

NBMAA

2020 Spring Newsletter



Dear Friends,



As one of the oldest museums dedicated to American art in the country, the New Britain Museum of American Art is proud to have served as a cultural institution of learning and a pillar of the New Britain community for the last 119 years. Although the Museum is currently closed due to coronavirus, it is my firm belief that this will continue to remain true throughout these uncertain times. Day by day, we remain dedicated to achieving our mission, stewarding our collection, facility and donors, and discovering new ways to raise awareness of and support for the NBMAA.

In many respects, even as we have maintained social distancing and begun to work remotely, our talented and committed staff have united together to rise to this occasion.

Through the past months we have worked to enhance online access to the Museum’s collections, exhibitions, and programs, and created new virtual learning materials for educators as well as students of all ages, now available at: **nbmaa.org/online**. Following this theme of connectedness, through our new online digital resources we hope to bring together families of the community, and those of you sheltering in your homes.

Additionally, we are continuing our commitment to our ongoing 2020/20+ Women @ NBMAA initiative. We are pleased to now provide video walkthroughs of special exhibitions, including *In Thread and On Paper: Anni Albers in Connecticut*, and *Kara Walker: Harper’s Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)*. Please also enjoy our new online series of Curatorial Chats, which provide insight to the lives and work of female artists in the Museum’s permanent collection. We look forward to presenting our robust 2020/20+ Women @ NBMAA exhibition program in full and, to ensure that we can bring these groundbreaking presentations to realization, are exploring the possibility of extending these exhibitions into 2021. Please visit our website for updates.

We will continue to monitor the evolving status to ensure the safest possible conditions for our community, and look forward to once again welcoming you to the Museum in the near future. Until then, I wish you health, wellness, and thank you for your ongoing support.

Warmly,
Min Jung Kim

Director and CEO

MUSEUM NEWS

MOVING IN
Lisa Lappe,
Director of Marketing

MOVING UP
Jeffrey Mainville,
Director of Operations

MOVING OUT
Melissa Nardiello,
Manager of Marketing
and Design
Shawna Rosol,
Visitor Experience Program
Coordinator

IN MEMORIAM
Elizabeth M. Barnes,
longtime donor
Richard Couture,
longtime member
Robert Frost, member
Seymour Gavens, former donor
JoAn K. Hagan, longtime
member and donor
Patricia P. Hatch, longtime
member, donor, docent, and
volunteer
Arlyne Hershenson, longtime
member
Nancy Hicks, longtime donor
and former John Butler Talcott
Society member

Jerome E. Howard, member
Stanley Kozak, longtime
member and donor
Alice Kugelman, former
member
Robert Lesser, Heritage Society
member
Donald E. Lijedahl,
longtime member
James B. Lyon, former member
and donor
George E. Martin, longtime
member, donor, docent, and
volunteer
Marcia I. Meyers, former
member

Howard C. Miner, Jr.,
former member
Robert A. Mugford, longtime
member and donor
Richard L. Norgaard,
former member
Sara C. Norris, longtime
member and donor
Robert E. Olsen, longtime
member and donor
Allen H. Pease, former donor,
member, volunteer, and
Heritage Society member
Alice Poulos, longtime member
James M. Probolus,
longtime member

Sali Riege, longtime American
Art Circle member and
Heritage Society member
Zosima Solano, former member
John W. Soper, former member
and donor
Guy L. Swanton, longtime
member
Raymond Yankauskas,
longtime member
Stephen Zwilling, longtime
member and donor

NEW BRITAIN MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

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Exhibition support

2020/20+ Women @ NBMAA is presented by **StanleyBlack&Decker** Additional support is provided by Bank of America.

Anni Albers in Connecticut: Textiles and Works on Paper is made possible by the generosity of The Coby Foundation, Ltd.

NEW/NOW: Shantell Martin is made possible by the Richard P. Garmany Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and the Howard Fromson Endowment for Emerging Artists.

The above exhibitions at the NBMAA are made possible thanks to the support of the Special Exhibition Fund donors, including John N. Howard, Sylvia Bonney, Anita Arcuni Ferrante and Anthony Ferrante, Marian and Russell Burke, and The Aeroflex Foundation. We also gratefully acknowledge the funding of Brendan and Carol Conry, Irene and Charles J. Hamm and Carolyn and Elliot Joseph.

Our thanks to NBMAA supporters





2020/20+ WOMEN @ NBMAA

All Women. All Year.

