

# ARTiculate

MEMORIAL ART GALLERY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

WINTER 2023



*Black Matriarch*, ca 1970s  
Clementine Hunter

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# CLEMENTINE HUNTER: A BOUNDLESS FORCE



How did a sharecropper in the American South, born just twenty-two years after slavery was abolished, become a celebrated artist?

Clementine Hunter was born in the Cane River Valley of Louisiana. She never learned to read or write, and was working as a farm laborer by the time she was eight years old. By fifteen, she went to work at Melrose Plantation in Natchitoches Parish, where she lived and worked for the rest of her life. In the 1930s, Hunter, already a talented quiltmaker now in her fifties, used the paints and brushes left behind by an artist's colony at Melrose to create works on discarded household objects. Later, she turned to canvas to paint the scenes of the rural South she knew so well.

Hunter began selling her artwork and soon garnered the admiration of other artists and collectors, and in 1953, she gained national attention after *Look* magazine published an illustrated article about her. In 1986, two years before her death, Clementine Hunter received an honorary doctorate degree in fine arts from Northwestern State University of Louisiana, a previously segregated university that in the 1960s had not allowed her on campus to view an exhibition of her own work.

Clementine Hunter created thousands of paintings during her lifetime. When she died at 101 years old, her work was exhibited across the United States. Today, her lively paintings, remarkable life, and prolific output have established her reputation as one of the country's most significant self-taught artists of the twentieth century.

A selection of Hunter's artworks, now on view in the Brush Gallery (located on the first floor), were generously lent by the American Folk Art Museum as part of Art Bridges' Collection Loan Partnership.

Image Caption: Clementine Hunter (1886 or 1887 – 1988), *Saturday Night, Natchitoches, Louisiana*, 1968, acrylic on board, 24 x 16 in. American Folk Art Museum, New York, Gift of Mary Bass Newlin, 1989.9.1. Copyright Cane River Art Corporation, with special thanks to Thomas Whitehead. Photo by John Parnell.

# LEARNING WITH AND FROM TEACHERS



As ever, the Department of Academic Programs (ACP) has continued to engage with teachers through our events and programs! In September, our Teacher Open House kicked off the school year, welcoming over ninety educators to enjoy guided tours, Yayoi Kusama's *INFINITY MIRRORRED ROOM - LET'S SURVIVE FOREVER*, collage-making,

and opportunities to learn about our resources and relax with colleagues over refreshments from Brown Hound Downtown. Lucky guests even left with door prizes courtesy of the generous donations from local businesses!

We hope to see many of these teachers at our professional development workshops this school year: a series of three workshops connected to social emotional learning competencies, and others centered on writing, math/science, and movement. Our interactive workshops offer a chance to see exhibitions and artworks while engaging with Artful Thinking Routines—a tool for responding to art that can be used in their classrooms. Teaching Artists will also lead themed art-making activities that prompt creative expression.

Finally, this fall also saw the official launch of our Teacher Advisory Council, which is comprised of two cohorts: one of elementary school teachers, and the other of middle and high school teachers. We chose participants from almost forty applicants based on their dedication to students and families, enthusiasm for serving as MAG's thought partners on the issues and questions we place before them. They have already given thoughtful feedback regarding our Teacher Resource Center, and we look forward to our continued dialogue.

The momentum at these events is clearly evident as passionate teachers connect with one another through the power of the arts. We hope that these programs will bring MAG and teachers together to ultimately deepen and expand the learning and growth of students across the region!

**ADAM KONEMAN**  
**MUSEUM EDUCATOR FOR SCHOOL OUTREACH**

# MAG VOICES



*Photo by John Schlia*

In late September 2006, I arrived at the Memorial Art Gallery for my first interview for a Desktop Support Analyst position. My husband, my three children, and I were moving from New Jersey to the Finger Lakes region, and I was searching for my next professional endeavor. I remember being quite nervous, thinking that I would be asked extensively about my connection to the arts. Other than having an appreciation and admiration of the talents that I don't have, I have no

experience and no connection to the art world. I was hired and started my new job at MAG two months later. I now have been with MAG for almost seventeen years and, as of last year, I am MAG's latest Director of Information Technology.

I was born and raised in southern Poland in a small village called Lapsze Wyzne located in the foothills of the majestic Tatra mountains. My life in Poland was filled with farm work, exposure to dance, singing, and performing, all connected to the traditional folklore of the area of my childhood. The village I come from changed hands throughout history from Polish to Austro-Hungarian to Slovak and back to Polish. The influence of these relatively frequent changes is reflected in local traditions and the dialect. For example, the traditional dance where I come from is not the typical Polish Polka but Czardas. Czardas is a traditional Hungarian folk dance.

I grew up under communism. Although I was a child at the time, I still remember martial law being implemented in the early 1980s. I remember the checkpoints, the curfew, food rations, and empty shelves in the stores. Being able to buy a loaf of bread required waiting for hours in line, hoping that there still was bread available after a long wait.

Coming to America was my dream very early on. I now have been living in the United States for exactly thirty years. I met my husband, a native of Germany, here in the US. We have three children. We live on a 126-acre sheep farm in the beautiful Finger Lakes region, and I still work at the Memorial Art Gallery. What better life could I ask for!

