

Springfield



NEWSLETTER

JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH 2021

90 YEARS AND GROWING!



Director's Greeting

Nick Nelson Museum Director

In the time since our last printed newsletter (AMJ 2020) we have witnessed so much social and political turmoil and division from an ongoing pandemic, to a historically contentious presidential election. With a nod to the apocryphal curse: We live in interesting times. Of course, these interesting times have not spared the museum world. According to a recent *USA Today* article, as many as one-third of U.S. museums fear closing permanently due to the pandemic. While many face serious financial troubles others are being held to account for systemic racism and inequality, most notably on social media through Instagram accounts like #ChangetheMuseum and online groups like *A Better Guggenheim*.

Certainly, the future of museums as we know them is being challenged on many fronts. While it's easy for some to see these institutions as set upon considering their altruistic intent, museums have a jagged past to contend with and still struggle with issues of public trust. These issues are evidenced by recent controversies from the resignation of Warren Kanders from the board of the Whitney Museum of American Art to the postponement of the *Philip Guston Now* exhibition that was scheduled at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC and three other leading museums in the U.S. and the UK. I don't think that it is overly dramatic to state that the ongoing pandemic and the social forces behind these controversies will challenge the future of museums in fundamental ways as they question vital issues from how museums are funded to how museums share authority and create space for all members of their

communities, not only in their exhibitions and programs but in their staffing and leadership. These are interesting times indeed. Speaking frankly, I find the opportunity for change to be a point of hope and clarity in a sea of worry and chaos. According to the American Alliance of Museums: "The American public considers museums the most trustworthy source of information in America, rated higher than local papers, nonprofit researchers, the U.S. government, and academic researchers." However, there has been a steady but increasing erosion of trust in societal institutions with museums included. This erosion of trust may not always be unwarranted but undoubtedly has had a devastating impact as we've faced a deadly pandemic and communities across the country seem divided even on basic issues of public health.

Ultimately, perhaps, the true divisions have less to do with whether to wear a mask or believe the results of an election and more to do with who can be trusted with our communities' best interests. At the extremes, it feels as if the efficacy of public trust is in question as well. But if museums are truly places of trust, perhaps the most valuable asset we collect, maintain, and share with our communities are not things at all but trust itself. Without the public's trust, what do museums have to offer other than being empty buildings full of empty objects? I believe that in this moment, museums also have an opportunity to answer a higher calling of rebuilding their communities through the rebuilding of trust.

To do so will present serious challenges as trust must be earned through uncertain and

NOW

EYE TO I: SELF-PORTRAITS FROM THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Through January 17, 2021

Eldredge, Spratlen, Armstrong, and Hartman Galleries

AFLOAT: ARTISTS AND RIVERS

Through April 18, 2021

Weisel Gallery

messy public work. They cannot become echo chambers. You cannot fake it until you make it. It calls for an embrace of vulnerability. But in a world adrift with uncertainty and exhaustion, the idea of promoting difficult and uncomfortable work may not be very appealing. The “brave space” that museums may become, may not be the places of comfort and solace that we all long for in this moment. If museums are to take on this work, they must do so with sensitivity and care. Museums will need to step up as servant leaders in their communities and, most of all, will have to lead by example.

For the Springfield Art Museum’s part, our efforts will include changes both large and small that I hope will have a big impact on how we serve our community. The most immediately visible will be changes to the format of our newsletter. We want to rethink this publication moving forward as a new kind of communication tool, one that is as much about listening and sharing the stories of others as it is about us telling our story.

This is one step of many we hope to take in creating greater engagement with you, our audience, through active listening. To help us with these efforts, the Museum is creating a new staff position focused on Audience Development. This staff member will oversee how we connect with our audience members and lead them toward greater engagement with our organization from visitor to volunteer to leadership. One question we might explore is how we might empower our visitors to become more involved in our Museum and build community through that involvement. We also plan to focus energy on building stronger and more meaningful relationships with the many organizations and community groups who are our partners. Strong partnerships are a great opportunity to build community, especially when there are opportunities to build bridges between diverse partners.

