

MYSTIC MUSEUM OF ART

News & Views | Winter / Spring 2017

MUSEUM HORIZONS 2017

News 2
Collections 5
Exhibitions 6
Events 7
Audiences 9

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MYSTIC MUSEUM OF ART

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VISION 2020

I wish to express my vision for this unique organization with you, our members and supporters. In our Strategic Plan it was revealed that we are an institution operating in two modes. In one mode, MMoA succeeds as a community-based arts organization and school wherein we embrace the local artistic community. However well we have done that, there is no better time to address the second mode where MMoA is poised to make strides equal in importance to its very founding. In this mode, MMoA operates like an art museum, complete with refurbished facilities, scholarly contributions to the visual arts, a permanent collection that is promoted, an endowment, energized leadership, and the support of the next generation.

Our Strategic Plan and its principal goals define a course of action that blend both aforementioned modes: recognizing our distinguished past, and building on our current successes to imagine a great future. It takes into account the changing nature of the population, and recognizes MMoA's evolving position in the community as well as the role of technology. My 2020 VISION is the path that will guide us to expand and better communicate with our audiences, secure our unique properties and beautiful grounds, and ensure the financial stability of the organization for years to come.

In order for MMoA to achieve VISION 2020, just over three years away, it must conduct its business in a far different model than it has previously, while acknowledging its history and those who contributed to its long run. The old museum model must be challenged and reinvigorated with new practices and ideas that will reinvent us.

As the recently board-approved Strategic Plan outlines several key topics re-emerge as we plan our future:

- Connect with audiences through experiences
- Define the future community that will support us
- Develop a master plan for our facilities
- Revise the exhibition program to blend in more scholarly exhibitions, collaboration with other museums, and promote and build our permanent collection
- Promote excellence within the organization
- Ensure a sustainable financial future

MMoA is re-organizing itself to attain a community and regional recognition for which it has heretofore not seen. I remain thrilled to be part of this community and express my thanks to all and best wishes for the New Year.

George G. King
Executive Director



MMoA NEWS & VIEWS

Winter / Spring 2017

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Editor

James Kaczman
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Cover: Henry Ward Ranger,
Under the Bough. Detail. Oil
on Canvas, Mystic Museum of
Art Permanent Collection.



MYSTIC MUSEUM CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON SOCIAL RELEVANCY

Between November 8th and 11th, 936 museum professionals from all over the region visited Mystic for the annual conference of the New England Museum Association. The last NEMA Conference held in Mystic was in 2003, with the theme, “Sex, Drugs and Rock-n-Roll.” This year’s theme was “Plug In: Museums and Social Action.” Sessions were accordingly themed to address how museums can remain relevant amidst the current political climate, deliver programs with empathy, and serve as forums for open discussion on topics of interest to their communities. On the heels of the presidential election results, conference conversations were lively and poignant.

Local Mystic museums played host to conference attendees, with evening events being held at Lyman Allyn Art Museum, Hygienic Art, Florence Griswold Museum, Mystic Seaport Museum, and Mystic Museum of Art. The staff of MMoA was involved with seven conference events this year, providing informational sessions, off-site workshop space, and a site for evening socials. MMoA Graphic Designer James Kaczman worked with Julia Balfour and Florence Griswold’s Tammi Flynn to present a session on website design. Deputy Director Dawn Salerno presented two sessions: one on Resume Writing and another on Intergenerational Communication in the Work Place.

MMoA was host to both the Directors and Trustees reception, and a larger conference Afterparty, providing food, drink, a view of our exhibitions, and plenty of time for museum professionals to socialize. We also hosted a hands-on workshop in our studio space and MMoA’s Dawn Salerno presented the NEMA Lifetime Achievement Award to Florence Griswold Museum Director Jeffrey Andersen. The closing lunch served as the organization’s annual meeting, at which Salerno was elected as Vice President to the Board of Directors of NEMA. She will serve in this role for one year before taking the position of President at the next annual conference in November of 2017.

This year’s conference was the second largest on record for NEMA, suggesting that Mystic was not only a convenient location, but a destination for those who appreciate its cultural assets. On a post-conference survey, more than 88% rated their experience at the Mystic conference as very good or excellent. As the conference fell on Veteran’s Day, organizers raised \$800 in charitable donations for Homes for the Brave, another sign that museums and museum professionals are committed to social relevancy.

Above, (left to right) Dan Yaeger, Executive Director, New England Museum Association; Jeff Andersen, Director, Florence Griswold Museum; Janie Cohen, Board President, New England Museum Association; Dawn Salerno, 1st Vice President, New England Museum Association and MMoA Deputy Director of Public Engagement and Operations.



