

It Came from the Vault: Rarely Seen Works from MAG's Collection
At the Memorial Art Gallery from March 16-June 9, 2013
“Staff Picks: A Cell Phone Tour to Accompany the Exhibition”
Dial in to the tour at 585-627-4132

Stop 1

Director's Welcome

Grant Holcomb, Mary W. and Donald R. Clark Director, Memorial Art Gallery

I'm Grant Holcomb, director of the Memorial Art Gallery. And welcome to *It Came from the Vault: Rarely Seen Works from MAG's Collection*, and to this special tour highlighting works in the exhibition chosen by Gallery staff.

This exhibition is sponsored by the Gallery Council, and Dr. Anne-Marie Logan. Additional support is provided by the Herdle-Moore Fund and Dr. Vivian A. Pallodoro.

The Memorial Art Gallery's storage vaults are home to thousands of objects that, for a variety of reasons, are seldom on public view. Against the backdrop of our centennial celebration, we share these rarely seen but treasured works with you. Many MAG voices created the current exhibition as members of all departments were invited to select their favorite work. They have also provided cell phone tour stops explaining why they chose what they did. We hope you will enjoy this unique exhibition and the opportunity to hear some of the Gallery staff speak about the works that speak to them.

Stop 2

Tour Instructions

Patti Giordano, Marketing Manager, Memorial Art Gallery

Throughout the exhibition you will see several signs that indicate a cell phone audio stop. Call the telephone number listed and enter the stop number to hear the artists talk about the highlighted work. When the stop concludes, you may simply enter the next stop number, or hang up and call the tour number back when you're ready. To interrupt a stop, press # and then the next stop number.

You also have the opportunity to share your thoughts with us about this tour, or your overall experience at the Gallery today. We encourage you to enter *0 (star 0) at any time during your tour to leave us feedback.

This cell phone tour is free, but please be aware that your normal plan minutes will apply. Thank you for visiting the Memorial Art Gallery.

Stop 3

Debora McDell-Hernandez, Coordinator of Community Programs and Outreach

Speaking on Eugen Bracht's *Morning Star*

Although I am not an expert swimmer, I have always loved the water and respected its ability to be both a powerful force as well as a source for tranquility. I was drawn to this painting because of the water and the deep, rich blues used throughout the painting. Had it not been for the land masses, it would be difficult to distinguish the sky from the river. I love the way the soft glow from the moon dances on the surface of the water. When I look at this painting I am transported to a serene place free of the noise that has become part of the modern landscape. I want to hop in a canoe and paddle down the winding water way and see what lies beyond the bend.

Stop 4

Susan Nurse, retired Visual Resources Coordinator

Speaking on Celia or Clarissa Burt's *Mourning Painting*

This is a mourning painting, painted on silk and embellished with stitching by C. Burt (Celia or Clarissa). Both watercolor and gouache (opaque paint) were used to put down the figures, fill in the names and dates of the deceased family members on a column and to outline the rest of the piece. The silk was then embroidered with fine silk thread in decorative stitches to enhance the column, the willows and ground. The other trees and ground foliage were fancy stitched with variegated puffy threads of chenille. The glass was then reverse painted with black to form a matting, with the maker's name in gold lettering. In spite of its age, this fabric piece is in remarkable condition.

I've been an embroider since I was 7, when my Grandmother taught me to hand sew by drawing pictures on old pillow cases and having me enhance the drawings with stitches. By my teens, I was recreating antique samplers from Williamsburg and the White House. I continue to do stitching projects to this day. There is rarely a day without some kind of hand stitching in my life. That is why I chose this piece. Because fabric is so fragile, this piece has not been exhibited in a while. Another reason that I liked this piece is that it once belonged to Isabel Herdle, who was the Gallery's Assistant Director from 1932 to 1972. I had a lovely relationship with her in her last years until her death in 2004. It reminds me of her and her love for American folk art.

Stop 5

Colleen Piccone, Curatorial Assistant

Speaking on Jon Carsman's *Melon Glow*

What intrigues me about this watercolor is the vibrant and intense melon color, a favorite of mine, edged in dark outline. The home is illuminated with sunshine as the trees and the wires cast long dark shadows. The architecture is familiar, like the Corn Hill area nearby.