Another very important goal for the Museum

will be to engage in serious work related to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion. In 2015, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, along with the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) and the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) conducted a study of diversity at U.S. museums and found serious deficiencies in diversity of staff and boards. According to the study: “Among museum curators, conservators, educators and leaders, only 4% are African American and 3% Hispanic (sic).” In response to this study, the AAM convened a Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) Working Group and in 2018 released the report, “Facing Change: Insights from the American Alliance of Museums’ Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Working Group.” A full copy of this report can be provided by the Museum upon request.

Among the insights provided by this report, those I find most actionable for our Museum include the following: “Every museum professional must do personal work to face unconscious bias,” “Systemic change is vital to long-term, genuine progress;” and “Empowered, inclusive leadership is essential at all levels of an organization.” Following up on these insights, the Museum will not only expand staff training in DEAI principles and work to expand the diversity of its staff and board through aggressive recruitment, we will also look within to identify opportunities for systemic change that will make our Museum a more diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive space.

What many of us feel right now is a longing to get back to normal. However, to me, getting back to normal means going back to a flawed system. In my opinion, one reason we are in this current state is that the normal that we enjoyed was dysfunctional. Moving forward means abandoning the comfort and security of getting back to normal. Simply put, we must “go forward to better” rather than “go back to normal.”

NEXT

THE INTERFERENCE STRUCTURE PROVIDES

Through April 18, 2021

Kelly Gallery

4X4 2020: MIDWEST INVITATIONAL EXHIBITION

February 27 – June 27, 2021

Eldredge, Spratlen, Armstrong, and Hartman Galleries

For the health and safety of our
customers and employees,
**FACE MASKS
REQUIRED**

Per Springfield City Code, Chapter 58, Article XIII, Section 58-1102



SPRINGFIELD -
GREENE COUNTY
HEALTH

Masks must cover nose
and mouth. Wearing a
face covering helps slow
the spread of COVID-19.

[HEALTH.SPRINGFIELDMO.GOV/CORONAVIRUS](https://www.health.springfieldmo.gov/coronavirus)

*All public programs and events remain cancelled through April 9, 2021 in accordance with Phase 3C of the City of Springfield, MO Road to Recovery Plan. More information at www.springfieldmo.gov.

**We regret to inform you that the annual *All School Exhibition* has been cancelled in 2021 due to the impacts of the pandemic on seated art classes in educational settings across our community during 2020. We look forward to welcoming this exhibit back to our galleries in 2022!

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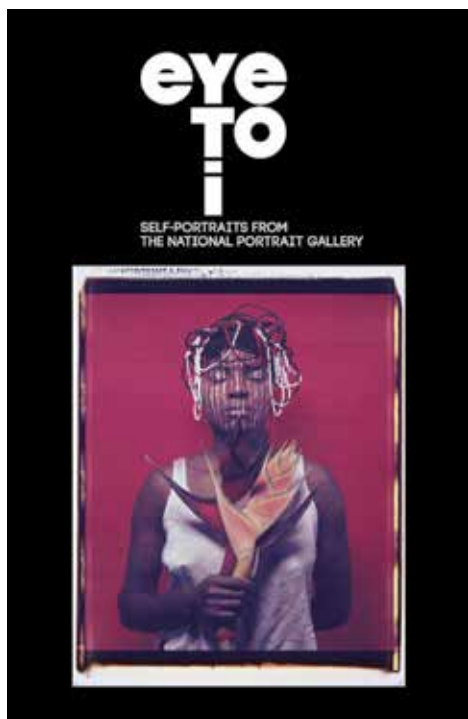
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MISSION Founded in 1928, the Springfield Art Museum invites you to connect with the world, your community, and yourself through active engagement with art objects.

EYE TO I:



María Magdalena Campos-Pons, *Untitled from the series When I am not Here, Estoy allá*, 1996, Dye diffusion transfer print. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Gift of Julia P. and Horacio Herzberg © María M. Campos-Pons.

Since October 24, 2020, The Museum has been pleased to host *Eye to I: Self-Portraits from the National Portrait Gallery* organized by the Portrait Gallery's Chief Curator Emerita Brandon Brame Fortune. At a time when countless "selfies" are being posted on social media channels and identity is proving to be more and more fluid, the exhibition presents a sampling of how artists have approached the exploration of representation and self-depiction through portraiture. With each self-portrait, artists either reaffirm or rebel against a sense of identity that links the eye to "I." Drawing from the National Portrait Gallery's vast collection, *Eye to I* examines how artists in the United States

George Gershwin, *George Gershwin Self-Portrait*, 1934, Oil on canvas board. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Gift of Ira Gershwin.

