently displayed throughout the event
- » 1 additional drink ticket for each guest

Gold Sponsor // \$3k (4 available)

- » 4 tickets to Future: REMIX
- » Recognition in promotional materials including printed program, website, social media, digital media and Sightlines publication after the event.*
- » Name and logo prominently displayed throughout the event
- » 1 additional drink ticket for each guest

Silver Sponsor // \$1k (Unlimited)

- » 2 tickets to Future: REMIX
- » Recognition on website and Sightlines publication after the event.
- » Name and logo displayed at event
- » 1 additional drink ticket for each guest

PURCHASE TICKETS HERE



\$65 for KIA members | \$75 general admission and day-of

Ticket includes entry for 1 person, 1 drink ticket, hors d'oeuvres, live DJ's, and access to the KIA galleries.

For more information on sponsorships and tickets, please contact Josiah Solis at josiahs@kiarts.org or at 269-585-9279.



Future Now: Virtual Sneakers to Cutting-Edge Kicks is co-organized by the American Federation of Arts and the Bata Shoe Museum. This exhibition is curated by Elizabeth Semmelhack, Director and Senior Curator, Bata Shoe Museum.



kiarts.org

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts

314 S Park St
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

*To ensure all print recognition sponsorship must be confirmed prior to March 6, 2025. Sponsorships that are confirmed after March 6 may not be able to be recognized in printed materials.

On the Cover:
Mr. Bailey, *Octopus Shoe*, 2018, Collection of Mr. Bailey, Image courtesy of Mr. Bailey.