

Bennington
museum

INSIDE

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Patience and Impatience

“Good things come to those who wait.” We have been changing madly of late. Not arbitrarily, change for change’s sake, but changing in order to be more relevant, to answer *your* needs, to delight *you*, challenge *you*, and fascinate *you*. I am both patient and impatient. Patient to let things develop carefully until they reach their fullest potential; and impatient to see the future, because the future is so exciting. I want to share some of the great things that are happening here at the Bennington Museum!

Toward the end of the year, we were given two masterful paintings by internationally important artists who worked here in Bennington—*Battle of Bennington*, by Grandma Moses, and *Wildcatter* by Jules Olitski (see article on page 5). Major works such as these transform the museum and your experience of it. They reward multiple visits so that you come to know them like old friends.

In a year-end roundup of the best of 2014, *The Wall Street Journal* cited this museum’s summer exhibition, *Alice Neel/Erastus Salisbury Field: Painting the People*, as one of the nine “most memorable exhibitions of 2014” in all North America—an accolade that put us in select company with the Metropolitan Museum, MoMA, MFA Boston, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, and the National Gallery of Canada.

And at our opening on February 14 we unveiled a redesigned museum shop and a new Works on Paper Gallery, both created in existing space by our building staff. The Works on Paper Gallery has been a goal as long as I have been here, for it enables us to be more relevant by highlighting photography, the most contemporary of art forms. With it we can continue to tantalize and delight *you*.

In the last few months we have been strategic planning to set our future priorities. You will hear more about that soon. Be patient as we plan the museum’s exciting future—and impatient, eagerly anticipating the next surprise.

The *NEW* Bennington Museum—Get into It!

Robert Wolterstorff

on the cover...
Jules Olitski (1922-2007)
Wildcatter, 1963 (detail)
Magna acrylic on canvas, 20 inches x 26 inches
Bennington Museum Collection
Gift of Kristina Olitski
See entire painting on page 4.



Events



On Saturday, December 13, over 400 visitors enjoyed Festival of Trees Family Day. Top left and middle; Katy Riley visits with Will Moses at his book and merchandise signing. Ensor Franklin is all smiles with Santa. Right, top; At the Festival of Trees Gala, more guests than ever before came out to celebrate the season and support the museum, including Greg Van Houten and Jane Disanto and at right, bottom; Jennifer and Brian McKenna.



Bennington Museum hosted its annual Members' Dinner in the Ada and Paul Paresky Wing on October 17. Above left; Jennifer Fels enjoys a moment with her husband and recipient of the 2014 General Stark Society Award, Tom Fels. Above right; recipient of the Walloomsac Society Award, members of the Sage City Symphony gather for a photo in front of Carl Ruggles' *Portals*.



Top left; Members of the Sonata program held at Sonatina in Old Bennington visited Bennington Museum in October. Richard Neel, son of Alice Neel, was among the visitors. He was delighted to give a personal tour of Alice Neel's work that was on view. Above middle; Laurence Jackson Hyman welcomes a guest to his exhibition in the new Works on Paper Gallery. Above right; Music filled the air in the Ada Paresky Education Center on November 2, as Marc Peloquin performed compositions by Lionel Nowak. Marc Peloquin with Alison Nowak prior to the concert.



Exhibitions



During the recent winter break, Bennington Museum undertook a major project, the construction of a gallery devoted to works on paper. Envisioned in 2014, this gallery allows the museum to feature drawings, fine prints such as engravings and lithographs, paintings on paper, and photographs by contemporary and historic artists. The museum is home to a large collection of works on paper that periodically rotates into the permanent galleries and changing exhibitions. This new gallery allows the museum to share more of its collection, as well as bring in loans that tell the rich history of creativity in Vermont and the broader region.