Drawing from the National Portrait Gallery's vast collection, Eye to I examines how artists in the United States have chosen to portray themselves since the beginning of the last century.

have chosen to portray themselves since the beginning of the last century.

The Museum's hosting of *Eye to I* features 58 works in a variety of styles and media ranging from caricatures to photographs, from colorful watercolors to dramatic paintings and time-based media. The exhibition traces the process through which select artistic practices have transitioned from gazing into the mirror to looking into the camera; from painted, drawn surfaces to mechanical reproductions such as prints and photographs; from static forms to video. Artworks to be included in the exhibition span the art historical timeline from 1901 to today. Early works include self-portraits of Edward Steichen,



SELF-PORTRAITS FROM THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY



Roger Shimomura, *Shimomura Crossing the Delaware*, 2010, Acrylic on canvas. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Acquired through the generosity of Raymond L. Ocampo Jr., Sandra Oleksy Ocampo, and Robert P. Ocampo © 2010, Roger Shimomura.

Alexander Calder, and composer George Gershwin, who was also a painter. More recent self-portraits include a video work by Ana Mendieta, and work in a variety of media by Chuck Close, Lois Dodd, Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons and Alison Saar, as well as a large-scale painting by Roger Shimomura, *Shimomura Crossing the Delaware*.

"Individuals featured in *Eye to I* have approached self-portraiture at various points in history, under unique circumstances, and using different tools, but their representations—especially when seen together—all raise important questions about self-perception and self-reflection," says Brandon Brame Fortune, Chief Curator Emerita, Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. "Some artists reveal intimate details of their inner lives through self-portraiture, while others use

FEATURED ARTISTS INCLUDE:

Robert Arneson
Alexander Calder
Jasper Johns
Allan Kaprow
Deborah Kass
Elaine de Kooning
Jacob Lawrence
Louise Nevelson
Irving Penn
Robert Rauschenberg
Fritz Scholder
Roger Shimomura
Edward Steichen
and many more.

The exhibition traces the process through which select artistic practices have transitioned from gazing into the mirror to looking into the camera; from painted, drawn surfaces to mechanical reproductions such as prints and photographs; from static forms to video.



Burton Philip Silverman, *Study for Survivor, Self-Portrait*, 2004, Oil on linen © 2004, Burton Silverman.

the genre to obfuscate their private selves or invent alter egos.”

Featured in *Eye to I* are self-portraits by prominent figures in the history of portraiture, including Robert Arneson, Alexander Calder, Jasper Johns, Allan Kaprow, Deborah Kass, Elaine de Kooning, Jacob Lawrence, Louise Nevelson, Irving Penn, Robert Rauschenberg, Fritz Scholder, Roger Shimomura, Edward Steichen, and many more.

Eye to I: Self-Portraits from the National Portrait Gallery has a richly illustrated companion volume that features an introduction by Brandon Brame Fortune and nearly 150 insightful entries on key self-portraits in the museum's collection. The book was published by the National Portrait Gallery, in association with Hirmer Publishers (2019). 336 pages. 175 color plates. 7 x 9 in. Hardcover. \$45.00. Distributed by the University of Chicago Press.

See *Eye to I: Self-Portraits from the National Portrait Gallery* in our Eldredge, Spratlen, Armstrong, and Hartman Galleries through January 17, 2021. This exhibition has been organized by the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C. and supported in part by Mr. and Mrs. Michael H. Podell.

Deborah Kass, *Red Deb; Yellow Deb; Silver Deb; Blue Deb*, 2012, Screenprints. Gifts of the Abraham and Virginia Weiss Charitable Trust, Amy and Marc Meadows, in honor of Wendy Wick Reaves.





Left: Alison Saar, *Mirror, Mirror; Mulatta Seeking Inner Negress II*, 2015, Woodcut on chine collé. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution © 2015 Alison Saar.

Above: Lee Simonson, *Lee Simonson Self-Portrait*, 1912, Oil on canvas. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Gift of Karl and Jody Simonson.

Support for the Springfield Art Museum's hosting of this exhibition has been provided in part by the Melinda J. McDaniel Charitable Trust.