The New Britain Museum of American Art is proud to present 2020/20+ Women @ the NBMAA, a groundbreaking, year-long series of exhibitions and programming featuring works by a diverse group of women artists. The exhibitions, which honor the centenary of women's suffrage in America, provide a twelve-month platform for female artists in the context of this milestone year.

The artists selected represent diversity in race, ethnicity, age, experience, perspectives, cultural backgrounds, career, geography, and medium. Kara Walker, for example, explores race, gender, violence, and identity in representations of the African American experience. Anni Albers is considered the most important textile artist of the 20th century, as well as an influential designer, printmaker, and educator. Shantell Martin's work is unique in her innovative and multidisciplinary output—combining art, commerce, and technology, while Jennifer Wen

Ma's interdisciplinary practice bridges installation, public art, performance, and community engagement. Helen Frankenthaler has long been recognized as one of the great American artists of the 20th century.

The Museum will also present two group thematic exhibitions as part of the 2020 year-long program. One exhibition features rare Shaker "Gift" or "Spirit" drawings created by women between 1843–57. "Gift" or "Spirit" drawings are unique to the Shakers and to American religious culture. The other, which honors 100 years of American suffrage, highlights artists whose work advocates for social change, installed with historic ephemera from the women's suffrage movement. Individually and collectively, the works by these artists challenge and inspire women and people of all genders, races, and ethnicities.

Learn about the exhibitions and programs at nbmaa.org.

EXHIBITION SCHEDULE*

JANUARY 24–APRIL 19

Kara Walker: Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)

MARCH 19–JUNE 14

In Thread and On Paper: Anni Albers in Connecticut

MAY 7–OCTOBER 11

NEW/NOW: Shantell Martin

JULY 17–OCTOBER 8

Anything But Simple: Shaker Gift Drawings & the Women Who Made Them

AUGUST 7–OCTOBER 18

Some Day is Now: Women, Art & Social Change

NOVEMBER 6–FEBRUARY 14, 2021

Over Time We're Left with The Best: Helen Frankenthaler Late Works 1990–2003

NOVEMBER–MARCH 2021

NEW/NOW: Jennifer Wen Ma

*All exhibition dates are under review and will be announced soon. Please visit our website at nbmaa.org for more information.



In Thread and On Paper: Anni Albers in Connecticut

March 19–June 14

McKernan Gallery, The Stitzer Family Gallery, and Robert and Dorothy Vance Gallery

Anni Albers with textile samples in her home ca. 1950–60, Photo: *New Haven Register*

Anni Albers, *Black, White, Gold I*, 1950, Cotton, jute, lurex, 25 1/8 x 19 in.



In Thread and On Paper: Anni Albers in Connecticut traces the remarkable transformation from weaving into printmaking that Anni Albers made over the 44 years that she lived in her adopted state. The exhibition progresses from her pictorial weavings of the 1950s, such as *Black, White, Gold I*, to textile samples, drawings, and designs, leading naturally into her long engagement with printmaking, and to a series of functional fabrics. Work made specifically as art blends seamlessly with that which she made for commercial purposes.

Beginning in 1922 as a student at the German Bauhaus, Albers’s coursework included Material Studies, in which mundane materials such as metal scraps, paper, and broken glass were worked with simple hand tools in order to find the unique qualities of the material. From that, a sensitivity to materials’ potential stayed with her for the rest of her career.

Born in Berlin in 1899, Annalise Fleischmann took the name Anni Albers when she married fellow Bauhausler Josef Albers in 1925. Together they fled Nazi Germany in 1933, taking teaching positions at Black Mountain

College, near Asheville, NC. They moved to Connecticut in 1950 when Josef became chair of the Department of Design in Yale’s School of Art.

