

MYSTIC MUSEUM OF ART

News & Views | Summer 2017



ROBERT BRACKMAN THINKING IN COLOR

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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ARTS FUNDING ENDANGERED

The wolves are once again at the door warning us that they would like to dismantle and abolish the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH.) Together, the NEA and NEH account for less than one percent of annual federal spending. This may not seem like a lot of money but much of it is granted to small organizations who make the arts available for many in need of such programs.

The NEA supports arts in every congressional district in the country. For example, MMoA was a recent recipient of a crucial NEA grant for a collective project with other Connecticut organizations to preserve the state's artistic heritage by digitizing a portion of our permanent collections. Those receiving funding go far beyond just artists and museums. The NEH's Warrior-Scholar Project, for example, provides a "humanities boot camp" to assist military veterans to prepare for college. The NEA manages the Blue Star Museums Program, which last year provided free museum admission to nearly a million active-duty personnel and their families.

To fulfill an award, an organization is required to attract matching funds, widening a project's pool of funders and stakeholders. On average, each dollar NEA awards leverages nine dollars more. Additionally, the agency administers the government's Arts and Artifact Indemnity Program, which facilitates major international traveling exhibitions, such as 2015's Matisse show at the Museum of Modern Art.

The present situation is daunting but individuals and institutions may help protect arts funding by knowing key facts and lending their voice. Nationwide, museums employ more than 400,000 Americans, contribute \$21 billion to the economy annually, and return more than \$5 in tax revenues for every \$1 they receive in government funding. Locally, MMoA last year spent \$457,000 of its annual budget on goods and services in our community and \$62,000 to provide educational programs to 2,200 area students. Perhaps most telling, in a time of division and skepticism, museums are considered the most trustworthy source of information in America. Please talk to your state and national representatives with personal correspondence that reaffirms the importance of art and museums in all of our lives.

George G. King
Executive Director



MMoA NEWS & VIEWS

Summer 2017

Dan Pearson
Editor

James Kaczman
Graphic Designer

Cover: Robert Brackman
Portrait of the Artist's Wife,
Francis Brackman (detail),
1938. Oil on canvas, Mystic
Museum of Art Permanent
Collection

SALERNO SELECTED FOR PRESTIGIOUS GETTY PROGRAM

Dawn E. Salerno, MMoA's Deputy Director for Public Engagement and Operations, has been selected to attend the 2017 Getty Leadership Institute in Claremont, California. The selective and intensive four-week program brings together a diverse range of museum leaders from across the country to gain skills and experience to strengthen their cultural institutions.

Now in its 38th year, the institute is a management program for chief executive and operating officers, directors, and senior level museum executives who influence policy, effect change, and are in the first two to seven years of their position. The institute strives to include participants with a range of specializations, sizes, budgets, and geographical locations. Academically rigorous, the program emphasizes leadership, strategy, organizational culture, and change management through online sessions, two weeks of residency at Claremont Graduate University, and practicums at Los Angeles area institutions.

"My research and learning duties during the program will allow me to contribute to MMoA's evolution with a much enhanced skill set," says Salerno. "I've been told that the cohort stays in contact years after the program and can serve as an informal leadership advisory group."

A Mystic native, Salerno began at MMoA in 2008. She became Deputy Director in 2015. Previous to MMoA, Salerno served as Associate Museum Educator for School and Family Audiences at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford and as Assistant Director/Director of Education at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum in New London.



Salerno currently serves as First Vice President on the Board of Directors of the New England Museum Association, Northeast Regional Representative for the American Alliance of Museums' EdCom Membership Committee, and as a member of the Board of Directors for Connecticut Humanities. In 2010, she was named the Connecticut Art Education Association's Outstanding Museum Educator of the Year.

MMOA GALA TO HONOR IRENE AND CHARLES HAMM

Mystic Museum of Art's annual gala fundraiser, A Night at the Museum, will honor Irene and Charles Hamm, of Mystic, for their generous support of art and education at many area institutions, including MMoA, where Charles is an Elected Artist. Irene and Charles are noted art collectors, who over time amassed works from many eras highlighting the link between America and the sea. In 2013, the Hamms gifted 165 of these works, by leading American artists from the 19th and 20th centuries, to New Britain Museum of Art to create the Charles and Irene Hamm Collection of Coastal Art.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Charles served as executive vice-president for advertising agency McCann Erikson Worldwide. He later served as CEO of the Independence Community Bank, before retiring to devote his time to painting, art collection, and philanthropy.