MUSEUM TRENDS FOR 2017 AND BEYOND

BY DAN YAEGER

Executive Director, New England Museum Association

For the past five years the Center for the Future of Museums, an important wing of the American Alliance of Museums, has published TrendsWatch (<http://aam-us.org/resources/center-for-the-future-of-museums/projects-and-reports/trendswatch>), an incisive and intriguing look at things that might have an impact on the museum horizon in New England and beyond. This year's edition focuses on five trends.

LABOR 3.0: NEW JOBS OR A JOBLESS FUTURE?

The nature of work is changing. Technology is allowing job flexibility like never before. An estimated 25% of all workers nationwide now spend all or part of their days working from home, allowing the opportunity for greater work/life balance and happiness.

Photo by Lars Norgaard.

However, this seems to benefit only high-value employees. Low-wage workers are not typically offered flexible working arrangements. And technology seems arrayed against them too: over the next 20 years robots and artificial intelligence are projected to displace 47% of the American workforce, mostly blue-collar jobs.

This stress-inducing trend is showing up in museum practices. Despite the fact that museum jobs are highly competitive (it's typical for even menial museum jobs to attract 100 applicants), a recent survey found that only 7% of museum professionals believe they work in a culture that is "positive and healthy" (www.joyfulmuseums.com).

This dissatisfaction has the potential to erode museum excellence from within, effecting everything from the visitor experience to donor relations. However, museum activists are calling for better pay, more staff and board diversity, and better opportunities for advancement (#museumworkersspeak, www.museumhue.com), and museum leadership is starting to listen. NEMA has facilitated and encouraged conversations on this topic at its 2015 and 2016 conferences, through its Career Growth Studio, and social media.

MORE THAN HUMAN: EXTENDING THE SPECTRUM OF ABILITY

Last year marked the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Since then museums have gone from fearing ADA as an unwelcome mandate to embracing it. Universal Design (creating spaces geared for all visitors, regardless of their physical abilities) is now the standard language of museum construction. Museum programming today treats people with disabilities as a vital component of the museum audience.

Advances in technology, though, are presenting a new challenge: accommodating visitors whose experiences are shaped by neurological interfaces, advanced prosthetics, even gene editing. According to TrendsWatch, we are entering an era that goes beyond “assistive technology” (electric wheelchairs for instance) to “augmentive technology” that can enhance the abilities of anyone.

Included in this tech smorgasbord are wearable technologies like haptic vests and smart hairclips that translate sound into vibration for the deaf or hard of hearing, biometric implants and digital tattoos that allow people to use their proximity or gestures to accomplish all sorts of interesting tasks, and bionic devices that make ordinary people superhuman.

The apogee of this movement is artist and “cyborg activist” Neil Harbisson, who “hears” color through an antenna that he had surgically implanted into his skull to translate light waves into vibrations. While it might be a bit of a sci/fi fantasy to imagine future museum visitors experiencing art in a whole new way, the wearable tech trend is accelerating quickly and museums need to begin accommodating it now.

AUGMENTED DEVICES

VR, AR, IRL: these are acronyms of increasing significance for museums. VR, or virtual reality, is the suite of hardware and software that propel users into a digital fantasy world of amazing, immersive verisimilitude. AR, or augmented reality, provides a technological overlay onto the real world, enhancing experience with data, graphics, and other helpful content. IRL, of course, is “in real life,” which is what VR and AR attempt to either escape or enhance.

Museums are expressing optimism and concern over what these technologies forebode. Optimists see VR and AR as vehicles for far-flung users to interact digitally with museum content in exceptionally immersive experiences. Pessimists fear AR and VR will become digital substitutes to IRL museum visits. However, this is sort of like the fear baseball team owners expressed in the 1950s when they believed attendance would suffer if games were televised. Try getting tickets to a Red Sox/Yankees contest and see how that fear panned out.

CAPTURE THE FLAG: THE STRUGGLE OVER REPRESENTATION AND IDENTITY

Cultural sensitivities today seem to be at a boiling point. Icons of the past are being removed from the public eye because they commemorate a history of oppression: the Confederate flag and monuments, university edifices and programs named for controversial figures, team mascots representing racial stereotypes.