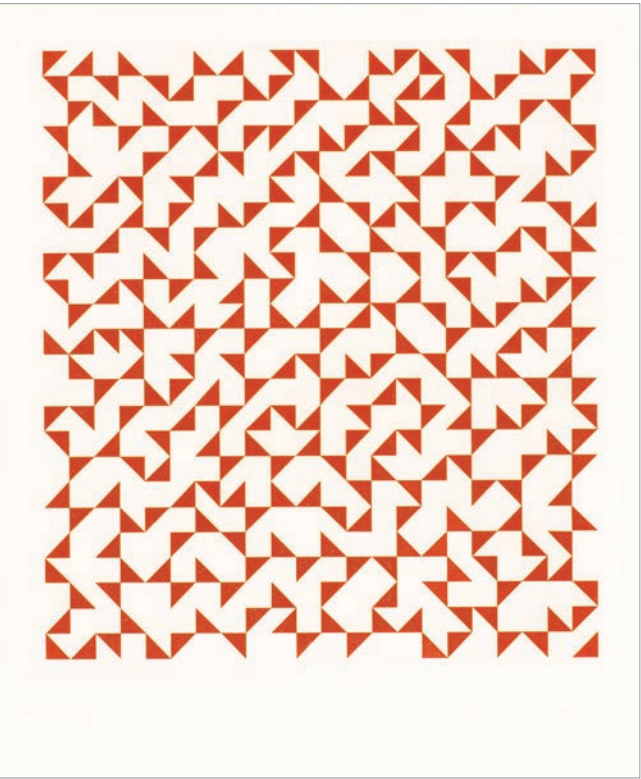
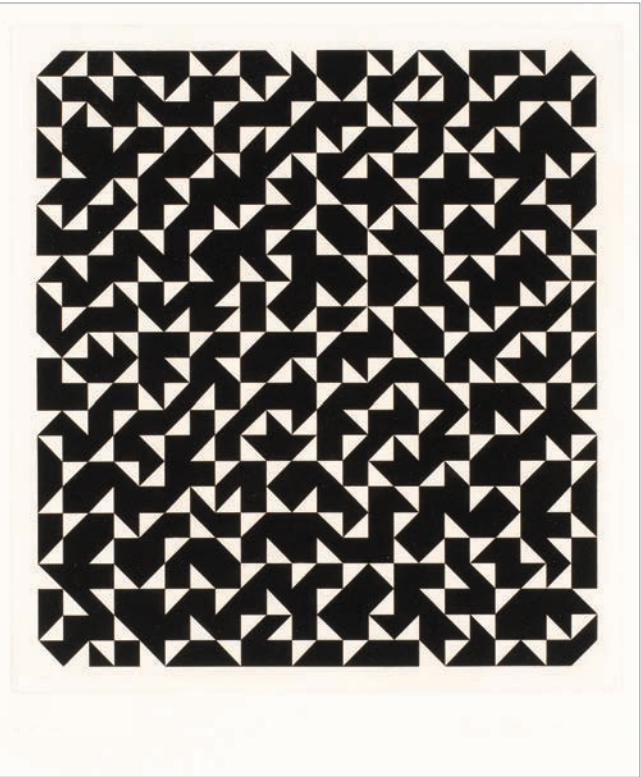
In Thread and On Paper traces Albers’s trajectory into Connecticut, where she continued to balance art making with designing for industry. Small woven samples show a relationship with the textile firms to which they were sent that is similar to her interactions with the master printers and rug makers who executed her designs. In each case her genius lay not only in understanding the materials, but also in recognizing the capabilities of others.

A considerable amount of space in the exhibition is devoted to Albers’s prints, drawings, and fabrics in which a pattern is composed of triangular elements. Working in screenprint, inkless embossing, photo-offset, lithography, copper plate etching, aquatint, and in textiles, she was preoccupied by various triangular motifs for over 20 years.

Beginning with sketches on gridded paper, the triangular compositions appear to be simultaneously ordered and also non-repeating. Her lifelong pursuit of material knowledge was present again in a 1974 conversation with Nicholas Fox Weber as she compared the effect of her triangular compositions to her understanding of metal alloys. Bronze, for example, is an alloy of tin and copper, and is much stronger than either. Instead of having regular crystal structures of a single element, which can easily bend or slip, the alloy is composed of varying crystals, which creates an atomic grit that is harder to break. Following that line of thinking, the strength of Albers’s repeated triangular compositions draws on the irregularities of the pattern. The beauty of pure abstraction gives form to ideas of materiality.

The same curiosity, ability, and instinct that in weaving had elicited such incredible and entirely abstract beauty, Albers applied to the materials and processes of printmaking. The resulting artworks, in both cases, are the natural product of attentive listening to the materials. As she put it in her 1943 essay *Designing*, “a good listener is told what to do by the material, and the material does not err.”

Fritz Horstman, Education Director, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, curator of *In Thread and On Paper: Anni Albers in Connecticut*



Anni Albers, *Triangulated Intaglio II*, 1976, Single-color copper plate etching and aquatint, 24 x 20 in.

Anni Albers, *Triangulated Intaglio IV*, 1976, Single-color copper plate etching, 24 x 20 in.