Born in Florida, Irene worked for 32 years as a special education teacher in New York. Charles serves on the board of the Mystic Seaport and Brooklyn Academy of Music. Locally, the Hamms were also instrumental in the Hamm Pavilion Classroom at the Coogan Farm Nature & Heritage Center in Mystic.

"The Hamm's sustained and creative commitment to art and education reaffirms the profound impact individuals may have on institutions and communities," says George King, MMoA executive director. "This is particularly true for the students who are recipients of the Hamm's generosity and may develop a lifelong love of art and learning."

MMOA VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: COURTNEY MOORE

Courtney Moore, founder and organizer of the Art After Dark concert series, is the 2016 recipient of MMoA's volunteer of the year award. Started in 2011, Art After Dark is a family friendly event that draws hundreds and features live music and art. It is led by a group of volunteers, including Courtney, who call themselves "Team Pumpkin." Courtney has also been integral at MMoA for her work with the annual Viewing Party for the Lighted Boat Parade and by serving on several summer fundraiser committees.

In addition to her work at MMoA, Courtney volunteers for the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, Sails Up 4 Cancer, and River Jam. She also serves as the co-chair for the Center for Hospice Care/Mudhead Benefit Regatta and as the Mystic River Mudhead Sailing Association Commodore.

Educated at Southern Connecticut State University, Courtney worked in the newspaper and pre-press magazine industry and served as a grant writer for a non-profit nature center in Colorado before partnering, in 2006, with Maura Blaney to found CMB Creative Group. At CMB, Courtney serves as public relations liaison for multiple clients assisting with press releases, print design, marketing, sales, and event planning. She lives in Mystic with her husband Toby.



MMOA WELCOMES DAN PEARSON TO STAFF

Dan Pearson has been named MMoA's Manager of External Affairs. As such, he will contribute to MMoA's efforts in advancement, marketing, communications, public relations, and grant writing. He will also edit MMoA publications, including its newsletter, and serve on MMoA's Advancement, Events, and PR/Marketing committees.

A Mystic native, who now resides in Stonington, Pearson graduated from Bowdoin College and from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. He worked as music journalist, contributing to national publications such as Nylon, Stop Smiling, and Good. In addition, for ten years, he covered government, education, and the arts for Boston Magazine and The Day newspaper, receiving state and national awards, including the City and Regional Magazine Association Awards' Gold Medal. He formerly served on Calvary Nursery School's Board of Directors, on the Stonington Historical Society's Publications Committee, and on MMoA's Education Committee.



A
NIGHT
at the
MUSEUM

MYSTIC MUSEUM OF ART
GALA FUNDRAISER
HONORING IRENE & CHARLES HAMM

JUNE 10, 2017, 6PM
9 WATER STREET, MYSTIC

COCKTAILS, HORS D'OEUVRES AND SILENT AUCTION
IN THE DAVIS GALLERY

A DELICIOUS DINNER BY A THYME TO COOK AND LIVE AUCTION
UNDER THE TENT ON THE MYSTIC RIVER

LIVE MUSIC FROM ROCK N SOUL REVUE

ROBERT BRACKMAN: THINKING IN COLOR

BY ERIKA NEENAN

Charles Lindbergh. Anne Morrow Lindbergh. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. These prominent individuals are only a small number who chose to have artist Robert Brackman paint their portrait. Mystic Museum of Art is lucky to hold three portraits by the artist within its permanent collection, including the portrait of Brackman's wife, Francis (cover). After completing the portraits of the Lindberghs, Brackman emerged as a sought after portraitist who could easily have become a society painter. Instead, Brackman worked against this classification by becoming a dedicated teacher who never abandoned his love of still lifes and imaginative figural scenes. It is within these works that Brackman developed a personal style strikingly similar to that of Paul Cezanne. An examination of both artists' working methods, and their value of color over drawing, help to explain their similarities and Brackman's enduring reputation.