TrendsWatch tells us “museums, as public stewards of our collective history, find themselves enmeshed in the struggle over representation, identity, and material culture.” Some of the deposed statues and monuments are literally winding up in museums for more discrete exhibition. Museums are convening conversations about whether these public monuments perpetuate oppression or serve as essential reminders of history’s mistakes. As localities struggle over their iconography, museums, says TrendsWatch, “are called on to act as cultural hazmat teams.”

One of the most perplexing issues to arise out of this trend is the question of who, exactly, “represents” a culture and is authorized to speak for it. The MFA/Boston confronted this head-on last summer during the controversy over “Kimono Wednesdays,” during which the museum encouraged visitors to don kimonos and pose for selfies with Monet’s *La Japonaise*. Protesters accused the MFA of insensitivity and colonialism. Counter-protesters defended the museum and noted that the protesters were not of Japanese heritage, implying they did not have the moral authority to protest in the first place.

HAPPINESS: BECAUSE YOU GET WHAT YOU MEASURE

Calling a museum a business is like calling an eagle a bird. True, but much more than that. That’s why it’s a bit unsettling to see the museum field continuing to use business-related metrics such as profit & loss, ROI, and economic impact as the primary weapons in its public advocacy arsenal. Sure, museums in varying degrees do benefit their communities with economic well-being, but their biggest impact on people is their ability to enhance education, quality of life, and overall happiness.

Fortunately, there are signs that bottom-line thinking is changing throughout society. Businesses are realizing that happy employees are productive employees (Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh is a guru in the “happiness movement”) and governments are beginning to supplant World War II-era measures of GDP/GNP with nonfinancial metrics that include happiness as indices. TrendsWatch opines, “Once we redefine success to include more than cash, museums are poised to make sizable contributions to our collective bottom line.”

MYSTIC ART ASSOCIATION AND THE MACBETH GALLERY: A HISTORICALLY PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP

BY ERIKA NEENAN

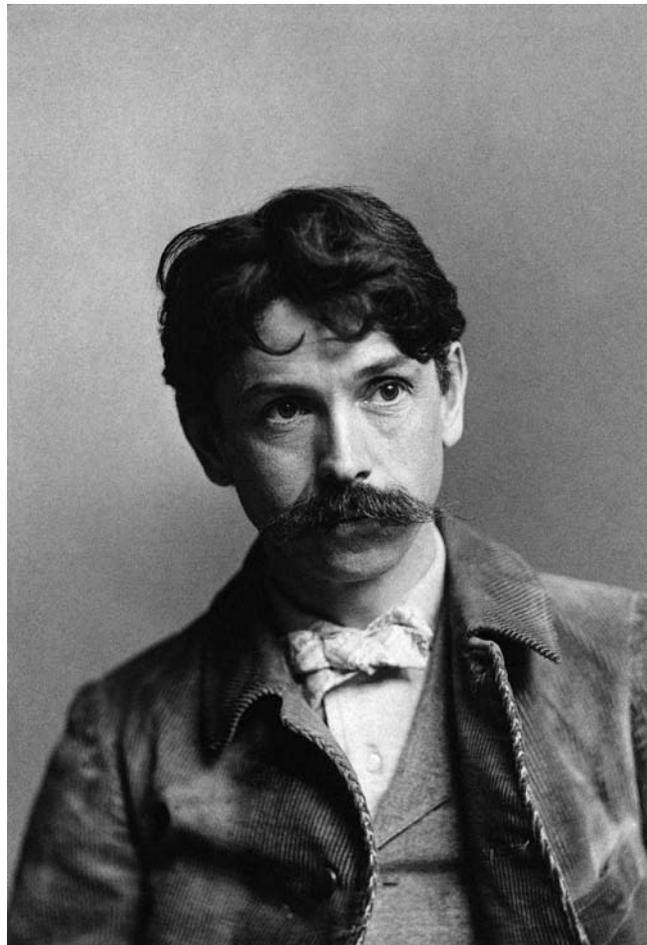
Robert Henri. George Luks. Arthur B. Davies. These artists were groundbreaking leaders in the art world during the early twentieth century. As members of "The Eight," they each broke with the conservative academic teachings of the Academy. These artists were based in New York and were at the forefront of developments in American Realism and Modernism.

Charles H. Davis (right), a contemporary of "The Eight," settled in Mystic in 1892, after having lived in France for about ten years. His reputation encouraged other painters to join him in what formed into an informal artist colony. The colony at Mystic formed at a time when summer colonies were prevalent in the United States.