All works © 2020 The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Connecting Words and Lines: An Interview with *NEW/NOW* artist Shantell Martin

May 8–October 11

William and Bette Batchelor Gallery

Among the most innovative young artists working today, Shantell Martin (1980) is known for her exploration into the vast potential of the drawn line. Using an ink marker, she creates improvisational compositions that exist as small personal sketches, large-scale murals, live drawing performances, and collaborations with high-profile fashion brands, shoe-makers, engineers, and pop stars.

As part of the New Britain Museum of American Art's *NEW/NOW* series featuring emerging and established contemporary artists, the Museum will present Martin's first career retrospective in 2020. Celebrating the span of Martin's output, the show will explore the evolution of her artistic style and technique while focusing on three aspects of Martin's output—art, commerce, and technology—and their myriad cross-sections. Ahead of her exhibition, Martin shares insights about her life, work, and what's ahead.

Below is an excerpt of a recent interview with the NBMAA.

Can you share a bit about your background and how it has come to shape your art?

Being raised in an environment that didn't have the luxury or the understanding of putting art at the center, especially for children, my first introduction to art was through cartoons, not museums. Looking back at it now, I'm able to appreciate how this taught me that inspiration and creativity come from within.

Your show takes place as part of the 2020/20+ Women @ NBMAA initiative, in which all of our exhibitions throughout 2020 have been dedicated to the exhibition and acquisition of work by women artists, in an effort to bring greater representation of women to our galleries. Do you see your work in dialogue with themes of representation, diversity, and empowerment? If so, how?

Yes. By simply being, myself, a queer, biracial woman from a working class background. In reality I shouldn't be where I am. The act of me doing what I do is a form of activism and you could say a rebellion against the societal limitations placed upon myself and others.

Collaboration is often part of your process. How do you feel it impacts or expands your work?

It combines the knowledge that you have and the knowledge someone else has and is already right there—it's expanding. But it also gives you the opportunity to meet others in a new space. Sometimes that space can be a really vulnerable place for one or both people. Any time you're doing something new, it invites you to access courage and it's also very humbling.

What advice might you offer to aspiring artists?

Keep creating and sharing. Understand that the process is the art and there is no need to rush.

[Check out the full interview @ nbmaa.org](https://nbmaa.org)

Photo: Matt Doyle



Stay Creative and Engaged by Connecting to the NBMAA Online

Visit nbmaa.org/online
for our suite of digital content

The Museum is now offering digital content through its new online portal, including a variety of art activities; drawing from our selection of free Art Cart crafts for families, lessons have now been redesigned to be done at home with everyday materials! “Funky Frames,” “Geometric Abstraction,” and “Nature Up Close” are just a few of the activities now available as fully illustrated, downloadable PDFs, complete with a list of suggested materials and detailed instructions. The entire family can get involved with provided questions for guided looking, as well as related games and activities.

In addition, our website now offers a selection of downloadable coloring book pages drawn from masterpieces in our collection to be enjoyed by children and adults alike. Recapture your favorite work, with provided selections ranging from Albert Bierstadt’s *Seal Rock* to our Chuhily glass sculpture. When complete, don’t forget to share your creations on social media using **#ColorTheNBMAA**, and check out what others have done! New activities will be made available regularly so check the Museum’s website often.

Through this extended closure, the Museum also continues to provide online resources for educators and students. Check out nbmaa.org/educationalresources to discover a variety of downloadable PDF

powerpoints, providing a detailed virtual tour of works on display in the Museum, along with guided questions. The first of these online lessons, “MATH-terpieces,” encourages students grades 6-8 to make connections between art and math within the NBMAA’s collection. In addition, each resource includes key concepts, related vocabulary, and instructions for art projects that allow students to apply what they have learned. All lessons are supported by online collection information in eMuseum, the NBMAA’s online catalogue. Additionally, each lesson meets common core standards, and is designed to connect to school curriculum, state, and national content standards.

In the coming weeks, additional lessons will continue to be made available, including “Design Thinking: Art, Architecture and Engineering” for art and engineering students grades 4-8; “What is Art?” for art students grades 6-12; and “What is America?” for social studies and history students grades 4-12. When the Museum reopens, these lessons can also be used in the classroom before or after a student field trip.

