

MYSTIC MUSEUM OF ART

News & Views | Fall 2018

TONGUE IN CHEEK: THE ART OF BRYAN GORNEAU



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FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

MYSTIC MUSEUM OF ART

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IN SEARCH OF THE MUSEUM'S NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The search for our new Executive Director began in February of this year with the formation of a Search Committee. A proposal to hire an executive search-firm was advanced to the Board which they unanimously approved. Our strategy for hiring an independent search-firm was that they have access to a broader pool of qualified candidates, and can reach out to those who may not even be seeking a new position. A generous donor has underwritten most of the cost of this engagement so there is minimal financial impact to our budget.

We interviewed various companies and came down to two very talented finalists. In the end, we decided to engage Museum Search & Reference. They are a leading executive search-firm focused solely on placing leaders in museums. That, and the fact that all those working at the firm have been in the museum field, and many in executive positions, gave us confidence that they would know what skill sets are needed to manage and lead Mystic Museum of Art.

Their mission statement is: "Museum Search & Reference is focused on one task—finding the very best Leadership for American Museums."

In their twelve years of doing business, they have placed thirty-two directors and twenty-four other museum professionals, including deputy directors, directors of education, and curators, in museums across the U.S. They are based in Manchester, New Hampshire, and have a strong portfolio of clients in New England.

The firm's principal, Marilyn Hoffman, and a senior associate with the firm, Connie Rosemont, are jointly working on our search. They spent a day at the Museum in early April, interviewing members of the Search Committee, staff, and important dedicated friends of the Museum. They toured the Museum and 15 Water Street.

Armed with an understanding of what is needed to manage and lead MMoA, they have been actively recruiting and vetting possible candidates. The formal application deadline was July 26th. The goal is that the Search Committee will have a roster of candidates to evaluate and select for interviews beginning in late August/early September, and hopefully have our new Executive Director in place by late October.

See *DIRECTOR*, page 2



MMoA NEWS & VIEWS

Fall 2018

Bill Furgueson
Editor

James Kaczman
Graphic Designer

Cover: Bryan Gorneau
Niche, 2014
Mixed media, 14 x 12 in.
See essay on page 3

FROM THE PRESIDENT

MMOA STRATEGIC PLANNING REVIEW UPDATE

Mystic Museum of Art is now in the third year of implementation of its 2016–2018 strategic plan, an appropriate time to look at the present status of this process, while also reviewing the past and looking toward the future. At the start, in 2014, we implicitly asked the question: As a relatively small community-supported non-profit arts organization that's been around for more than a hundred years, do we really need to do "strategic planning?" And we quickly found the undeniable answer: We need to do strategic planning only if we want to still be here as a vital institution actively supporting the arts and artists in our community a hundred years from now.

In the year-long planning process (2014–2015) that actively engaged staff, board members, artist and non-artist members, and community stake-holders, we asked and answered many additional questions. We assessed our programs, our resources and finances, our strengths and our weaknesses. We developed and adopted a comprehensive strategic plan that set five major goals and the strategies for achieving them. The goals are: (I) build MMoA's community, (II) connect through experiences, (III) better utilize, sustain and enhance our three unique facilities and grounds, (IV) promote excellence within the organization, and (V) ensure a sustainable future.

The first of these goals, to build MMoA's community, has involved pursuing five separate strategies: (i) define an identity for the Mystic Museum of Art that communicates its value to the community, (ii) increase awareness of MMoA in the mid-Atlantic and New England art museum communities and beyond, (iii) retain current and build new audiences for exhibitions, (iv) increase capacity for audience outreach, attendance and visitation; (v) cultivate future supporters of MMoA (millennials).