through ***Jonathan Gitelson: In the World***

May 3

Kicking off the Regional Artists Exhibitions for 2015 are works by Brattleboro artist Jonathan Gitelson. Working in a variety of mediums that include photography, artist books, video, installation, web-based projects, works on paper and public art, this exhibition includes works from three of Gitelson's recent projects – *A Man in Nature*, *The Last Snow in Brattleboro*, and *The Sweet Spot*.

through ***Laurence Jackson Hyman: The Bennington Years, Photographs 1962-1970***

May 10

The inaugural exhibition in the newly created Works on Paper Gallery includes photographs taken by Hyman during his time in Bennington and at Bennington College in the 60s. He has noted "I think my best black-and-white work was done in the sixties at Bennington, both as a student and as a teacher." This is the first of three exhibitions this year all drawing from works by innovators who lived, worked or studied in the Bennington College community, or curated by current students.

March 28 through June 21 ***Alcohol in Vermont: Creation to Consumption, Tolerance to Temperance***

This exhibit examines the significant role of alcohol in Vermont's history. Taverns were once the center of community life and alcohol was consumed in quantities unimaginable today. Reformers in the 1800s fought the evils of addiction and drunkenness, and politicians intensely debated the regulation of alcohol in some of the most notorious elections in state history. Even after the repeal of national prohibition, many Vermont communities used Local Option laws to limit the use of alcohol. It wasn't until the craft beer movement in the 1990s that Vermonters again celebrated alcoholic beverages. See related events on page 7.



Anna Mary Robertson "Grandma" Moses (1860-1961) *Battle of Bennington*, 1953. Oil on pressed wood . 18 x 30 ½ inches.
Gift of Carol and Arnold Haynes Copyright © 2014, Grandma Moses Properties Co., New York

Recent Acquisitions

This last October the Bennington Museum added two exceptional gifts to its collection, a masterpiece by Anna Mary Robertson Moses from Carol and Arnold Haynes and a gem-like abstraction by Jules Olitski from his wife, Kristina Olitski. These are two of the most important acquisitions to enter the museum's permanent collection in the last decade. They perfectly illustrate the museum's current goal to reinvigorate its collections by building on strengths while charting new paths.

Moses' iconic *Battle of Bennington* (above) from 1953 was commissioned by the Daughters of the American Revolution. While Moses was deeply interested in the past, her historical images tended to rely more on hearsay and memory than well-documented historical fact. Moses' depiction of the battle, fought on August 16, 1777, only a few miles from where the artist lived most of her life, features a landscape of rolling hills abuzz with the activity of dozens of soldiers. Some of the figural groups are based on images Moses discovered while researching the battle, such as Leroy Williams' painting *Col. Baum and Col. Pfister Mortally Wounded*, on view in the museum's Battle of Bennington Gallery. In an interview with Edward R. Murrow the artist explained why she included the monument in the painting (upper right), despite the fact that it wasn't built for more than a century after the battle: "I put the monument in because it looked good."

Olitski's *Wildcatter* (cover and opposite page) is emblematic of the innovative stained-ground abstractions that catapulted the artist to the fore of the American art scene in the late 1950s. The painting, with its limited color palette, featuring two pairs of perfect complements, and deceptively simple composition, with an irregular oblate circle within a circle, was executed in 1963, the year Olitski arrived in Vermont to teach at Bennington College. It typifies not only Olitski's work of the period, but larger trends in American painting at the time, including the emerging styles of Color Field and Minimalism. As late as 1990 the preeminent critic Clement Greenberg declared Olitski "the greatest living painter."

Jamie Franklin
Curator

EXHIBITION

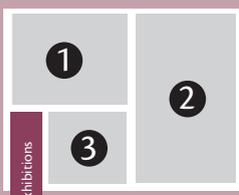
Alcohol in Vermont:

Creation to Consumption, Tolerance to Temperance

March 28-June 21

During Vermont's early history alcohol was consumed in quantities unimaginable today. Establishments like the Catamount Tavern and Walloomsac Inn were the center of community life and alcohol was required for any public work or gathering. Reformers in the 1800s fought the evils of addiction and abuse through popular literature, church trials, public shaming, social societies, and finally legislation. Some Vermonters resented anyone trying to regulate their private habits. How far could the state influence the public good without infringing on personal liberty? Politicians intensely debated the regulation of alcohol in some of the most notorious elections in state history. It wasn't until the craft beer movement in the 1990s that Vermonters again embraced alcoholic beverages. Highlights of this exhibition will include Ethan Allen's bar tab, beautiful historic glassware for high class drinking, records and banners from local temperance societies, and a flask used by a local flapper.