I love the realistic style and the use of strong light and shadows. This reminds me of what watercolorist Charles Burchfield would have painted 40 years ago.

As the snow melts on the roof, I'm reminded of how beautiful a sunny winter day can look and feel.

Stop 6

Kerry Donovan, Secretary, Education Department
Speaking on Daniel Arthur Allen, Jr.'s *Sunny Ducks*

My name is Kerry Donovan and I am the secretary in the Education Department. When MAG staff was given the opportunity to pick a piece for this exhibition, I figured that I would likely choose a 19th- or early 20th century American piece—I've studied history for many years and tend to be drawn to works that speak to the context in which they were created, as art can be a particularly interesting primary source. And yet I ended up choosing *Sunny Ducks*, largely because I found it to be so unexpected and unusual. I actually did a double take the first time I saw it, not sure if I was seeing what I thought I was seeing. Then as I looked closer, I realized there was so much to wonder about and explore. And I kind of like the fact that I'm not really sure what is going on here! I look forward to adding to my understanding of *Sunny Ducks* by learning more about the artist.

Stop 7

Cindy Culbert, Curatorial Consultant
Speaking on Arthur B. Davies' *Oxen Under Trees*

My name is Cindy Culbert and I am a curatorial consultant for the MAG. I chose Arthur B. Davies' watercolor *Oxen Under Trees* painted around 1927 because of my conflicted feelings about his life and work. Part of me respects him for the role he played in the development of American Art. He was instrumental in two of the most important exhibitions of the 20th century, as an artist in the first and an organizer of the second. Another part of me doesn't respect him at all because of the double life he led. Upon his death it was discovered that he had another family in New York City while his wife and children lived on a farm in the Hudson Valley. On top of that, I just don't like most of his oil paintings. But he also did prints, drawings and water colors and those I can't deny enjoying immensely.

Stop 8

Carol Acquilano, Preparator
Speaking on Jean Dubuffet's *Affairements*

I studied Italian Art during my college years and ended up spending a semester in Italy. Naturally I was thrilled to see the Renaissance come to life in all the Tuscan towns we visited, but during one visit to Florence I stumbled upon an exhibition that featured the work of Jean Dubuffet. It was so different and so refreshing, like opening a door to my imagination. The work was so expressive, so lyrical and vibrant.

This print is like its French title, filled with activity and action. It is so thrilling to me! Since that first impression so many years ago, I have always connected with his abstract and playful sensibility.

Stop 9

Patti Giordano, Marketing Director

Speaking on Helen Frankenthaler's *Air Frame*

When I look around me I am very tuned into the basic repetitive patterns that create our visual realm. The whip of a cloud in the sky is a wave in the ocean and also a swirl of snow in the wind. The small graphic components that make up our big world are beautiful and pure when isolated and allowed to speak on their own. The grace of these clean and simple shapes reminds me to appreciate and nurture the little things. These delicate parts will then join together to make a rich and wonderful whole.

Stop 10

Sheri Burgstrom, Senior Accountant

Speaking on Charles Gruppe's *Dutch Landscape*

My name is Sheri Burgstrom and my position here at the Memorial Art Gallery is Senior Accountant. I am responsible for budgets, forecasting and other special financial reports.

I was very excited to be offered the opportunity to personally select a piece from our collection that might not otherwise be shared with the public. There was a sense of overwhelming responsibility as I began to review our Embark system which is a huge catalogue of computerized snapshots of each item in our collection. There is pottery, glass, paintings and drawings. We have so many very different categories and types of art. Classic and extremely eccentric pieces I had no idea we have in our collection. The process showed me how our Gallery, the one I was so fortunate to work for, was so full of surprises and future adventures for our patrons, public and family audiences. It was as if this experience was a key and it unlocked a completely new insight to what our Gallery has the potential to offer.

How was I going to choose? I decided to start a list of items that captured a second glance or that I wanted to learn more about. Two hours flew by and all of a sudden I realized that I had reviewed less than 2% of the collection and my list of items that were especially interesting to me filled the notebook page! This approach was not going to work and I wanted to take this opportunity very seriously. How was I ever going to narrow down my choice to one item. All of a sudden, my excitement turned to pure panic. I didn't want to waste this opportunity.