AFLOAT: ARTISTS AND RIVERS

Afloat: Artists and Rivers



Sharon Zimmerman, *Turkey Run II*, 2000, Watercolor on paper. Friends of the Springfield Art Museum Purchase Award from Watercolor USA 2001. Collection of the Springfield Art Museum.

*"I lost the rivers
for part of my life.
I took them up
again after I came
back again (to
Missouri) in 1935."*
— Thomas Hart Benton

The Museum is pleased to present *Afloat: Artists and Rivers*, featuring 40 works pulled from the Museum's permanent collection including paintings, prints, and drawings, exploring a wide range of river-based work. This exhibition reflects upon the importance of Missouri's local waterways and beyond, as both a natural amenity and as a source of artistic inspiration.

Southwest Missouri is home to numerous natural resources. Easy access to beautiful parks, trails, and waterways is an important draw for tourists and residents alike. But it may come as a surprise that the Ozarks, and the Current and Buffalo Rivers in particular, were at the forefront of the national effort to protect this country's natural rivers. The beauty of Ozark rivers attracted enough advocates to stop the building of a dam along the Current River in 1949, and to create America's first "explicitly protected river corridor" in 1964, with the development of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, managed by the National Park Service.

One of these staunch advocates was none other than Missouri artist Thomas Hart Benton who voiced his support towards protecting his favorite rivers – the Current, the Buffalo, and the White; sites that he floated on a regular basis and that were featured extensively in his work. Ozark rivers continue to serve as inspiration and respite for our community, and for our artists. Local and regional artists include Thomas Hart Benton, Anne Austin Pearce, George Caleb Bingham, John Steuart Curry, Oliver Corbett, George Kieffer, Howard Garrison, Everett Coffelt, Ida Haldeman, and Louis Freund.

See *Afloat: Artists and Rivers* in our Weisel Gallery through April 18, 2021. This exhibition is generously underwritten by Bass Pro Shops/Cabela's. Additional financial assistance for this project has been provided by the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency.



Missouri Arts Council
The State of the Arts



the interference structure provides



Richard Smith, *Logo Suite portfolio*, 1971, Screenprints on vacuum-formed plastic on wood panels. Gift of Nathaniel Bickford, arranged through the Martin S. Ackerman Foundation. Collection of the Springfield Art Museum.

“...the grid is representative of this kind of idealism that we create, but the reality of human perfection is that the grid always shifts.”

— Andrea Zittel

The Museum is pleased to present *the interference structure provides*, which examines work by a group of loosely related artists from the 1960s and 1970s. This special exhibition includes artists like Michael Kidner, Garo Antreasian, and Gordon House, who were interested in the ways in which systemic structures could be applied to the process of art-making. Highly analytical in nature, each of these artists was reacting against a traditional focus on the art object in efforts to make their art more responsive to the world around them.

Some of these artists, such as Michael Kidner, utilized early computers to devise programs of art-making to impose rigid structures upon the

act and context of art-making. The resulting works often included grids, moiré patterns, and graph-like projections. This exhibition of 25 paintings, prints, sculpture, vacuum-molded plastic, and mixed media is pulled from the Museum’s permanent collection and includes work that has rarely been on view, including Kidner’s *The Elastic Membrane* portfolio, Richard Smith’s *Logo Suite*, and Jesús Rafael Soto’s screenprints on plexiglass and kinetic sculptures.

See *the interference structure provides* in our Kelly Gallery through April 18, 2021.



COLLECTION SPOTLIGHT: SUN TARGET II SARAH BUHR, CURATOR

Most Springfieldians would agree that the Museum's most well-known, and certainly most visible work, is *Sun Target II*, or as many of you know it – the French Fries. We've been thinking a lot about outdoor sculpture as we anticipate the beginning of the Stormwater Project and revisioning of our grounds.

These discussions have been happening in tandem with one of my projects that focuses on the history of the Museum. While deep in newspaper archives, artists' files, articles, and collection records, I realized that *Sun Target II* has led an exciting life: it has traveled throughout the United States, it has been wrapped, yarn bombed, cleaned and conserved, and served as the backdrop for countless photos.

Sun Target II is just one of a three-work series made by the artist John Henry. Each work in the series changes in scale and configuration.

Sun Target II has led an exciting life: it has traveled throughout the United States, it has been wrapped, yarn bombed, cleaned and conserved, and served as the backdrop for countless photos.