In Connecticut, the Mystic Colony joined art colonies in Lyme, which was founded in 1900, and Cos Cob, which was active beginning in the 1890s. The art colonies in Connecticut helped contribute to developments in Tonalism and American Impressionism. The Mystic Colony formally formed as the Mystic Art Association and held their first annual summer exhibition in 1914. (The Mystic Art Association would become Mystic Museum of Art.)

At the 1914 and 1915 exhibitions of the Mystic Art Association, works by Charles Davis, Henry Ward Ranger (see cover), and Impressionist artists such as Colin Campbell Cooper and Reynolds Beal were heavily featured. What would draw Henri, Luks, and Davies to exhibit with an Association so closely connected with American Impressionism and Tonalism? The answer to that question lies with a man who helped shaped the history of American art—William Macbeth.

William Macbeth founded the Macbeth Gallery in 1892. Located in New York City, the Gallery was the first to focus exclusively on American works of art at a time when European art was preferred by buyers. William Macbeth spent a great deal of time developing the market for American art, through exhibitions as well as through the publication *Art Notes*. The Gallery hosted *The Eight* exhibition in 1908, and represented many American artists, including Charles H. Davis, with whom Macbeth had a close working relationship.



In 1916, William Macbeth lent thirteen works to the Mystic Art Association's annual exhibition. The decision was likely informed by two factors - Macbeth's relationship with Davis, and by his efforts to build a market for American art. In 1917, both Robert Henri and Arthur B. Davies exhibited in the Mystic summer exhibition. George Luks exhibited in the 1919 exhibition. By lending works for display with the Mystic Art Association, William Macbeth encouraged the participation of artists who were otherwise unconnected to the region or to the Impressionistic style that the region's summer art colonies had helped to develop.

George E. Tingley, *Portrait of Charles H. Davis*. Photograph.

2017 EXHIBITION CALENDAR



JANUARY 13 - FEBRUARY 25

Juried Theme Exhibit: This Is Not Art

Selections from the Permanent Collection

Receiving: Sunday, January 8 & Monday, January 9

Opening Reception: Friday, January 13, 5:30 - 7:30pm

Snow Date: Friday, January 20, 5:30 - 7:30pm

MARCH 3 - MARCH 25

Young At Art

Opening Reception: Saturday, March 4, 1 - 3pm

MARCH 31 - JUNE 3

Members/Elected Artists Exhibit

Selections from the Permanent Collection

Receiving: Sunday, March 26 & Monday, March 27

Annual Meeting/Opening Reception: Thursday, April 20,

5:30 - 6:30pm / 6:30 - 8pm

JUNE 16 - JULY 29

Connecticut Academy of Fine Arts 103rd Annual Exhibition

Receiving: Sunday, June 11 & Monday, June 12

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



AUGUST 4 - SEPTEMBER 23

61st Regional Exhibition

Janvier Miller Solo Show - Winner of 60th Regional

Receiving: Sunday, July 30 & Monday, July 31

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



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

EVENTS

Dine & Donate

Dine out to Support Mystic Museum of Art! Let your server know you are dining on behalf of MMoA and 15% of your purchases will be donated back to the organization. Valid during lunch and dinner. Dine in or take out. Cannot be combined with other discounts and promotions, including happy hour specials.

January 26th at Breakwater in Stonington
January 27th at Steak Loft & Go Fish

Langston Hughes Poetry Reading

MMoA's eighth Langston Hughes Community Poetry Reading will celebrate the legacy of the renowned African American poet. Artists, educators, poets, students, and members of the community will read from Hughes' voluminous body of work. James Montford, Director of the Bannister Gallery at Rhode Island College, art professor, and well known artist, will give the keynote address. Once again, local poet Rhonda Ward will emcee, and Gretchen Higgins will coordinate. People do not need to sign up to read, as they have in past years. They just need to come with their chosen poem and read.

Sunday, February 5, 2pm
Free

Museum Trivia Night

Join our MC and put your world knowledge to the test. Trivia topics include art, nature, local history, and science. Facts have been assembled with the help of museum educators at Mystic Museum of Art, Mystic Aquarium, Mystic Seaport, and The Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center. Register solo, or as a team of up to four people; registration begins at 6:30; trivia starts at 7. Come for the trivia, stay for the fabulous food, drink and company.

Monday, February 27, 6:30pm - 9pm
Oyster Club, 13 Water Street, Mystic, Connecticut
\$5 / person; \$10 / team of 2 - 4 people
Refreshments available for purchase.

Family Night

Games and art activities await you at MMoA Family Night. Drop by for face-painting, hands-on art making, and a gallery game. View Young At Art, an exhibition of artwork from local young people ages 0 to 18.