Left: Artwork created for the Nature Up Close activity created by the Coordinator of Youth Studio and Family Programs Stephanie Strucaly

Right: One of the many coloring pages created by Educator Bonnie Rose Sullivan

Below: I Made This, a new at-home series created by Educator Bonnie Rose Sullivan



Create mini-masterpieces at home, with the NBMAA’s new “I Made This” video workshops. Presented by teaching artist Bonnie Rose Sullivan, each video provides step-by-step art instructions that anyone can follow. Throughout this series we will explore a variety of different medias and subject matters, including paint, pencil, still lifes, landscapes, and more! Find the first episode on our website at nbmaa.org/i-made-this

Fanny Brown
The Museum’s First Curator

The New Britain Museum of American Art has been shepherded by visionary leaders throughout its long history. Among the most innovative figures to garner early acclaim for the institution was its first curator, Fanny James Brown. During her tenure from 1928 to 1936, she brought regional and international talent to the Museum, showcased the work of women sculptors and painters, and expanded notions of what could and should be exhibited at an American art museum.

Brown’s work at the Museum began in 1928 with an ambitious roster of exhibitions, including *Painting and Bronzes by American Artists*, comprising nearly fifty works by leading and emerging American artists, and *21 Paintings from the Museum’s Collection*, showcasing the collection’s holdings in entirety.

Although the institution had determined to collect American art exclusively, in 1929, Brown ventured to display a daring group of European modernists, including Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Giorgio de Chirico. Groundbreaking for its time, the exhibition garnered controversy as well as praise; as one local editorial read, such exhibitions “will do yeoman’s service in arousing the populace to a realization that we have art exhibits of such caliber in town that they are worth a clash of opinion... Miss Brown is holding high the torch of art interest in New Britain and we intend to encourage her.”

In subsequent years, Brown’s exhibitions featured work by Sanford B.D. Low (the future Director of the NBMAA); members of New Britain Art League, including Virginia Low, Grace Vibberts, and Fanny Brown herself; as well as American masters William Merritt Chase, Emil Carlsen, Childe Hassam, Henry Ward Ranger, Jonas Lie, and John Sloan. Brown’s ambitious and pioneering work fostered expansive notions of American art, and we continue to hold her torch high now and into the future.



Sarah Miriam Peale (1800–1885)
Mrs. Charles Ridgely Carroll, ca. 1822

Sarah Miriam Peale was a leading portrait painter in Baltimore and St. Louis. Frequently referred to as one of Americas first truly professional female artists, she supported herself with great success for 60 years.

Part of a large and artistically talented family, she, along with her two sisters were among the only women during this time to achieve such high distinction in the field. She exhibited her first full-sized portrait at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts at the young age of 18. Six years later, she and her sister Anna became the first women elected to the Academy.

Throughout her prolific career, Peale painted the likenesses of diplomats, congressmen, and other eminent individuals who visited her studios. Her painting at the NBMAA depicts one of her earliest Baltimore patrons, and showcases her ability to convey the mood and personality of her sitters.

Sarah Miriam Peale (1800–1885), *Mrs. Charles Ridgely Carroll (Rebecca Pue)*, detail, ca. 1822, Oil on canvas, 29 x 24 1/4 in., Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Vose in memory of Sanford Low