Sun Target is large-scale and installed on the grounds of the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, and is a part of the Mint Museum's collection. *Sun Target I*, part of the Central Florida University collection, is medium-scale in comparison to *Sun Target II*, which

1974: Created in 1974, first shown in Grant Park, Chicago as part of the Art Institute of Chicago's Sculpture in the Park exhibition alongside works by Mark di Suvero, Kenneth Snelson, Richard Hunt, and others.

1975: Installed in Riverside Park, NY

1976: Installed in downtown Atlanta, GA

1980: Purchased by Springfield Art Museum, installed on east grounds

1994: Moved further east to median near National in preparation for Museum expansion; conserved after moving

2007: Wrapped in plastic for "A Day Without Art" in honor of World AIDS Day

2013: October, local Yarn Bombers organized by artist Pam RuBert cover the sculpture in yarn

2016: May, "Save the French Fries" campaign successfully raises funds to conserve the work

2016: August, sculpture cleaned and restored



Henry considers the three works sisters, closely related but distinct in the ways that they occupy space.

is considered monumental in scale. Henry considers the three works sisters, closely related but distinct in the ways that they occupy space. Henry sees his sculptures as "a kind of transition between intimidating architecture and the average person.... sculpture serves as a humanistic kind of buffer."

There appear to be as many "French Fry" sculptures as there are types of french fries. All the following cities have a yellow John

Henry sculpture that local residents have nicknamed "the French Fries": Pittsburgh, PA; Gainesville, FL; Springfield, IL; and Sioux City, IA (Sioux City recently repainted their sculpture blue, with the artist's permission).

I've always thought *Sun Target II* seems cramped on the small little patch of grass by National Avenue. I think we should move it closer to the building after the grounds are redone – what do you think?

RECENT ACQUISITIONS: CRYSTAL

We are excited to announce the Museum's Purchase Award winner from *Watercolor USA 2020* – *Crystal* by local artist Trevor Doell, purchased with funds generously provided by the Southwest Missouri Museum Associates.

Doell is a recent graduate of Missouri State University with a B.A. in Fine Art. His portrait depicts Crystal Methyd (Cody Harness), a local drag artist and recent contestant (and finalist) on season 12 of RuPaul's Drag Race. Pre-

pandemic, Crystal hosted *Get Dusted*, a monthly drag party at The Outland Ballroom, including a special themed party in 2019 tied to the Museum's 99x: Sweet Monsters event, as well as drag bingo nights at The Golden Girl Rum Club and drag brunches at Cellar + Plate. Doell's artist statement shares more about why he chose to paint *Crystal*:

Finding my place in the LGBTQ community was a major role in my acceptance. When finding people that you can connect with on a personal level because you share similar stories, you begin to build a bond. That feeling of friendship then begins to turn into more than that, they become your family. For me, personally, I found my chosen family within the drag community. When seeing my friends perform in drag, I can sense the confidence that they embody and it's as if nothing can knock them down. For me, as a gay man and as an artist, this gave me the courage and confidence in myself to be the person that I truly am. These paintings are a representation of not only the idols that I look up to but also



Trevor Doell, *Crystal*, 2019, Watercolor on paper. Museum Purchase Award from *Watercolor USA 2020* with funds provided by the Southwest Missouri Museum Associates. Collection of the Springfield Art Museum.)

people who taught me to love myself for who I am all the while giving me a place to finally feel accepted. I want the LGBTQ youth to see themselves represented in a positive way by people who have gone through the same struggles and difficulties. Whether your family or your chosen family, accept you, there are people that will support you no matter what.

It was vital for the Museum to acquire this painting, not only for its technical achievement, but for its connections to our community and its emphasis on the often-overlooked performance art aspect of drag. This work is powerful, it represents and reflects the rich and diverse personal and community-wide narratives that are happening right now in Springfield. *Crystal*, together with other paintings of Springfield residents in our collection, like Fanny and L.A.D. Crenshaw, Rodney Frew, Susi Steinitz Ettinger, Bucky Bowman, Robert E. Smith, and many more, will allow us to continue to tell Springfield's unique story through art.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS: ONCOMING SPRING (SPRING FLOODS)



Rob Erdle, *Oncoming Spring (Spring Floods)*, 1990, Watercolor on paper. Gift of Maureen Hayes Sando and Barry Mack Sando. Collection of the Springfield Art Museum.