Each story or description of every piece made them special and important. I had a new appreciation and respect for the curatorial and exhibition staff at our gallery.

It became obvious to me that my approach needed to change and that I had to accept that we have enough treasures to fill a lifetime of viewing. I decided the only way I was going to be able to select an item was

to randomly poke at items and narrow my field by accepting that I would choose the first selection that made me think of someone special that I know. In a sense, I would let the item speak to me.

The painting I chose is called the *Dutch Landscape*, a nautical seascape painted with oils on canvas. When this painting came up I immediately thought of my dad and how he loved to work on building his wooden boats, how my aunt who was a nun that taught art and after her retirement, went to Europe and would send us paintings of landscapes and lastly, the beautiful frame and how I went to an auction when I was 12—and horrified my parents by raising my hand and bidding \$7 on 20 ornately framed mirrors—which we still laugh about (and use). I decided if that picture could provoke these three thoughts in an instant, the picture picked itself by bringing back memories for me. I hope you enjoy the item I chose and thank you for letting me share my experience.

Stop 11

Marjorie Searl, Chief Curator

Speaking on George M. Haushalter's *Portrait of James Sibley Watson, Jr.*

This is Marjorie Searl, chief curator at the Memorial Art Gallery, speaking about the portrait of James Sibley Watson Junior by George Haushalter.

I chose this portrait to include in the exhibition because I wanted visitors to see art related to MAG's founding family, the Watsons. This little boy is the son of MAG's founder, Emily Sibley Watson, and the half-brother of James Averell, in whose memory the Gallery was given. He grew up around the corner at 11 Prince Street. When this portrait was painted, his whole life stretched out ahead of him. Who could imagine the remarkable life that James Sibley Watson, Junior, would lead. He celebrated nearly every birthday of his youth sailing on his family's yacht to interesting places like Norway and France. Sibley, as he was called, went to Harvard College where he met interesting people like the poet E.E. Cummings, who became a lifelong friend. He became a doctor and pioneered important radiology techniques right here in Rochester, but never neglected the artistic part of his personality. For ten years, he was the publisher of an important literary and art journal called the *Dial*, which published poets like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. This little boy grew up to be a major force in the worlds of art, letters, and medicine in the twentieth century.

Stop 12

Colleen Griffin-Underhill, Gallery Store Manager

Speaking on Paul Klee's *Fairy Tales*

My name is Colleen Griffin-Underhill and I am the Gallery Store Manager. The piece that I have selected is *Fairy Tales* by Paul Klee.

If this little painting has hung on MAG's walls since I began working here, somehow I've missed it. I first came across a faded postcard in a pile of scrap paper in my office several years ago. I was surprised to

find that it was part of our collection then. I've always been captivated by Klee's colors, so I was hooked by the energy of that blue and charmed by the small traveler almost lost in the color and movement. Klee's magical language of symbols and lines make this piece so familiar to me but even as I write this I've only seen our online images and my faded postcard.

Walking in and out of the dark museum every day these works become part of your life. Greeting you as you rush to a meeting or sending you on your way after a busy day. Here is a stranger to me. I'm thrilled for this chance to get to know it better.

Stop 13

Barbara Stewart, Advancement Assistant

Speaking on Käthe Kollwitz's *Maria und Elisabeth*

I am Barbara Stewart and work in the Advancement Office of the Memorial Art Gallery.

Maria and Elisabeth by Käthe Kollwitz—Kollwitz is one of my favorite artists in the Gallery's collection. Her work reflects the times and people she lived with in Germany during late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Maria and Elisabeth depict two women, perhaps mother and daughter, who care deeply for each other. I imagine they are about to part or are reconnecting after a separation. The white values in the print seem to radiate with the heat and emotion of the figures. The outline of the paper around the figures seems to add more tenderness to the figures enclosing them in a private moment together. This piece reminds me of cherished people in my life; a dear friend, my sisters or my mom.

Stop 14

Samantha Clay Reagan, Creative Workshop Registrar

Speaking on *Untitled* by Robert Motherwell

My name is Samantha Clay Reagan. I am an art teacher and the registrar at the Creative Workshop, the art school here at the Memorial Art Gallery.