Cezanne's profound influence in the modern era stems from the groundbreaking way in which he interpreted form, in terms of the spatial relationships between objects as well as their representation on a two dimensional surface. In Cezanne's time, the traditional way to create form in painting was through the use of light and shadow, which had been the dominant method since the Renaissance. Cezanne broke with tradition. Rather than employing light and shadow, Cezanne used color. To create the image of an apple, for example, he would place a stroke of brick-red, a warm color, against different shades of green, a cool color. The eye always interprets cool colors as being closer than warm colors. By placing warm and cool in relation to each other, Cezanne would create form without light and shadow.

Brackman employed this same method within his own works. This is observable, for example, in *Somewhere in America*, painted in 1934, where he uses the same technique as Cezanne to create an apple- shades of green and red are strategically placed in order to create the form of the fruit.

Cezanne believed that good drawing resulted from the accurate use of color. Similarly, Brackman never made a preliminary sketch on canvas, but rather began his work by expressing its tonal quality.¹ Their philosophies on color are naturally reminiscent and reflective of the debate of disegno vs. colorito, which arose during the Renaissance due to different regional styles on the Italian peninsula.



Florentine Renaissance artists valued disegno, a term that translates to drawing or design, over that of color. They believed disegno was the base of all the arts. In comparison, artists of the Venetian Renaissance valued colorito, or color, over that of drawing and would work directly on canvas to build a composition using paint to do so.² Cezanne and Brackman held similar values. This philosophy resulted in personal styles that demonstrate the emphasis they placed on color.

Thank you to Lois Constantine and the Noank Historical Society for their help in researching and understanding Robert Brackman.

Robert Brackman: Thinking in Color will be on view June 16-September 23. This exhibition is made possible through the support of StoneRidge Senior Living Community and Celia Gallup, in honor of her father, Robert Brackman.

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1. Vaughan, Malcom. "Robert Brackman" in *Creative Art* (April 1933).
 2. Reasons for the difference of opinion resulted from the type of paint Venetians and Florentines were using in the Renaissance. Venetians worked in oils. Slow drying oil paint is much easier to layer and build upon than tempera paint, which was the traditional medium used by Florentine painters. Because tempera paint dried so quickly, preparatory drawings were essential.

Above, Robert Brackman, *Somewhere in America*, 1934. Oil on Canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum

EXHIBITION CALENDAR



MARCH 31 - JUNE 3

Members/Elected Artists Exhibit

Selections from the Permanent Collection

Annual Meeting/Opening Reception: Thursday, April 20,
5:30pm - 6:30pm / 6:30pm - 8pm