Callie Stewart
Collections Manager



Captions/Credits for pg. 4.

1. Jules Olitski (1922-2007) *Wildcatter*, 1963. Magna acrylic on canvas. Bennington Museum Collection. Gift of Kristina Olitski
2. Carle Michel Boog *Ethan Allen's Trick, Shams, Drunkenness and Escapes Capture by British Soldiers* (1925-1926) Illustration for D. B. Thompson's "The Green Mountain Boys" Bennington Museum Collection. Gift of Thos. Nelson & Sons
3. Laurence Jackson Hyman (b. 1942) *Nude Pottery 1*, 1969. Courtesy of the Artist.

Exhibitions made possible in part by the S. Lane Faison Jr. Exhibition Fund.

Sneak Peek ...

Inward Adorings of the Mind: Grassroots Art from the Bennington Museum and Blasdel/Koch Collections

July 3 through November 1

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From the Development Office

The close of 2014 was marvelous for Bennington Museum! Reflections, Festival of Trees with all its moving parts netted more than \$33,000. Unbelievable! Call it the power of positive thinking or New England perseverance. Either way, THANK YOU!

We received a magnificent unexpected gift at the end of December: a check for \$25,000 designated for music programming. The donors, who wish to remain anonymous, have strong ties to the community and believe in the power of music. During a recent phone call they said, "We are thrilled to be able to support and encourage Bennington Museum's efforts to provide music programs for the public to experience and enjoy." It is a donation to the museum, but the people who attend the performances and programs are the true recipients.

Our goal for the Annual Fund has increased dramatically this year. Like the Festival of Trees we have set our sights high and our donors will come through. The Board of Trustees has issued an amazing challenge to match every dollar given to the Annual Fund with a dollar of their own, up to \$75,000. Call the Development Office or visit our website to make a gift. A gift of \$1,000 or more welcomes you to our Leadership Circle. Consider making your gift in quarterly or monthly installments or by donating securities.

Income from membership is also on the rise. We have new members joining every week and current members are renewing at higher levels to take advantage of the benefits we offer. Regardless of how much you give or how you do it, we are grateful for every donation we receive.

The news IS good. However, the strategic plan speaks to major facility needs, staffing deficits and new initiatives that all need funding. We need your financial support now more than ever so we don't lose momentum. Great things are happening here and are getting noticed. Tell us your ideas and don't be strangers – we love to see you in the museum! Thank you so much for your commitment to the museum, which makes such a difference here.

Jeanne Conner
Director of Development

Bennington Museum recognized by

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL "Best of 2014: ART"

for one of the nine most memorable exhibitions in North America

Bennington Museum found itself in a select company of North American museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, National Gallery of Art in Washington, Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, and the National Gallery of Canada. The article, by Karen Wilkin independent critic and curator, was titled *Both Anticipated and Unexpected* and appeared December 26, 2014

Fearless Art Talks

Have you ever visited a museum and left thinking "I'm a pretty smart person. Why don't I get this?" You're not alone — especially when it comes to art, which can sometimes feel like a mystical field, shrouded in obscure language. That's why we're starting a series of "Fearless Art Talks," for adults who aren't comfortable talking about art, who feel they don't "get" it. We will look at and talk about art and have fun doing it. (Yes! You can have FUN looking at art in a museum!) For a schedule of Fearless Art Talks, see page 7.