My choice print was done by the American abstract expressionist, Robert Motherwell. Notice the little black circle here. Marks like these *are* typical of Motherwell's abstract work, but when compared to others, this little splotch is curiously less imposing and explicit. It speaks to me as a point of invitation or viewing—an eye or aperture of some sort. Along with the playful mark, I *love* the strong, vibrant color. To me, this print leaves its viewer with plenty to explore.

Stop 15

Shirley Wersinger, Editor and Graphics Coordinator Speaking on Odilon Redon's *Geraniums*

My name is Shirley Wersinger and I have been editor and graphics coordinator at MAG since 1986. The work I've chosen is *Geraniums* by the French artist Odilon Redon.

Unless you were an art history major, Redon's name may not be familiar to you. But in the late 1800s he was quite famous as one of an avant-garde group known as the Symbolists, whose works often incorporate mythology and dream imagery. At least four works by Redon were featured in New York City's famous Armory Show, which opened in 1913 and literally rocked the art world. In fact you can see another of his works in MAG's own salute to the Armory Show, on view just across the hallway through May 12.

During the last decades of his life Redon turned from the mostly monochromatic works of his early career and began to explore color. Flowers—such as the geraniums in this pastel drawing from 1902—were a favorite subject.

I love this work because it is beautifully rendered yet simply done, with a delicate color palette that I could live with and look at every day. And I know I'm not alone. In the 1990s the Gallery mounted a show that paid tribute to Dr. and Mrs. James H. Lockhart Jr., major donors whose other gifts include masterworks by Degas and Homer on view elsewhere in this exhibition. Redon's *Geraniums* was the work chosen for the catalog cover.

Stop 16

Marie Via, Director of Exhibitions Speaking on Birger Sandzen's *In the Nevada Desert*

My name is Marie Via and my special pick for the show is *In the Nevada Desert* by Birger Sandzen. This landscape was given to the Memorial Art Gallery by Gustave Soderlund, a professor at the Eastman School of Music for nearly five decades. He might have been attracted to it because it was by a fellow Swedish-American. Perhaps they even knew each other: they were both living in Kansas in 1918, when Soderlund acquired it from an exhibition there.

I'm a sucker for heavy impasto and fell in love with this painting the first time I saw it, in early 1983, shortly after I began working at the Gallery. It was cloaked in a dingy yellow haze and was badly in need of a cleaning. I don't know for sure but am guessing that Professor Soderlund was a heavy smoker, since it had been in his possession since the year after it was painted, and when it was cleaned in preparation for this exhibition, the stuff that came off the surface looked suspiciously like nicotine. Seeing the colors now, as fresh as when Sandzen laid them down onto the canvas, I would venture to say that this is one of his masterworks.

Stop 17

Marlene Hamann-Whitmore, Acting Director of Education Speaking on Wilhelm Schimmel's *Eagle*

I'm Marlene Hamann-Whitmore, Acting Director of Education this year. I chose this small carved eagle, attributed to Wilhelm Schimmel, an American artist who was born in Germany in 1817, eventually made his way to the United States, and lived in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania until his death in 1890.

As soon as I spotted this small sculpture on a shelf in one of our storage rooms, I was taken by the immediacy of the carving - it so perfectly captures the struggling "birdness" of a young bird that I found it irresistible. And the depiction of the iconic form of an eagle as a vulnerable creature made the piece even more striking. There are many other pieces in the Gallery's collection that I would say are more beautiful, or finished, or complex, but for straight-out personal connection, this one was it for me.

The piece reminds me that as a young child—and I bet a lot of you did this too—I tried to rescue my share of very young birds that had been pushed out of the nest, landing somewhere in our backyard. In they came, into a shoebox—with a "nest" we constructed out of goodness knows what—and placed under a desk lamp for warmth. We took turns feeding the baby bird whenever it cried, whenever we could. This endeavor was heart-wrenching then, and again as my young children repeated the saga. It pretty much always ended in tears, followed by a funeral in the backyard. Yet the intensity of the caring, and the connection, was real, and seemed like the only right choice at the time. So in my mind, if a work of art can rekindle and elicit that level of response, I say, "shot: score."

Stop 18

Mary Ann Monley, Administrator of Volunteer Services and Tours Speaking on W. Elmer Schofield's *Devon Countryside*

My name is Mary Ann Monley. I am the Administrator of Volunteer Services and Tours. My choice for the *It Came from the Vault* exhibit is Walter Elmer Schofield's *Devon Countryside*.