Thursday, March 2
6pm - 8pm
Free



Sculpture from Pre-historic to Contemporary Times

Sculpture is the most accessible art form in that it occupies the same space in which we interact as humans, and yet, its meaning often eludes us. This survey of three-dimensional artworks includes historical context, art genres, media, and aesthetic appreciation of sculpture dated from Prehistoric to Contemporary times. The instructor, Julia Pavone, will highlight key turning points and innovations using seminal artworks across the centuries.

Mondays, 6:30pm - 7:45pm
April 3, 10, 17, 24

Series:
Members \$35 / Public \$50
Students w/College ID \$20

Single Class:
Members \$10 / Public \$15
Students w/College ID \$5

Advance registration requested: 860.536.7601 x209

Slow Art Day

It is estimated that people spend only eight seconds looking at a given artwork in a museum. Founder of Slow Art, Phil Terry, started this project in the summer of 2009 to encourage people to spend about ten minutes looking at fewer artworks. Slow down and enjoy the artworks of the annual Members and Elected Artists Exhibition. Visit MMoA galleries between 11 and 1 and pick up our Slow Art Guide. Our staff has recommended five pieces for your focus. Visiting with children? Pick up our Eye Spy gallery game. Then join others for lunch at nearby Bartleby's at 1 pm to talk about your experience. Lunch is at your own expense.

Saturday, April 8
11am - 1pm
Free

Art After Dark

MMoA's family friendly Tuesday night concert series returns with more live music and live art on our riverfront patio. Live Music by Ramblewood, live art by Jake Hertzler, and balloon art by April Brunelle.

Tuesday, April 18th, 6pm - 8:30pm
Members \$12, Public \$15, Children 4 - 12 \$3,
Children 3 and under are free
Season Pass: Members \$60, Public \$75

Sponsored by: Cottrell Brewing Co., Pizzetta, Dogwatch Café, Noank Shipyard, Mystic Shipyard, The Captain Daniel Packer Inne, ABC Photo Lab, CMB Creative Group, Real McCoy Rum

Summer Fundraiser

Save the date for our Annual Summer Fundraiser. Details to follow.

Saturday, June 10.



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 & plenty of time to socialize.

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

JANUARY 19

Zentangle Whimsical Garden

Carol Dunn

Relax with the captivating method of Zentangle drawing. Using an Apprentice tile, create garden-like designs within a round shape.

Tonight's martini: The Zentini

FEBRUARY 16

Upcycled Jam Jars

Sue Palmer

Rope transforms even the most common glass jar into a lovely storage container. Bring a clean 8oz. or larger glass jar to transform. Tonight's martini: Like Butter!

MARCH 16

Calligrams

Gail Turgeon

Part calligraphy, part image, the calligram organizes words in a shape which visually expresses the text. Tonight's martini: Chocolate Coconut

APRIL 27

Nature Drawing

Lisa Adams

Capture nature's beauty in graphite. Learn to draw small objects from nature.

Tonight's martini: Espresso

INTRODUCING THE NEWEST GENERATION OF MUSEUM SUPPORTERS: MILLENNIALS

BY DAWN SALERNO

In a recent “off-stage” moment, a museum colleague of mine asked, “What is it with the millennials? I mean, it’s all anyone talks about right now!” And she would be correct. Millennials, defined generally as those born between 1982 and 1995, or between the ages of 21 and 34 now, are the coveted demographic amongst museums nationally. They are being targeted by audience initiatives at museums as our future visitors, program participants, donors and leaders.

One could look at studies of any generation and emphasize its negative qualities. Millennials have been criticized as possessing a sense of entitlement, having a tendency to overshare on social media, and being so frank as to “verge on subordination,” according to a 2016 New York Times article about their generation in the workforce. However, they are also classified as being team oriented, confident, diverse, optimistic, and loyal to their peers.

Millennials grew up in the digital age and became fast adapters of social media and smartphones. For this reason, they are used to having information, entertainment, and interaction at their fingertips, figuratively and literally. Therefore, the way a millennial might navigate a museum exhibition is vastly different from traditional methods (e.g. reading labels next to artworks). She might, for example, seek information in addition to what the museum has provided on label copy, tag and post a photo of herself at the museum to Instagram, or look up a song that’s playing in the gallery using her Shazam app, then buy that music on Amazon—all while visiting the gallery. Museums today have also adopted technologies that encourage this type of interaction. The Brooklyn Museum, for example, invented an app that allows visitors to ask questions about the collection using their smartphones. Once submitted, the questions go to a team of art historians and educators who respond and can give recommendations on what to see next within the museum, all in real time.