So, what do I bring to MAG? I bring commitment, hard work, and a unique perspective as an immigrant and naturalized US Citizen.

**BARBARA KINTZEL**  
**DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

For a longer-lasting immersion into the amazing art of Yayoi Kusama, stop into THE STORE @ MAG where Yayoi Kusama-inspired art, jewelry, accessories, and even the most amusing umbrellas are here to charm you!



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## JOIN US FOR AN ART TOUR!



**Save the Date** - April 23–25, 2024

Join us at the Phillips Collection in DC to visit with former MAG Director Jonathan Binstock and tour the extensive exhibition Bonnard's World with the Phillip's lead curator.

The exhibition will reunite many of the artist's most celebrated works as well as less exhibited works from four private collections. During our stay in DC we'll visit the newly reopened National Museum of Women in the Arts, recently featured in a segment on CBS Sunday Morning. A tour of the architecturally impressive Library of Congress and other less visited sites will also be on our itinerary. *Registration details coming soon.*

Image Caption: Pierre Bonnard (French, 1867–1947)  
*The Open Window*, ca. 1919  
Oil on canvas



# UNDER THE MICROSCOPE: REMBRANDT'S "PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN IN AN ARMCHAIR"

IN THE LOCKHART GALLERY, DECEMBER 8, 2023–JUNE 16, 2024



*Under the Microscope: Rembrandt's "Portrait of a Young Man in an Armchair"* presents an in-depth forensic analysis of one of MAG's most prominent Old Master paintings. Focused research on provenance and conservation history, and new scientific studies of the work in its present state offer a snapshot of the troubled life of this portrait over the past several centuries as well as new ways to consider it in the larger context of Rembrandt's legacy.

In May 2019, the painting underwent a wide range of imaging and scientific analysis so that we could learn more about its composition and history. Faculty and graduate students at the Garman Art Conservation Program at SUNY Buffalo State University photographed the painting using high-resolution imaging techniques that revealed underdrawings, surface features, and key structural components of the painting. A state-of-the-art X-ray fluorescence scanner was used to determine pigments and materials used by the artist. The information gained from this scientific analysis forms the basis for the exhibition's interactive, in which visitors can "look beneath the surface" as well as explore the painting's history of ownership and conservation treatment.

Rembrandt is widely accepted as one of the greatest painters in the history of European art. He was especially celebrated as a portraitist, or painter of people, who possessed an uncanny ability to incorporate an understanding of the sitter's identity into a painted representation of their humanity. *Under the Microscope* offers the unique opportunity to examine the context and material makeup of Rembrandt's *Portrait of a Young Man in an Armchair*. It also addresses the question asked since the 1980s: "Is MAG's portrait really by Rembrandt?"

Image Caption: Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn (Dutch, 1606–1669)  
*Portrait of a Young Man in an Armchair*, ca. 1660  
Oil on canvas  
George Eastman Collection of the University of Rochester, 1968.98

**NANCY NORWOOD,  
CURATOR OF EUROPEAN ART**



SAVE THE DATE

*An Artists' Affair*  
**ART AFTER DARK**

MAG's Annual Fundraising Gala  
Saturday, May 11, 2024 | 7 pm

**MAG**  
MEMORIAL ART GALLERY  
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

\*All proceeds enable MAG to provide greater access to education, exhibitions and programming for the Rochester community and beyond.



# 'TIS THE SEASON TO MAKE ART & BE MERRY!

As we enter the holiday season, we have a lot to be thankful for and to celebrate! On October 12, 2023, the Creative Workshop celebrated its 75th birthday as the museum's community art school, opening "officially" in 1949.

Although it's known that the gallery held art classes from its inception in the 1920s, the formalization of the phrase Creative Workshop didn't occur until about twenty years later. The first use of "Creative Workshop" we've found is from the Annual Report of the Director, October 12, 1949: "A creative workshop for children and adults rather than a school of art, this department now has an enrollment of 1,000 and a schedule of twenty-nine day and evening classes for adults and twenty-one for children after school and on Saturdays. It offers painting, modeling, sculpture in stone and wood, ceramics, weaving, and criticism. Of the 598 children attending, 150 hold scholarships, an opportunity for talented young people of grammar and high school age, which makes an appealing motive for many membership enrollments. The Gallery Summer School, which was held on the campus, had an enrollment of 400 children and twenty-five adults."

Today, the Creative Workshop continues to offer year-round classes in painting, drawing, ceramics, jewelry, weaving, and more for children and adults, as well as scholarships and summer program for youths in our community! Our annual enrollment has more than doubled since 1949 and we're now offering over sixty-five classes a session, and the creativity and community at our core remains steadfast. This winter, we invite you to join us in the Creative Workshop! Warm up with a new hobby, meet new friends, and explore your own creativity!



Our hands-on art classes for all ages are taught by artist-teachers, and are frequently inspired by art on view in the museum. For over seventy years we have been teaching, inspiring, challenging, and encouraging students of all ages.

Visit [mag.rochester.edu/creativeworkshop/](http://mag.rochester.edu/creativeworkshop/) to explore all class and camp offerings.

Contact the Creative Workshop at 585.276.8959 or at [creativeworkshop@mag.rochester.edu](mailto:creativeworkshop@mag.rochester.edu) to learn more.