Each of the remaining goals has a similarly well-defined set of strategies that, although I will not review them here, have been applied to MMoA programs and efforts in pursuit of the particular goal, while focusing on fulfilling our mission and meeting our commitments with programs of excellence. As with everything we do, MMoA's strategic planning implementation requires a community effort. That community includes members and benefactors, elected artists, a committed, dedicated and hard-working staff, and volunteers serving as interns, as docents, as committee members, and as Board members. Results are already visible in the quality and success of our education and outreach programs, juried and curated exhibitions, special events and after-hours programs, facilities and grounds, and collaborations with arts organizations within the broader community.

Although our progression from the Mystic Arts Center of 2015 to the Mystic Museum of Art of 2018 has been accomplished through innumerable individual and combined efforts, there is the perception of a quantum leap in our institutional identity in the eyes of the community. This in itself is a measure of success in achieving the goals of the strategic plan. But in the end, successful strategic planning is an iterative process. Over the coming months we will be reviewing our successes and our shortcomings, and re-evaluating our goals and strategies. We look forward to the leadership role a new MMoA Executive Director will play in that ongoing collaborative process.

David Madacsi
Board President

DIRECTOR

Continued from page 1

This search is national in scope, but Museum Search & Reference is strongly aware of the importance that the incoming Executive Director will be an active part of the local Mystic community. Marilyn and Connie provide regular updates to the Search Committee and report that there is good interest in the position, and they are optimistic we will have a strong pool of candidates.

In closing, I would like to thank members of our Search Committee: David Madacsi, Andy Halsey, Cindy Martin, Michele Kirk, Patty Kitchings, and Mari Kodama. They have already devoted many hours to the search process, and the work has only just begun.

I would also like to thank all our MMoA dedicated staff who have been working tirelessly to fulfill the mission of MMoA day after day. Special thanks to Judy Flora who has been doing double duty as our CFO and Acting Executive Director. Our new Executive Director will be inheriting an incredible team!

Mary Anne Stets
Chair of the Search Committee
Chairperson of the Board

TONGUE IN CHEEK: THE ART OF BRYAN GORNEAU

BY AMELIA ONORATO

Museums are constantly caught in a balancing act, paying tribute to our traditional art heritage while always searching for newer, different ideas. Perfectly encapsulating that dichotomy is Bryan Gorneau, a sculptor and mixed media artist from the Connecticut shoreline, who has also worked as a second-shift welder and art fabricator for nearly thirteen years; an arrangement he enjoys because it leaves his days free to work on his own art. Gorneau attended the Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts, where he was required to redo his entire application portfolio—the initial one was all heavy metal drawings—before apprenticing with local sculptor Gilbert Boro and completing a welding program at Central Wyoming College.

Gorneau's works incorporate elements of our society's cultural identity, often co-opting historical images and headlines of Americana from periodicals, or even from the side of the road. In terms of influences and themes, he is drawn to the oldness of things that aren't inherently archival quality in and of themselves, but that through their subject matter are timeless aspects of pop culture. And that aspect can be for better or worse. Consider *Children at Play*, in which two boys in vintage clothing toting lunch baskets and firearms are superimposed on a street sign we all see every day.

His work used to be more political, Gorneau confides, but these days he prefers to avoid making overt statements in his art; choosing rather to present ideas in juxtaposition that everyone can interpret on their own terms, forming their own opinions.

Ironically, although Gorneau prefers sculpture work he actually went to school with a focus on painting. "Obviously I had seen sculptures before college, but I didn't really notice them," he laughs. He credits Daniel Edwards, a professor at the Lyme Academy, with getting him interested and motivated in the medium, almost through reverse psychology—"He played mind-games! He'd say 'I can tell you're here for painting, I'll give you a C,'" Gorneau jokes, before admitting that this only made him work harder.

Above, right: Bryan Gorneau
Children at Play, 2017
Mixed media, 24 x 18 in.



Similarly, Gorneau speaks highly of sculptor Gilbert Boro, with whom he's worked with closely for over a decade, and considers to be family. In Wyoming, Gorneau focused on figurative sculpture, and found himself struggling after graduation because of the limiting nature of figure work, but more importantly because it just felt like schoolwork. It was Gil, Gorneau says, who helped him feel confident as an artist.