Calendar



Programs and Events

- Thursday** **Museum ABCs** – Designed for children ages 3 to 5 and their caregivers, this pre-school story hour includes stories on the month's topic, visits to the galleries to observe and talk about a piece of art or object, plus an art or craft activity. The monthly Museum ABCs program was developed and is offered in collaboration with the Bennington Free Library. Admission: Free. Registration is not required. Museum ABCs is generously sponsored by The Bank of Bennington.
- March 19, April 23, May 21**
1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Tuesday** **Fearless Art Talk** – is a new program designed for adults who don't know how to talk about art... yet. Join us after work for a laid-back, comfortable conversation about a work of art. Learn how to look at art more deeply, and discover that you can speak intelligently about what you see. The facilitator has no background in the arts, but has learned many ways of looking at and talking about art through her career as a museum education professional. Class size is limited to 10 participants. Call Deana Mallory to make your reservation. 802-447-1571. \$9/person for members, \$12/person for non-members
- March 31 and April 28**
5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, March 28** **Appraisal Fair** – Bring family heirlooms or the odd, quirky piece you always wanted to know about, and let an expert panel of art and antique appraisers explain and evaluate your items. \$5/item with a limit of 5 items.
- 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**
- Friday, April 10** **Jazz and Spirits** – Complementing the spring exhibition *Alcohol in Vermont: Creation to Consumption, Tolerance to Temperance*, is an event that highlights the spirits being created in Vermont today. Held in the Paresky Wing of the Bennington Museum, you are invited to sample local flavors and discuss with the creators the fermentation and distillation process that makes their spirit unique. Music by the Jeff McRae Band. Hearty cuisine. Price: \$75/per person for tickets to attend this event and Blues and Brews on May 15. \$45/per person for this event only.
- 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.**
- Saturday, April 11** **Slow Art Day** – is an international movement designed to encourage deep looking at and enjoyment of art. Spend 50 minutes viewing art on your own, then gather for a casual discussion over lunch with other Slow Art Day participants. Registration is required. Visit slowartday.com for information.
- 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**
- Monday through Friday** **Vacation Workshops** – Join in the exploration of the museum's collection for a day or the week, as the museum offers vacation workshops for children of all ages. April 13, *Pop Up!* Grades 4 and up; April 14, *Gilded*, Grades 3-6; April 16, *Animals Everywhere*, Grades K-2; April 17, *Art, Naturally*, Grades K-6. \$9/member \$12/non-member Includes snack and all materials. Call Deana Mallory at 802-447-1571 for details and to make your reservations.
- April 13 through April 17**
1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Friday, May 15** **Blues and Brews** – is an exciting event to engage guests in the art of craft brewing, in conjunction with the *Alcohol in Vermont* exhibition. Speak with the producers of some of the best craft brews in Vermont, as you taste their newest and best brews and learn how they got started in brewing. Music by the Jeff McRae Band. Hearty cuisine. Related merchandise will be available to purchase. Price: \$75/per person for tickets to attend both this event and the Jazz and Spirits Event on April 10. \$45/per person for a ticket to this event only.
- 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.**

Bennington museum

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On View

Anna Mary Robertson "Grandma" Moses (1860-1961)
Battle of Bennington, 1953
Oil on pressed wood, 18 inches x 30 ½ inches
Copyright © 2014, Grandma Moses Properties Co.,
New York. Gift of Carol and Arnold Haynes

Looking Ahead ...

March 28 through June 21

April 10

May 15

March 28

March 31 and April 28

April 11

Summer Exhibition: July 3 through November 1

*Alcohol in Vermont: Creation to Consumption,
Tolerance to Temperance*

Related Event: Jazz and Spirits

Related Event: Blues and Brews

Appraisal Fair

Fearless Art Talk

Slow Art Day

*Inward Adornings of the Mind: Grassroots Art from the
Bennington Museum and Blasdel/Koch Collections*



Stephen C. Warren, *Memory Ware Tower* (detail).
Mixed Media. West Hartford, VT, 1894.