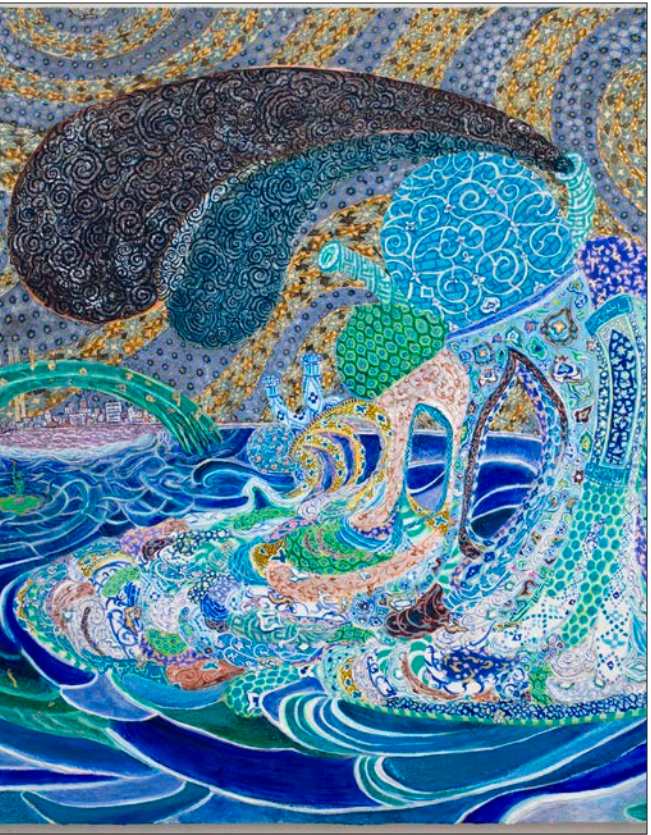


Beatrice Cuming (1903–1975)
Welders at Electric Boat Company, c. 1944

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Beatrice Cuming moved to New London, Connecticut in 1934, after studying at the Pratt Institute Art School in 1923. In New London, she found inspiration in the city’s industrial landscape—its steam trains, power plants, harbors, and factories. As with her contemporaries Elsie Driggs and Georgia O’Keeffe, her work captured the spirit of modern life.

During World War II, women entered the workforce to fill positions traditionally held by men. In 1943, Cuming became a guard for the Electric Boat Company in Groton and was commissioned to document the building of submarines there. In the NBMAA’s painting—one of six created as part of the commission—the welders’ masks conceal the workers’ identities and genders, which lends an element of mystery to the scene. Given that many women held such jobs during wartime years, it is possible that Cuming’s welders are, in fact, women.

Beatrice Cuming (1903–1975), *Welders at Electric Boat Company*, detail, ca. 1944, Oil on canvas, 32x 39 in., Charles F. Smith Fund



Nagar Ahkami (b. 1971)
Backsplash, 2010

As a first-generation American, Negar Ahkami explores how cultures intersect, merge, and influence one another. Drawing from her Iranian-American background, Ahkami makes sweeping mixed-media paintings in which she interweaves references to traditional Iranian tiling and patterns with Western artistic traditions and American landscape painting. As she explains: “My iconography over the years has explored neuroses of our times—Islamophobia; Orientalism and Occidentalism; consumerism; climate change; and the impact of these phenomena on women. My ultimate quest, regardless of subject matter, is to unleash Persian art’s expressive potential.”

Ahkami attended the Art Students League of New York and received her BA in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures from Columbia University in 1992. After studying law at Georgetown University and briefly practicing in her twenties, she went on to pursue her MFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York in 2006.

Negar Ahkami (b. 1971), *Backsplash*, detail, 2010, Acrylic, gesso, and glitter on wood panel, 48 x 60 in., General Purchase Fund



PARTNERSHIPS

Stanley Black & Decker Kick-off Event

On Thursday, March 5, the NBMAA held a kick-off celebration honoring co-host Stanley Black & Decker, the Presenting Sponsor of our 2020/20+ Women@NBMAA initiative. Commemorating the centennial of women’s suffrage in America, 2020/20+ Women@NBMAA marks a year of groundbreaking exhibitions and programs devoted exclusively to women artists and to bringing greater diversity and representation of women to our galleries. We thank Stanley Black & Decker for their invaluable support in making this initiative a tremendous success!

Over 200 guests attended the event, including Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, Stanley Black & Decker President and CEO Jim Loree and fellow SB&D employees, friends, and family members, as well as NBMAA staff, trustees, and members. Visitors enjoyed refreshments, tours of our galleries and special exhibitions, hands-on art activities offered by our Education Department staff, and special remarks from NBMAA Director and CEO Min Jung Kim, Jim Loree, and Susan Bysiewicz. In addition to honoring the Museum’s 2020 initiative, the event represented

a celebration of International Women’s Day, community partnership and engagement, and equality throughout every field and walk of life.

Stanley Black & Decker’s partnership with the NBMAA is not without precedence, but is in fact predated by a rich history of friendship going back to the 1800s. Our organizations are rooted in the history of New Britain: the NBMAA was chartered in 1853, just 10 years after Frederick Stanley founded the Stanley Bolt Manufactory in New Britain, which later became Stanley Works before becoming Stanley Black & Decker. In the 1940s, the NBMAA’s first Director Sanford B. D. Low, and retired president of Stanley Rule and Level, Alix W. Stanley and his wife, Harriett Russell Stanley, forged a close friendship that culminated in the donation of the Stanley’s extensive art collection to the Museum in 1953. Today, the Museum is located on the property that was once owned by former Stanley Works president William H. Hart; his home itself serves as the original building for the Museum, and what is known as the Landers House today.