Although Gorneau's playful aesthetic and subject matter transcends medium, the methods between mixed media and sculpture are naturally quite different. His process for the former involves stockpiling images that catch his eye, just waiting for him to find the perfect background, often a road sign or a piece of newsprint, that will pull it all together. Once the disparate elements present themselves, he begins the daunting and time-consuming job of combining them. His mixed media works always start with Gorneau knowing what the finished product should look like, whereas he finds the process of sculpture infinitely more freeing; it evolves naturally as he plays with and deconstructs his materials.

Regardless of his work's two- or three-dimensionality, Gorneau says he doesn't mind things being a little dirty. He proudly points out that the sculpture shows his tool marks; the paintings show his drawing marks. There's a life and an energy in imperfection.

EXHIBITION CALENDAR



AUGUST 3 - SEPTEMBER 22

62nd Regional Exhibition

Mystical Interactions: Sunil Howlader Solo Exhibition

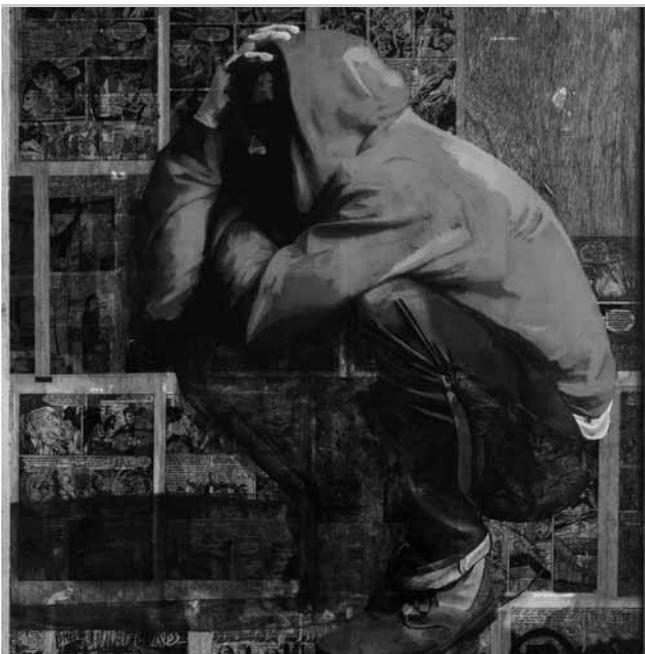


SEPTEMBER 28 - NOVEMBER 10

Photo Show 40

Receiving: Sunday, September 23 & Monday, September 24

Opening Reception: Thursday, October 4, 5:30pm - 7pm



SEPTEMBER 28 - NOVEMBER 10

Tongue in Cheek: Bryan Gorneau Solo Show

Opening Reception: Thursday, October 4, 5:30pm - 7pm



NOVEMBER 16 - DECEMBER 22

Holiday Gift Show

Holiday Show Preview Party. Friday, November 16, 6pm - 8pm

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

EVENTS



Artini Hour

Mix cocktails and creativity for your next happy hour. Take on a creative project with one of our instructors as you learn to play and experiment with a variety of media. We provide instruction, supplies, a tasty beverage (signature Martini, Wine, Beer, Non-alcoholic) and plenty of time to socialize with friends.

Thursdays, 5:30pm - 7:30pm

\$18 Members / \$23 Public

Call to register: 860.536.7601 x213

Clay Creations

Liz Lomax

Using polymer colored clay, design, create and bake beads, earrings, keychains, or your choice of an accessory piece that can be used as a holiday gift for someone special.

Tonight's Martini: Melon Cucumber-tini

September 27

It's only Natural

Sean Kane

Design a personalized set of stationery by creating handdrawn/written greeting cards embellished with natural materials such as grasses, pinecones, moss, and twigs.

Tonight's Martini: Apple Cider-tini

October 25

Meditations Stones

Sean Kane

Use paint pens and basic calligraphy skills to design a series of beach stones with inspirational text.