I have always been attracted to the Impressionist painters and particularly to the Pennsylvania Impressionists. Their use of color, light, shadows and thick application of paint always draws me in makes me want to be in the places that they painted.

Considered one of the finest of the Pennsylvania Impressionists, Walter Schofield was known for his rugged portrayals of the hills and woodlands around New Hope, Pennsylvania and for his equally powerful depictions of the Cornish seacoast. He was born in 1867 in Philadelphia to English parents and began his art career studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He also studied in Paris at the Academie Julian. His main interest was in painting the countryside whether it be in France, England or Pennsylvania. His fellow artists and friends were Edward Redfield, Robert Henri and William Glackens.

In 1897 Schofield married an Englishwoman and they moved to England in 1901. They lived in Cornwall and thereafter the artist would spend winters in America painting in Pennsylvania, upstate New York and New England. During the 1930's he also made painting trips to Arizona, New Mexico and California.

Walter Schofield died in Cornwall in 1944. Although largely forgotten in the years after his death, his reputation has since been revived as scholars and curators have given increasing attention to American Impressionism and its importance.

Stop 19

Paul Harp, Ceramics Studio Manager

Speaking on Bill Stewart's *Fork and Rake*

These two sculptures, *Fork and Rake* by ceramic artist Bill Stewart are my choice to come out from the vault for this exhibit. Bill Stewart's work has been described as "inventive and humorous, mysterious, primitive, tribal, ritualistic, childlike, and absurd." What I enjoy the most is seeing what Stewart has created with clay, glazes and the firing processes. My own work with the same materials is wheel thrown, symmetrical and for the most part functional in design. Can there be any more of an opposite way working with clay? I'd like the students viewing Bill Stewart's work to see that it isn't just the materials but truly the artist that makes this Art. My name is Paul, and I am the Ceramics studio manager and an instructor in clay for the Creative Workshop here at MAG.

Stop 20

Grant Holcomb, Mary W. and Donald R. Clark Director

Speaking on Joyce Treiman's *The Parting*

When I was a curator at the San Diego Museum of Art, many years ago, I was asked to invite someone to jury an annual exhibition of area artists, much like our own Finger Lakes exhibitions today.

A friend suggested Los Angeles artist Joyce Treiman who, from our first meeting in 1981 to her death ten years later, remained a cherished friend who had a puckish sense of humor. She was also a gifted artist capable of fusing many of the dynamics of 20th century abstraction with a deep and abiding respect for the artistic traditions of the past.

Here, in this study for Treiman's monumental painting *The Parting*, the artist stares out at us behind her glasses while paying tribute to Rembrandt's *Night Watch* and commemorating, as she so often did, the life and death of a beloved mother, who stands to her right.

Stop 21

Nancy Norwood, Curator of European Art

Speaking on *Stumpwork Panel with Figures and Animals*

My name is Nancy Norwood, and I'm the Curator of European art. I've chosen to speak about the piece of 17th-century British embroidery called *Stumpwork Panel with Figures and Animals*.

I had never looked closely at this beautiful raised-work embroidery until the president of a local needlework guild called me a few years ago. She was hosting a regional meeting of embroiderers, and wondered if her group could see this piece during their visit to Rochester. It turned out to be the high point of their meeting, and it was certainly the highlight of my day.

It was a luxury to see this exquisite work created by a woman over 400 years ago through the eyes of women who themselves are master embroiderers. In the 1600s, a woman's skill at needlework was seen as a measure of her social status as well as her marriageability and her "womanliness." Our needlewoman worked the silken threads to build up texture and dimension, using small bits of wire to create a curly, stiff tail for the unicorn and real seed pearls to decorate clothing, much as it would have looked in real life. What fascinated me is that the women visiting the museum that day understood exactly how the work was created because, almost five hundred years later, they use the same techniques.

Sharing art with other people is one of the most rewarding aspects of working in an art museum. What I learned about this small piece of embroidery gave me a brief glimpse into history, and into one woman's creativity. But it was really the shared experience of looking and learning that stayed with me—and that memory is the reason I chose this piece for our Vault exhibition.