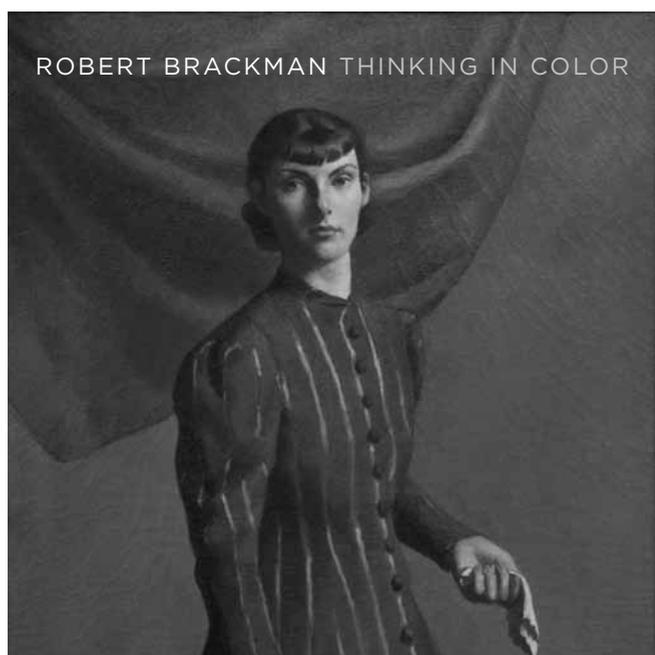
JUNE 16 - JULY 29

Connecticut Academy of Fine Arts 106th Annual Exhibition

Website: www.ctacademy.org

Receiving: Sunday, June 11 & Monday, June 12

Opening Reception: Thursday, June 29, 6pm - 8pm



JUNE 16 - SEPTEMBER 23

Robert Brackman: Thinking in Color



AUGUST 4 - SEPTEMBER 16

Janvier Miller Solo Show

61st Regional Exhibition

Receiving: Sunday, July 30 & Monday, July 31

Opening Reception: Thursday, August 10, 5:30pm - 7pm



SEPTEMBER 22 - NOVEMBER 11

Photo Show 39 - Juried

Selections from the Permanent Collection

Receiving: Sunday, September 17 & Monday, September 18

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 28, 5:30pm - 7pm

To view prospectuses and submission guidelines for specific exhibitions visit mysticmuseumofart.org/exhibitions.

EVENTS



Artini Hour

Mix cocktails and your creativity for your next happy hour. Take on a creative project with one of our instructors, as you learn to play with a variety of media in the studios and galleries. We provide instruction, supplies, a tasty beverage and plenty of time to socialize.

Thursdays, 5:30pm - 7:30pm
\$18 Members / \$23 Public
Call to register: 860.536.7601 x209

APRIL 27

Nature Drawing

Lisa Adams

Use graphite and draw small objects to capture the beauty of the natural world.

Tonight's martini: Espresso

MAY 18

Collage

Lisa Adams

Re-purpose small books with collage using a robust collection of old photographs, rubber stamps, and retro clerical artifacts. Summon your imagination for inspired fun covers and interiors. Walk away with a whimsical journal as a keepsake.

Tonight's martini: Cosmo

Save the dates for future Artini Hours:
September 21, October 19, and November 30



Destination Art:

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

Travel to Boston with fellow art lovers and leave the arrangements to us. Our day begins at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where travelers may enjoy the stellar permanent collection, or the special exhibitions of Sandro Botticelli and Henri Matisse. Lunch at your choice of four award-winning MFA restaurants. Reservations recommended. Then visit the nearby Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Enjoy a tour of the Gardner and grab a bite in their café.

What's On View

Botticelli and the Search for the Divine explores the dramatic changes in the artist's style and subject matter, reflecting the shifting political and religious climate of Florence during his lifetime. The exhibition, the largest and most important display of Botticelli's works in the United States, features 24 paintings from international lenders and the MFA.

Matisse in the Studio is the first major international exhibition to examine the importance of Matisse's personal collection of objects, offering unprecedented insight into the great artist's creativity.

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, built to evoke a 15th-century Venetian palace, displays an art collection of world importance, including major works by Giotto, Titian, and John Singer Sargent.

Advance reservations are required by May 6. Contact Dawn Salerno at 860.536.7601 x209. Bus departs from and returns to the parking lot of Mystic Museum of Art.

Saturday, May 13, 8am - 7:30pm
\$75 MMoA Members / \$85 Public (includes bus travel, museum admissions, tour)

The Creative Process: A Discussion with MMoA Artists

Is thinking the enemy of creativity, as Ray Bradbury alleged? Must we attack creativity with a club, as Jack London suggested? More likely, we all approach the creative process differently. Join our panel of MMoA artists, and Dr. James Holzworth, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, Department of Psychology, University of Connecticut, in a discussion about what drives them to create, what keeps them motivated during “blocks” and what cognitive and emotional processes they go through when creating a work of art. MMoA Elected Artist, Julia Pavone, will moderate the discussion.

Monday, May 15
6:30pm, Free



Author’s Talk and Book Launch: *Robert Brackman Remembered* by Lois H. Constantine

Join Lois H. Constantine, author of *Robert Brackman Remembered*, and MMoA Executive Director, George King, for a conversation about Lois’s new book on her time studying with this internationally known artist, who was also a former president of The Mystic Art Association—now MMoA. Brackman, who himself studied with George Bellows, Robert Henri, and Ivan Olinsky, taught for many years at the Art Students League of New York. After retirement from the League, however, he taught at the newly-founded Lyme Academy of Fine Art, at his home in Noank, and, beginning in 1962, summer classes at the Madison Art School, where Lois became his pupil and learned, through him, an appreciation of classical art. This program complements the museum’s concurrent Brackman exhibition, which features loans and works from the permanent collection. The conversation will be followed by a book signing.