Tonight's Martini: White Choccola-tini

November 15

Holiday Canvas

Lisa Adams

Turn a blank canvas into a winter themed masterpiece.

Tonight's Martini: Gingerbread-tini

December 20



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 passes are also available: \$60 MMoA members; \$75 non-members. Parking validations provided with admission.

Tuesday, September 18, 6pm - 8:30pm

Live music by Darrin Keech, live art by Katherine Gates, and balloon art by April Brunelle

Tuesday, October 16, 6pm - 8:30pm

Live music by The Fake Experience, live art by Bonnie Sullivan, and balloon art by April Brunelle

Season Sponsors: Mystic River Press, Universal Package Store, and The Resident Newspaper

Sponsors: ABC PhotoLab, Captain Daniel Packer Inne, CMB Creative Group, Coca-Cola, Cottrell Brewing, H&H Distributing, Hosmer Mountain Beverages, Mallove's Jewelers, Mighty Swell Beverages, Mystic Shipyard, Mystic River Mudhead Sailing Association, Mystic River Press, Noank Village Boatyard, Pizzetta, Sails Up 4 Cancer, The Real McCoy

I Feel Voxish Speaker Series

I Feel Voxish is a forward looking speaker series in which leaders in culture and ideas present topics representing their passions. Held in MMoA's 15 Water Street Gallery, the program features individual speakers and salon discussions. Each event will conclude with a reception. Check the MMoA website for a schedule of upcoming presentations.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Wendy Lopes

In our Volunteer Spotlight this issue is Wendy Lopes. Wendy is one of the docents in our gallery who does a lot more than just greet our visitors and make them feel welcome at MMoA. Wendy has also helped out at our Summer Gala Fundraiser, Art After Dark, the Voxish speaker series, the Holiday Show, facility rental events, and almost every art exhibition opening.

Originally born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana, she is married to U.S. Coast Guard Captain Kevin Lopes and they have a son, Ethan. This is the family's second stint of living in Connecticut. After living all across the country, Wendy, Kevin, and Ethan have been back in the area for the past five years. Ethan and Wendy both took art classes here at Mystic Museum of Art and the two have been volunteering here for just over a year now. Ethan has been helping out in the studios during our summer camps.

A talented artist, Wendy excels at painting and photography. She has not been in a MMoA show, because she has not been painting recently due to the loss of her art materials when Hurricane Isaac destroyed her storage unit in Louisiana. Instead, she has been focusing her time on doing interior design work as well as taking art classes at Rhode Island School of Design. Along with her busy schedule as a parent, designer, and student, Wendy still has time to volunteer here at MMoA.

While there are aspects of Southern life she misses, Wendy is so happy to be part of the wonderful MMoA community. And Mystic Museum of Art is very appreciative having her serve as such a hard-working, welcoming, and enthusiastic volunteer.

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT



Cristina Ruales

The Mystic Museum of Art is proud to introduce our newest art faculty member, Cristina Ruales. Born in Quito, Ecuador, Cristina reached her first summit, in the Andes, at the age of five, setting the stage for a lifetime of striving for high achievement.

Cristina comes to MMoA after moving from New York, where she was an accomplished fashion designer and businesswoman. Her quest for excellence led her to Parsons, where she received her BFA degree at the age of sixteen. She received her MFA in costume design from Yale, becoming the first female Latina to graduate from the Yale School of Drama in the Design program.

Her fashion line has been carried in stores such as Henri Benel, Takashimaya, Intermix, and American Rag. As a Senior Designer for DKNY, she gained crucial knowledge in production, merchandising, and marketing. She has also had her designs shown during New York's Fashion Week.

Ruales still makes time to go mountain climbing between time spent working on her fashion collections, where her love of nature and architecture continues to act as her inspiration. Cristina shared, "My whole ethos is basically based on the idea of architecture versus nature. So, nature can be in the print, often, but also in terms of the way things fit the body and natural fibers versus technical fibers. But the architecture isn't just like the architecture that inspires me, like our buildings we live in and our indoor/outdoor experiences as human beings, but really the architecture of the clothing itself—how the garments are draped."