The Museum is pleased to announce the acquisition of Rob Erdle's 43" x 96" watercolor painting *Oncoming Spring (Spring Floods)*. Erdle (1949-2006) was a prolific American watercolorist. Born in California, Erdle received a B.A. from California State University – Fresno where he studied with Wayne Thiebaud and Judy Chicago. He obtained an M.F.A. from Bowling Green University.

Erdle was involved with the Museum's *Watercolor USA* exhibition for 20 years, serving as juror in 1989 and included as an exhibiting artist for multiple years. He was the president of the Watercolor USA Honor Society from 1997-2000. His work has been included in numerous national and international watercolor exhibitions and is included in the permanent collections of the New Orleans Museum of Art, the Ochsner Foundation, and the University of North Texas, among others.

Oncoming Spring reflects Erdle's mature style, pulling from both landscape and abstract traditions. This work is one of the largest in a series Erdle created in 1990-1991 inspired by Chinese scroll paintings, Monet's *Waterlilies*, and the gardens at Giverny. It has been exhibited at the Louisiana Art and Science Museum and Still-Zinsel in New Orleans. While the Museum has several strong works by Erdle in our permanent collection due to his generous and successful involvement with *Watercolor USA*, we had nothing in this scale by an artist well-known for his nearly six-foot long paintings.

This work is the gift of Maureen Hayes Sando and Barry Mack Sando. The Museum is deeply appreciative of their generous philanthropy. *Oncoming Spring (Spring Floods)* is currently on view in the special exhibition *Afloat: Artists and Rivers* through April 18, 2021 in our Weisel Gallery.



SUSAN DANIEL SMMA PRESIDENT

Hi everyone. Well, it's the start of a new year, and hopefully everyone is keeping safe and well and may someday soon receive the coronavirus vaccine to insure they can stay that way!

We keep working on our money-making projects – Geraniums, Mums and pecans. We have postponed the Fashion Show until fall in the hope that COVID-19 will be under control by then and we can move forward with our plans.

We have been able to maintain good financials and are now helping Kate Baird with the Art Museum Project Bags. Kate introduced the Project Bags to the Board of Trustees at their recent meeting - which have been implemented in lieu of the 5th grade bus tours that are now on pause because of the virus. They are really fun bags and a great educational resource as well. Kate noted that the bags are currently being assembled and delivered to the school classrooms by the Museum's docents, but she would welcome outside volunteers and asked that anyone willing to help to please contact her.

SMMA is currently searching for an Administrative Assistant to take over the general office duties three days a week. Our Art Groups will begin meeting again in January and hopefully will have a good spring to enjoy their meetings. An

SMMA website is currently in the planning stages. Any input would be appreciated. All suggestions will be considered and compiled and presented to the Futures Committee for final decisions.

Thanks to my Executive Committee for working hard to get things done, even though we have mostly been reduced to keeping in touch over the past several months via emails and texts. It's been a different (difficult) kind of year, but we are all looking upward and onward for the positives in our lives.



SMMA Announcements 1st Quarter 2021

Donations & Speaker Gifts: Amateur d'Art, Cameo Art, Visual Arts (now disbanded)

Memorials & Honorariums: In memory of Gloria Eskew & Judy Gibson

Board of Trustees Meetings: Wednesday, January 27, 2021



SHAE JOHNSON FOSAM PRESIDENT

As we continue with our “new normal,” I would like to remind you all that going to visit the Springfield Art Museum is safe, so please get there to enjoy. It does serve as a distraction and gives wonderful variety to your day.

I would like to remind you all to renew your FOSAM Memberships. Please check out our website for more details on what membership gives to you at the various levels of giving. We will be mailing out reminders in the next couple of months.

The normal September 99 Times Party was cancelled due to the Covid-19 virus and with the thought of preventing its spread. FOSAM has contributed \$2,000 to the Conservation and Preservation Fund. This is one of the ways your membership money helps out the Museum.