Thursday, July 13
5:30pm, Free
Books available for purchase

Art After Dark

MMoA’s family friendly Tuesday night concert series is back for its 7th season with live music and live art on our riverfront patio.

Members \$12, Public \$15, Children 4 - 12 \$3, Children 3 and under are free. Season Pass: Members \$60, Public \$75. Parking validations provided with admission.

Tuesday, May 16th 6pm - 8:30pm

Live Music by The Troublemakers, live art by Mary Horrigan, and balloon art by April Brunelle

Tuesday, July 18th 6pm - 8:30pm

Live Music by Woolly Mammoth, live art by Leif Nilsson, and balloon art by April Brunelle

Tuesday, August 15th 6pm - 8:30pm

Live Music by The Fake Experience, live art by Sam Brown, and balloon art by April Brunelle

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EDUCATION

ART EDUCATION AND “NATIONAL WELFARE”

BY DAWN SALERNO

Can a museum teach empathy or inspire good citizenship? Can engaging with art make a doctor or police officer better at their jobs? Can it help a student improve in math, literacy, and critical thinking? The answer has proven to be yes, on all counts.

It has been 25 years since the American Alliance of Museum's landmark publication, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*. One of its key ideas still resonates with vitality: "The commitment to education as central to a museum's public service must be clearly expressed in every museum's mission and pivotal to every museum's activities." This is certainly the case at Mystic Museum of Art (MMoA), where education began as far back as the 1940's with art lessons taught in the museum galleries. But museum education at MMoA, and at most institutions, has grown to encompass so much more than just painting classes.

At the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for example, New York City police officers receive training to improve observational skills. Minnesota Institute of Art staff members conduct talks at the Eagan campus of Thomson Reuters, the international financial data and news company, to discuss fakes and forgeries in the art world as a means of teaching ethics and principles of law. In Boston, the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) enhances the curriculum of residency programs at area medical schools by exploring the human aspects of medical practice. Objects in the MFA collection are used as springboards for conversations on issues future doctors may encounter, such as death.

Dr. Joel Katz, at Harvard Medical School, developed "Training the Eye: The Art of Physical Diagnosis," which uses MFA galleries to hone doctors' observation and interpretation skills, both of which correlate to more precise diagnostic results. In a 2016 *Huffington Post* article, Brooke DiGiovanni Evans, the MFA's Head of Gallery Learning, said the program seeks to "bring residents back to the human side of being a doctor, giving them ways to connect with their patients" and to "have empathy and understanding."

Art museums expose us to a diversity of ideas, peoples, places and time periods. That broadening experience imparts greater appreciation and understanding. Take a study conducted by the University of Arkansas Department of Education Reform and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, in Bentonville, Arkansas. The study found that even a single museum experience improved a student's empathy for people who lived in a different time and place.



A 2006 Guggenheim Museum study of its education programs found that students in the museum's art program performed better in six categories of literacy and critical thinking skills than did students who were not in the program.

Here at MMoA, school field trips include a hands-on studio lesson. Teaching methods used in these programs are designed to meet the needs of students with diverse learning styles, particularly those who do not succeed academically by traditional methods. Hands-on art-making helps youth to develop skills in dexterity, hand-eye coordination, listening, problem-solving and teamwork. Art also makes content areas, like math and literacy, more accessible to visual learners. MMoA programs expand students' abilities to communicate and comprehend ideas expressed in non-verbal ways. The long-term goal of Education Outreach programs, like field trips to MMoA, is to develop students into self-initiated learners who seek out learning experiences beyond the classroom.

The broad lens applied to art by education programming at museums across the country helps us to learn more about ourselves and the world around us.

As William Adams, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, stated, "People who engage in a profound way with a broad range of disciplines—including, and in some cases especially, with the humanities - are preparing to engage the challenges of life. They are creative and flexible thinkers; they acquire the habits of mind needed to find solutions to important problems; they can even appreciate the value of making mistakes and changing their minds. I am convinced that this kind of study is not merely defensible but critical to our national welfare."