The MMoA is excited to have another accomplished artist working in our studios. Cristina Ruales will offer classes starting this fall and we invite you to stop by and personally welcome her into the MMoA community



A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

On June 9, 2018, under the leadership of Gala Committee Chair Cindy Martin, the Mystic Museum of Art held its annual summer fundraiser to support the operations of the Museum. During the evening we honored Lois H. Constantine, a longtime Elected Artist who has done important work as a volunteer in our archives. Lois's work ensures that MMoA community members will have a clear understanding of the history of this great organization. During the evening we held silent and live auctions, and hosted a paddle raise to support the educational outreach programs that serve our local schools. It was a highly successful evening and we are proud of how the local community came together to support the Museum and its mission.



THE DIGITAL DEBATE



BY MARY ADDISON

Technology. It's everywhere and as a whole we are loving it. Our phones and other devices have become an extension of our mental and physical selves and we recognize all the many countless benefits. Sure, we also identify the negative side effects of phones on the developing mind. From time to time we fondly reminisce about the "good old days" when our heads were held high, our letters were handwritten and our fingerprints more defined. As parents, we agonize over when is the "right" time to allow our children to have a phone. We are saddened by their sudden loss of innocence and disinterest in playing outside.

However, the reality is that we love our technology and can't imagine our lives without it. We no longer have to be bored when sitting in a doctor's office, deal with awkward silences, or fear a long car ride with our kids in tow. Because of technology, we are knowledgeable on countless assorted topics and experts in a wide variety of fields. Throughout the history of art, advancements in technology, materials, tools, and applications have brought us to where we are now. Digital technology is no different. It redefines art and what we are able to create. For the first time ever, each and every one of us is capable of artistic greatness.

The other day I was sitting at the pool observing a bubbly, giddy group of pre-teens. They posed with pouted lips, angling their faces this way and that as they took a series of selfies, hopeful that some would be worthy of posting on social media. The rejects were deleted and they rejoiced in the images making the cut. Each photo needed to go through a series of edits. They were scrutinized and adjusted for quality of lighting, saturation of color, and overall composition. It's a scene we witness everyday, especially with the younger generations.

Then one of the girls told her friend: "You are such an amazing photographer! You're so talented. You're like a real artist." I realized the weight of such a statement. Here was proof that Picasso's quote "every child is an artist" is true. We all now have the ability, literally at our fingertips, to be artists. No one can say they are lacking artistic ability. The world around us is suddenly a massive canvas that can be shaped and redesigned however we want. The possibilities are limitless.

As teachers, artists, and students of the arts, there exists a challenge with this newfound power. Traditional tools such as the paintbrush, paper, and pencil, now face obscurity. The artist, through conventional methods, was once in control of the physical surface of a piece of art. Now, with the click of a mouse, we are able to mimic traditional methods that an artist would have spent a lifetime to master. Art does not necessarily need to exist as a physical object anymore. But should it? Is it important to have an intimate connection between pencil and paper anymore when the final product can be just a few clicks away?

With the enormous quantity of digital art being produced there is no denying that some of it is great but much is pedestrian. The exceptional digital artists have put the work in. They have studied and trained, and possess solid skills in drawing and painting. They know how to use traditional art materials and have mastered them before heading to their computer. Their artistic vocabulary is already well developed. Their understanding of the principles of art translate digitally because they are using the computer as an extension of themselves.

Artists creating digital art without first learning the fundamentals simply can not know their full potential. True talent is discovered in the journey. What artist doesn't strive to better hone their skills by exploring a wide variety approaches? The greats are often those individuals who didn't only do one thing. They are great because they mastered all aspects of their field.