Our board members are the following, and I appreciate having these folks on our board for another year:

President: Shae Johnson

Vice President: Sandra Letson

Treasurer: VACANT (*Please let me know if you can be our treasurer ASAP! It's not a very difficult job.*)

Advisors: Betty Shook, George Deatz

Webmaster: Luci March

Others include: Cheryl Vowels, Avis Holloway

If you are interested in serving on the board, please let me know. We currently need one more board member. You can email me at Shaeinozark@yahoo.com. Mike Carlie has been putting out a great newsletter for art lovers during these past several months, called *The Artist's Palette*. If you didn't sign up for it yet, please contact [Mike MichaelCarlie@MissouriState.edu](mailto:MikeMichaelCarlie@MissouriState.edu) to get on the mailing list. It is a wonderful way to learn more about various artists - both historical and local - plus virtual museum visits, and more.

WATERCOLOR USA CALL FOR ARTISTS



Deadline to apply: February 21, 2021

Entry applications are now open for *Watercolor USA 2021!* The 60th annual juried exhibition of the very best in contemporary American watermedia is scheduled for June 5 – August 29, 2021. This exhibition is open to artists from all 50 states and U.S. territories and will be judged by Nick Nelson, Museum Director at the Springfield Art Museum.

All artists (age 18+) using watermedia as critical components in their work can enter. Artists whose work pushes the boundaries of traditional aqueous media are encouraged to enter. Approximately \$20,000 in cash prizes and Museum purchase awards are available. Support for *Watercolor USA* has long been provided by the Southwest Missouri Museum Associates, with additional cash and artist materials awards generously provided by the Watercolor USA Honor Society.

Artists who are interested in participating can view sample works from previous exhibitions

by visiting sgfmuseum.org/246/Watercolor-USA, reviewing previous *Watercolor USA* photo galleries on our Facebook page, or by reviewing previous “July August September” issues of our printed newsletter at sgfmuseum.org/150/Newsletter. In addition, you can request *Watercolor USA* catalogs dating back to the 1980s by contacting the Museum at (417) 837-5700.

These historical documents will provide a snapshot of what has been exhibited in the past; however, it is important to note that we are actively seeking what is now and what is next in the world of watermedia, and that each annual juror brings their own aesthetic eye and decision-making to the process.

For full information on entry rules and how to submit your work, please view or download the prospectus at sgfmuseum.org/246/Watercolor-USA or contact Exhibition Manager Cindy Quayle at cquayle@springfieldmo.gov or (417) 874-2863.

EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT: WEB OF CONNECTIONS

KATE BAIRD, MUSEUM EDUCATOR



Jane Wilson, *Night Across the Bay*, 1999, Oil on linen. Gift of Lawrence L. DiCarlo. Collection of the Springfield Art Museum

This spring and summer, I have had the chance to learn more about artists in our collection. What follows is just one instance of how a small amount of research can illuminate unexpected connections and make an experience with art feel personal. I chose a book about Jane Wilson because I had never heard of her. Here are a couple of things that she said about her work:

"...For me (painting) was about the substance of things without substance—our experience of the insubstantial being that which makes the insubstantial visible. That was when the idea of the painting as a 'container of endless experience' became most appealing to me. And the most basic form for that idea was the sky."

"(On a farm) you learn to feel the weather coming. Weather is not just visual, you can feel it with all your senses. That's what I'd like to get at in my paintings—that full-body feeling." As I read about Jane Wilson's girlhood in Iowa and her painting practice, I thought of another artist in our collection who grew up in Iowa and makes art about the experience of perceiving

which references the sky, Anne Lindberg. The quotes above offered me insight into Wilson's paintings, but they also gave me new ways to consider *tilted sky*, an artwork that, as a function of my job, I have spent more time

actively considering than any other piece of art anywhere.

That contradictory formulation—"a container of endless experience"—also seems like an apt description of a museum. When we are physically present in a museum, it literally contains us. But does it also contain all the impressions we carry out of it and weave back into our lives? Does it contain the coincidences out of which we make meaning? I became aware of Jane Wilson's work at the beginning of our recent stay-at-home order. At the same time, I happened to receive an email from a college painting professor with whom I had lost touch many years ago. She mentioned that a small reproduction of a Jane Wilson painting hangs in her studio.

Without as many people to see or places to go, I've instead gotten a glimpse at the dense but ephemeral web that tethers the works in our collection to each other and to my own life outside of the museum. This web is always mostly invisible, different for everyone, and constantly changing. If we had all the time in the world, we'd never get to see it all.

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