Stanley Black & Decker has continued to serve as a major supporter of the NBMAA for many decades and to our present moment. As President and CEO Jim Loree shared on March 5, “We are proud of all the female artists, the Museum, and Director and CEO Min Jung Kim as they continue to use art to elevate social dialogue and change.” We at the NBMAA are delighted and grateful that our friendship with Stanley Black & Decker continues to flourish, particularly in this remarkable year celebrating women and social equality.

Photos courtesy of Stanley Black & Decker

Opposite: Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, Stanley Black & Decker President and CEO Jim Loree, and NBMAA Director and CEO Min Jung Kim

Above: Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz

Below: Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz and Stanley Black & Decker’s Women’s Network Leaders





IN MEMORIAM

Robert Lesser

The NBMAA celebrates the legacy of longtime Museum patron and Pulp Art expert Robert Coleman Lesser, who passed away in New York City on March 1, 2020 at the age of 96. Lesser was a WWII veteran, author, and most notably, an avid collector of Pulp Art. Drawn to the excitement, action, and fantasy-filled imagery of the genre since his boyhood, Lesser amassed perhaps the most extensive collection of Pulp Art covers worldwide. In 2003, he published a comprehensive book on the subject entitled *Pulp Art: Original Cover Paintings for the Great American Pulp Magazines*.

Growing up in Brooklyn, New York during the Great Depression, Lesser was captivated by pulp

fiction magazines from an early age. Printed on low-grade wood-pulp paper, to which the term “pulp” refers, these books featured sensational, eye-catching illustrations, particularly on their covers. Over the decades, almost all the original artwork commissioned by publishing houses from the leading illustrators of the day was lost, as the paintings were intended for one-time use and were then invariably discarded.

In the 1970s, Lesser became one of the first people to recognize the relevance of such covers, not only aesthetically, but also as an important reflection of our material culture. He began to acquire what few examples he could find across the U.S., uniting the original texts with the illustrations produced

for them. In 2013, he gifted his extraordinary collection of 200 Pulp Art illustrations to the New Britain Museum of American Art, which is recognized as one of the first American museums to collect examples by prominent 19th- and 20th-century American illustrators. Today, the Robert Lesser Collection represents the greatest assemblage of Pulp Art in this country, preserving the history of this exclusively American art form and celebrating the legacy of its greatest fan.

Photo: Robert Lesser at the 2015 ribbon cutting

Artwork: Unknown Artist, *Painting for the Movie “Raffles” with David Niven*, detail, c. 1940, Oil, 21 3/8 x 45 in., The Robert Lesser Collection



Support the Annual Fund

While the New Britain Museum of American Art’s physical doors are closed to help stop the spread of COVID-19, our team is hard at work ensuring the Museum remains an accessible resource for all. A plethora of information lies in these pages—from the interview with upcoming exhibiting artist Shantell Martin on page 9, to some of our staff’s favorite female-identify artists in the permanent collection on page 12, to an excerpt from the brochure for *In Thread and On Paper: Anni Albers in Connecticut* on page 6. As you can see on page 10, our talented staff in the Education Department are creating virtual learning materials for students of all ages. We are delighted to present these resources to our community at no cost.

As a non-profit organization, we rely on ticket sales, education program fees, fundraising events, memberships, and donations to operate. There is no doubt that the Museum’s revenue will be severely impacted by the extended closure of the NBMAA. We have been analyzing expenses to help offset anticipated revenue shortfalls and will be

actively pursuing financial relief packages and grant opportunities as they become available. However, it may not be enough and we need your help.

The generosity of the Museum community has sustained the NBMAA for 119 years. In these unprecedented times, please consider supporting the NBMAA with an unrestricted gift to the Annual Fund. Unrestricted gifts toward the Annual Fund are designed to make an impact on every aspect of the museum. Right now, your support can make a critical difference in helping us keep going.

This is a time of uncertainty in many ways for us all. If you are able to help, please consider a philanthropic contribution to the Annual Fund to help close this gap. All contributions—no matter the size—will have an impact. For those of you who have already supported this effort, we thank you for your generosity and commitment to the Museum during this time. Contributions can be made online at nbmaa.org.

Photo courtesy of Stanley Black & Decker



MICHAEL MINDERER
INSTALLATIONS SPECIALIST

What is your background experience in collections management, installation, and/or related fields?