Throughout history, art has always reflected the culture of the times. It has taken many forms and is continuously evolving. The digital era has undoubtedly been a positive addition to the artistic process. Our phones are now a tool just like a palette knife or colored pencil. However, there is something to be said about actively engaging with our work. There exists an emotional connection and for some an almost spiritual journey in the process of traditional art-making.

Think about how technology has expanded your appreciation of art. Perhaps you are excited about a photo you recently captured or a new drawing app you tried. Give that feeling the attention it deserves. Perhaps those selfies can be a gateway to something great that you didn't even know was there.

ANNUAL FUND

HELP YOUR ART MUSEUM BECOME ALL IT CAN BE

What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything?
— *Vincent van Gogh*

In 1913, Charles Davis and his fellow artists created the Mystic Art Association with a vision of education and artistic daring. It was founded as a society and an exhibition space, but it has always also been a community center. And what began as a landfill is now the only downtown public green space on the Groton side of the Mystic River, offering views of so many of the elements that define downtown Mystic. Not only a beautiful property, the MMoA is one that is impacting the community.

Creativity takes courage.
— *Henry Matisse*

The mission of Mystic Museum of Art is to inspire creativity and critical dialogue by engaging the regional community in the understanding, appreciation, and practice of visual art. To support its mission as an educational, non-profit organization open to all, Mystic Museum of Art maintains a historically significant gallery, built in 1931, on Water Street in downtown Mystic. The Museum conducts a regularly-scheduled series of juried, open, and invitational exhibitions throughout the year, presents a variety of programs in the performing arts, including literary events and musical performances, offers fine art for sale, and maintains a museum quality archive department and permanent collection. Mystic Museum of Art's comprehensive education program offers classes for both children and adults and provides educational outreach programs to regional schools including Groton, Stonington, New London, and Norwich. Our Museum fosters creativity within the community and is not afraid to reach out to all community members.

All happiness depends on courage and work.
— *Honoré de Balzac*

As we close out the year 2018, there has been tremendous work done here at the Museum. By enhancing the space in front of 15 Water Street, the land in between the Oyster Club and the downtown Police Station, and the installation of our beautiful rain garden, our grounds have been transformed into one of Mystic's most beautiful properties. Through our diverse exhibitions, inspiring speaker series, and the hosting of job fairs and professional development days for community organizations, the Museum has been a venue for many events that have enhanced the region culturally, intellectually, and economically. And, to further impact the community, we have done amazing outreach at various schools and participated in many local community events. All of these great actions took place because of the hard work shown by our incredible Museum staff. This dedicated group have been tremendous in their efforts to positively impact our community.

Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others.
— *Booker T. Washington*

The Museum is only as good as the work of its staff and the support of its members. Your Annual Fund support is vital to allow this fine institution to offer free admission, access great exhibits to show on the walls of our galleries, offer the compelling community speaker series, and provide such a rich art education program to both our local school systems and our community as a whole. Your gift to the Annual Fund, no matter its size, has an impact on all of the components that make up the Mystic Museum of Art experience.

EVERY GIFT MAKES AN IMPACT

\$10

- A day's worth of teaching supplies for a summer art camp
- A one-hour art class for a child three-and-½ to 5 years old

\$25

- A box of exhibit label paper
- Model's pay for an hour of figure drawing class

\$50

- A month's worth of office copy paper
- A week's worth of teaching supplies for summer art camp

\$100

- One month's worth of office supplies for the Staff
- Flowers for the planters around the building

\$250

- A set of new paints for the Art Department
- A camera for the Photography classes

\$500

- A street banner for advertising purposes
- All summer art camp T-shirts

\$1,000

- Supports an exhibition in the Liebig Gallery
- A full summer of camp for a half-day camper

\$2,500

- Supports the cost of putting on a major exhibition

\$5,000

- Updating exterior lighting for the grounds
- A sprinkler irrigation system for the front grounds
- Cleaning the Museum's HVAC system

How will your gift help the Museum to be all it can be?

MYSTIC MUSEUM OF ART

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PHOTO SHOW

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SEPTEMBER 28 – NOVEMBER 10, 2018