Millennials are showing themselves to be a different breed of donor too. “Younger philanthropists and donors today are looking for measurable results,” noted Ford Bell, former president of the American Alliance of Museums, in a 2014 New York Times interview. “It used to be you gave because it was the Metropolitan Museum of Art. But today, younger donors have a lot of things they can give to. They ask what the impact is going to be and how you’re going to measure that impact. The Rockefellers gave, but they weren’t looking for specific metrics.”

As board leadership ages out, millennials present opportunities not only for filling seats, but also for diverse and fresh perspectives. For example, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis turned over about 75 percent of their board membership in just seven years. When seats were filled by people in their 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s, the museum noticed interests and priorities among their younger members differed from those of older members. While the latter may have prioritized acquisitions to the collection, a younger board member prioritized the people attending the Walker’s programs.

If museums are to succeed at reaching this new young audience, we are best served by some face time with them. For this reason, many museums, like Portland Museum of Art and Mystic Museum of Art (MMoA), have established advisory groups. MMoA formed its Contemporaries Committee (CC) in 2016: a group of individuals aged 25 to 45 from the community who help to advise us on programming, membership, marketing, and donor cultivation for this demographic. The CC is headed by MMoA Board member Mari Kodama, and staff liaison Erika Neenan. Established as an audience development initiative by the museum’s Strategic Plan, the committee’s charge is to increase participation of millennials across all levels of the museum’s activities, from event attendance to leadership on the Board of Directors. To date, the CC has run two events for millennials and advised us on our new auxiliary group, The Contemporaries. The Contemporaries, a group of dynamic young professionals, will have opportunities to attend social and educational programs tailored to them while also supporting the museum as patrons. Thirty dollars annually includes admission into two Contemporaries-branded events and the April Art After Dark program. Members of The Contemporaries must also join as a member of MMoA.

As Ms. Neenan says, “Millennials often view museums as institutions that are not meant for them. With the Contemporaries Committee and The Contemporaries auxiliary group, our aim is to create events that draw millennials into the museum and break down that notion.”

If you have ever struggled to relate to somebody representative of another generation, you will understand the challenge museums have as we strive to appeal to all ages. We recognize that a museum tour for first graders must differ from a tour for adults, so why not make adjustments in other functions of the museum? At MMoA, our commitment is not only to encourage questions, but also to listen and respond to them. No matter what your age, we would love to hear from you.

IN MEMORIUM

ALEXANDRA "SANDY" LINEN HALSEY

Alexandra "Sandy" Linen Halsey enjoyed her final summer day with her family by her side on September 7, 2016. She demonstrated grit and grace in her two-year battle with cancer, maintaining her selflessness and passion for life. She is predeceased by her loving husband of 50 years, Anthony P. Halsey.

Sandy was born on December 14, 1934 in West Orange, NJ to Mary Barron Linen and John Schuyler Linen. She was the third of four daughters. Sandy attended high school at The Beard School in Morristown, NJ, where she later served on the board. She graduated from Skidmore College in 1956 and later served as a class agent, class president, and reunion chair and received the Outstanding Service Award for her many ways of giving back to her alma mater.

Sandy met her husband Tony Halsey after college while working for Oxford University Press. Sandy and Tony were married in 1957 and had four children, Wendy, Linda, Toby, and Bill, while living in Summit, New Jersey. Sandy was involved in many volunteer activities while living in Summit: the Summit Speech School where she served as President of the Board, Junior League of Summit; and the Summit Garden Club, while also raising four children. In 1985, Sandy and Tony moved from Summit to Mystic, Connecticut, where she continued her volunteer services at Lyman Allyn Art Museum, Mystic Seaport, Mystic Garden Club, Mystic Art Association, and Mystic Congregational Church.

She loved spending time in her garden, playing golf, walking her dog, sailing, traveling, and being with her family and friends. She also loved to paint, play the piano, and make cookies with her grandchildren.

FACILITY RENTAL



Host Your Next Event at Mystic Museum of Art

Need a unique venue for your event? Mystic Museum of Art is an elegant event venue, perfect for weddings, rehearsal dinners, corporate events, and holiday parties. River views with fine art exhibitions throughout the year make your event a memorable affair.

Call Andrea Frickman at 860.536.7601 x203, or email africkman@mysticmuseumofart.org to schedule a visit to view the gallery or book an event.



MYSTIC MUSEUM OF ART

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