I have a degree in Photography from the University of Maine. My instructors always instilled in me a sense of discipline and organization. While in college, I worked for a lumber yard, unloading and organizing the lumber. I guess that’s where my organizational skills originated: playing Tetris with thousands of pounds of lumber. I also have had a lifelong passion for woodworking. At a young age, my grandfather was a guiding light when it came to learning the skills of woodworking, and since then I have worked on many projects, including restoring antique barn boards and framing for flooring.

What is entailed in preserving the artwork in the museum collection on a day-to-day basis?

First thing I do each day is walk through the galleries and make sure the temperature and relative humidity are within the correct specifications. Next is a trip downstairs to collection storage and object storage to do the same.

Because our collection is constantly growing with new acquisitions, I have been focusing on ways to utilize our storage space efficiently to care for and store objects safely. I have fabricated large rolling storage bins to safely store and move artwork. These bins are lined and padded with acid-free, archival materials to protect the artwork.

The outdoor sculptures both on the NBMAA property and in Walnut Hill Park also require routine maintenance for preservation. Some just need to be pressure-

washed, and others made of wood or fiberglass will need different types of sealants.

What do you love most about the work that you do?

What I love most about my job is the variety. There is always something new to learn and discover. One of the most exciting aspects for me is when we open crates for a new exhibition, and the surprise of seeing a piece of artwork in person for the first time. Between our 2017 exhibition *California Dreaming* and last year’s *The Beyond: Georgia O’Keeffe and Contemporary Art*, I felt like a kid at Christmas opening up all these amazing works of art. It’s also very rewarding to see how people react to the exhibitions after our team is finished installing. I have always loved museums and to be working in one is a dream come true.

THOMAS SOYSTER

TRUSTEE, COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR,
ARTIST

By way of introduction, I am the principal owner of Soyster Taylor Design, PC, an architecture firm specializing in custom residential design, with clients and projects around the country. In part, our houses are often designed to showcase the owners’ collection of fine art and antiques, much like a private museum. Thus, my current occupation, along with prior experience working on gallery design and interiors at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, initially contributed to my attraction to the remarkable institution that is the NBMAA. I have been an active member for more than a decade and a Trustee for the past seven years.

I am currently pleased to serve as Chair of the NBMAA Collections Committee. The Collections Committee, comprised of Director & CEO Min Jung Kim and a group of very dedicated and knowledgeable Museum members, Trustees, and staff, is on the forefront of acquisitions, deaccessions, and collections policy for the Museum. Our deliberations represent the first step toward ratification by the full Board of Trustees of that which is, after all, what the NBMAA is all about: our collection and its preservation, presentation, and growth.

Being on the Collections Committee also allows for a privileged view into the thoughtful donations of art which are proposed for the Museum by generous donors—sometimes from quite unanticipated sources. We are as delighted on occasion by an important single work passed down in a family without much fanfare, as by a rather scholarly collection unexpectedly found in a donor’s attic. Ultimately, once accessioned by the Trustees, these works can be shared with the public and cared for by the Museum.

Lastly, I suppose I should confess that there is one work in our collection that deserves some recognition here, although, I assure you, its acquisition predates my tenure by many years.



T. W. Soyster (b. 1952), *Central Park, New Britain*, c 1985, Watercolor on paper, 21 x 23 7/8 in., Gift of Fleet Bank

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NEW BRITAIN, CT



Stay connected to the NBMAA
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Discover three centuries of American art, as well as virtual walkthroughs of special exhibitions, *Kara Walker: Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)*, and *In Thread and On Paper: Anni Albers in Connecticut* with commentary provided by museum curators. These exhibitions, in addition to all our favorite works of art we miss so dearly, are available to the public for free. New content is added weekly, so be sure to check back often. Also, follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for updates and a daily dose of art therapy.



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GENERAL ADMISSION

Members FREE
\$15 for Adults
\$12 for Seniors (age 62+)
\$10 for Youth (age 13-17)
\$10 for Students
Children under 12 free

SATURDAY ADMISSION

Free from 10 a.m. to noon
thanks to support from
the American Savings
Foundation.

MUSEUM HOURS

Monday: CLOSED
Sunday, Tuesday,
Wednesday, and
Friday: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Thursday: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

CAFÉ ON THE PARK

Open from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Menu includes soup,
sandwich, wraps, salads,
and more. Kids menu also
available.

ACCESSIBILITY

Please inquire at the Front
Desk for any assistance
you may require. We are
wheelchair accessible and
have three wheelchairs
available free of charge.

ON THE WEB

www.nbmaa.org
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