Stop 22

Meg Taber, Membership Coordinator

Speaking on *Label Designs for Japanese Tea*

My name is Meg Taber, Membership Coordinator at the Memorial Art Gallery. I chose a few of these designs for Japanese tea labels because I found them to be beautiful, whimsical and strange. What first drew me to these tea labels was the label with the "Cat fully clad in Kimono Preparing Tofu" as mice run around on the other panel. As an animal lover and tofu enthusiast I could not resist its charm. What this has to do with tea, I have no idea, but it would certainly intrigue me enough to buy whatever product it was selling.

Stop 23

Monica Simpson, Permanent Collection Registrar

Speaking on *Hands from Buddhist Sculptures*

I'm Monica Simpson, registrar for the Gallery's permanent collection. When we were given the opportunity to select an object to be included in the exhibition, I thought of these two bronze hands which

originally belonged to two different Buddhist sculptures. Since they came to us in 1997, these hands have always intrigued me and moved me. What did the complete sculptures look like? How did the hands come to be separated from the sculptures? And I like hands, the way so much of a person is expressed in his or her hands. Hands can reveal a person's age, whether a person is defiant or defeated, at peace or struggling, or if he or she has lived a life of physical ease or tough manual labor. In the same way, these graceful hands suggest serenity and acceptance to me. So, for me, the experience of looking at these hands is two-fold: contemplating the mystery of their origin and the journey that brought them here and experiencing their beauty and grace and the sense of calm they embody.

Stop 24

Jessica Marten, Curator of American Art
Speaking on Jerome Witkins' *St. Fichera*

My name is Jessica Marten and I am the curator of American art. The first time I saw Jerome Witkin's *St. Fichera* I was alone in our painting storage room and I came across it hanging on the racks. I felt like I'd been hit with a bolt of electricity. This monumental beautiful-ugly woman gazes out from the canvas seeing everything and seeing nothing. She's like some potent, unapologetic warrior saint, a modern-day Joan of Arc, who's both terrifying and vulnerable. I want to understand what she is about as much as I want to run in the opposite direction. I think it's those powerful, oversized hands that grasp the cross like vices and her amazing hair that pulses with the kinetic energy you feel around individuals who are slightly unhinged. The message is clear: be wary.

I am in awe this figure, and I am acutely in awe of the artist, Jerome Witkin. Who with his mastery of painting and portraiture, with paint and canvas, has created an image of womanhood that continues to unfold before me in unexpected ways.

Stop 25

Kathleen Nicastro, Library Assistant
Speaking on Thom O'Connor's *Mystic*

As a visual artist, I am captivated by the evocative subtleties of light and shadow in this piece which suggests to me the mysteries of reality the artist has layered into the drawing. Its title points us to the nature of the artist (and perhaps the subject as well) as a "seer" who attunes his imagination to the places where the human meets the divine. As Kandinsky explains: "The true work of art is born from the artist: a mysterious, enigmatic, and mystical creation. It detaches itself from him, it acquires an autonomous life, becomes a personality, an independent subject, animated with a spiritual breath, the living subject of a real existence of being." That is truly what this work of art is for me.

Stop 26**Dan Knerr, Exhibitions Registrar****Speaking on Darryl Abraham's *Eva May***

Hi, this is Dan Knerr, Exhibitions Registrar at the Memorial Art Gallery. I picked *Eva May*, because I just love things that are raunchy. And if want to hear some good old raunch, you want to go to YouTube and listen to Etta James, Keith Richards, and Robert Cray do "Hoochie Coochie Gal." Enjoy.

Stop 27**Sue Cook, Corporate Relations Manager****Speaking on Carol Acquilano's *North River, Marshfield, Massachusetts***

I'm Sue Cook, corporate relations manager at the Gallery.

Carol Acquilano's painting, *North River, Marshfield, Massachusetts*, takes me to a very similar view on my family's farm. Our farm is just 45 miles southwest of Marshfield, and yes, the farm's primary crop is butternut squash!

In this painting I'm immediately drawn to the water and reflections. I can't imagine this view without either. Do you notice that even though we don't see the sky above, we do see its reflection?

In addition, I love the stillness that exudes from this scene. I can hear the quietness. In today's busy world, stepping into this scene slows me down and renews my spirit.

I encourage you to stand tall, breathe in the fresh air, and enjoy!