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**Kansas City Star, The (MO)**

August 14, 2011  
**Section:** News  
**Page:** F3

**'Water Lilies' drives attendance at Nelson**

*ALICE THORSON, The Kansas City Star*

Attendance is looking up at the **Nelson-Atkins** Museum of Art.

The **"Monet's Water Lilies"** show, which attracted 99,025 visitors during its 12-week run, gets some of the credit.

In recent years, the visitor count has averaged 350,000 annually; for the 2011 calendar year, Mark Zimmerman, the museum's director of administration, is expecting 390,000, an increase he attributes in part to **Monet**.

In 2007, the **Nelson** got a big bounce when the Bloch Building opened with the "Manet to Matisse" exhibit of Marion and Henry Bloch's impressionist collection. Although the 2007 total was 453,000 visitors, in the years that followed attendance dropped to 350,000, putting it below the pre-expansion average of 363,600.

This summer's **"Water Lilies"** racked up more visitors than the 91,600 who saw "Manet to Matisse" and the 84,200 who attended the 2001 Winslow Homer show. But it didn't top the 2002 "Eternal Egypt" exhibit's crowd of 114,000 or the 1990 Thomas Hart Benton show, which drew 118,500.

Whenever the spikes occur, more people mean more purchases.

The expanded museum store is thriving, Zimmerman said, with revenues of more than \$750,000 compared with the old store's yearly average of \$250,000.

To make it easier for Friday visitors to see the museum's exhibits and dine, beginning Sept. 16 the Rozzelle Court restaurant will stay open until 10:30 p.m. on Fridays. The extended hours are only for the restaurant. The museum will close as usual at 9 p.m. on Fridays, but diners who come in by 9 or 9:15 have access to the restaurant, Zimmerman said.

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