TALK ABOUT THE PASSION

BY DAN PEARSON

For those who grow up in or around Mystic, the first and most formative cultural institution many encounter is not a museum but the Mystic Disc record store on Steamboat Wharf. It was that way for me. When I entered the store, at age eleven, the Disc catapulted me out of the narrow exposure of the Top 40 rotation into a world that extended far ahead and far beyond that. Suddenly there was jazz, folk, punk, and, most importantly to me, an independent underground that enabled me to feel that I and my generation were part of something significant. The artistic education at the Disc liberated and empowered me to understand I didn't need MTV or commercial radio to dictate my taste. I could embrace and champion voices from the margin. In addition, I learned to respect antecedents and see how one current movement could not have existed without a previous. Nowhere was this more apparent to me than with Bob Dylan, who innovated the medium but only by drawing on and amalgamating elements as diverse as Rimbaud, Muddy Waters, John Ford, and Odetta.

In January, I became the Mystic Museum of Art's Manager of External Affairs. Since arriving, the Disc has been on my mind a lot because I feel that Mystic and this museum stand at a very exciting moment. There is no way around it: If you grow up in Mystic, and if you love it and stay, or come back, it can nevertheless feel like a place trying desperately to keep its glow alight with whale oil. It is the nature of a tourist and service economy. Yet there is, with downtown's bookstore and its programming, other locally-owned business and speciality shops, and now this museum as well, a forward and independent effort to respect and build on the past to bring it forward into something new.

The significance of this cannot be underestimated for MMoA. The Museum does not share the notoriety of the Seaport or Aquarium. It does not connote daring and youth, even though its founders were innovators and a major part of its mission is targeted to student outreach. Yet here is the Museum asking big questions about who it was and who it should be. Here is the Museum trying to broaden its appeal, to enter a new era under new leadership to again find the balance between riverfront location, small town serenity, and the wild creative potential all around and beyond it.

All art may be political. Or, as Bertolt Brecht said, "Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer to shape it." Yet, as I think about the direction of this museum and this moment, the quote that comes to me is from the Scottish poet George Mackay Brown, in which he describes the artist's mission to "interrogate the silence." Never has that been more necessary, or, in its own way, more political, locally and globally, than in this epoch. Like any institution, MMoA is striving to make our exhibits more interactive and to find more ways to connect with people through social media. But ultimately, a goal in the digital age is to pry people out of it to encounter or to make art and reconnect with their senses and imagination. We live in a time of division and fallacy, of nihilism and a water torture of never-ending news. Art is a refuge and rejuvenation. It is the political weapon to counter all that by enabling people to apprehend nuance, beauty, humility, and enduring and self-evident truth. It is a chance to forge connections from disparate elements and hear suppressed voices at liberty to speak.

Yes, in a place like this, there is always fear that novelty will alienate and undermine. But, art should never be a part of a service industry only there to please with the comfortable and familiar. This is where both Mystic and MMoA may respond and aspire. In their time, the Impressionists who inspired MMoA's founders, were considered radical. They are now considered establishment. The bands U2 and R.E.M, who defined the indie underground of my youth, became the biggest bands in the world by bending the ears of the population to their will. Confronting the new never distances us from the past. It brings us closer. There is no greater respect for those before us than taking courage from them to dare to rethink conventions. Even if you find area historical institutions staid, think of the unknown heroes they celebrate: everyday people who went off into what Herman Melville described as the "howling infinite" on whaleships and sealing expeditions to the bottom of the globe. Whiteouts, squalls, adventure, fortune. What is staid in that?

This all means a great deal to me, of course. At eleven years old, I thought my town was all souvenir and saltwater taffy and then one day it was so much more. Even now, I am astounded that I would have the luck to grow up with the Disc, a place of constant dialogue and invention. Common, perhaps, in the East Village or up on Thayer Street. But more rare in a small town. This is why, all these years later, I feel enthusiasm. Not to overstate it. I recognize the scale upon which we work. But Mystic and this museum have the potential to inspire a new generation who must enter and interrogate their own silence to find the courage to go forward creatively and reverentially.

MYSTIC MUSEUM OF ART

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AUGUST 4 - SEPTEMBER 16, 2017

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