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Around the Gallery

A Publication of the R. W. Norton Art Gallery

Spring Brings *American Still Lifes* Exhibition 4 March - 25 May

Say “still life”, and you may think of a typical representation of the art genre: a bowl of tulips, a pan of baked bread, an apple with draped peeling, and a knife and bowl of butter all displayed on a table topped with a linen cloth. When *American Still Lifes*, an exhibit by fifteen artists opens at the Norton on March 4th, however, you’ll also see works that take the medium behind the expected in delightful, innovative, and thought-provoking ways. The Norton is honored to serve as the premiere site of this exhibit that will tour the nation after its three-month run here.

American Still Lifes, created by David J. Wagner LLC of Traveling Museum Exhibitions (and dedicated to James E. Parkman, founder and chairman of the Susan Kathleen Black Foundation), brings together several artists from around the world, across the nation and down the street. The latter is Daniel Mark Cassity of Shreveport, a native of Bastrop, Louisiana, and graduate of Louisiana Tech University. Cassity supplies five of his works. Dan and his wife, Diana, have resided in Shreveport for several years, but recently moved to Hot Springs, Arkansas.

“We moved for a job opportunity for Diana, but my brother and my mother are here in Shreveport, and we visit here frequently,” he comments.

Among his works in the exhibit, *Unattainable*, an oil on panel, is a work from his still life series “Enter the Kingdom”. It displays an origami dragon, a key, an elegant pouring vessel, very inelegant oil can, and a pair of dice rolled to seven. You’ll mull over that one for a while. It’s all part of how Cassity uses common objects as characters in a story.



Unattainable
Daniel Mark Cassity

“My still lifes represent the fall of controlled light upon a variety of textures,” he remarks. In producing them, he arranges elements to stimulate the viewer beyond the painted surface.

Colors in his “Enter the Kingdom” works exude a soft, filtered look he achieves with a tool few artists may employ. He builds up his glazes from a mid-tone ground and with a stipple brush, like those found in makeup artists’ kits, he smoothes over individual brushstrokes.

Cobalt and Bricks reveals his initial foray into his trademark of luminous shadows. *The Wash Tub* and *The Chopping Block* both won regional art shows in North Carolina, where Cassity lived for several years. Meanwhile, he explores other genres, including plein air landscapes. Outside, he uses his own creation of what he calls his “Plein Air Field Buggy” - a child’s little red wagon outfitted with drying racks.

AT A GLANCE:

Gallery website
<http://www.rwnaf.org>

First Saturday Tour:

Perils of Pigment
 1 March, 2:00 p.m.

Now Showing

Men of Letters Exhibit
 Through 1 June

Coming Soon

American Still Lifes Exhibition
 4 March - 25 May

Greco-Roman Outdoor Tour

5 April, 2:00 p.m.

Voices from the Archives:

Larry J. Hinton
 U.S. Army, Vietnam War

**AROUND THE GALLERY
 CONTRIBUTORS**

Everl Adair,
 Dir. of Research & Rare Collections

Kip Dehart,
 Landscape Designer

Gary D. Ford,
 Staff Writer

American Still Lives (cont'd)

Other artists of the exhibit also bring fascinating and fresh eyes to the world of still lifes. Soon Warren, a native of South Korea and resident of Fort Worth, renders her works in oil on canvas. Her favorite subjects are fruit and flowers from her garden.

“I’m inspired by the beauty and complexity of nature and our surroundings. I try to paint the essence of the subjects and my sincere feelings for nature,” she remarks. Ms. Warren is a signature member of the National Watercolor Society, the Southern Watercolor Society, and the Texas Watercolor Society.

Laurin McCracken, a native of Meridian, Mississippi, and a Fort Worth architect, is equally adept in his studio or in offices of Jacobs Global Building NA, where he is chief marketing officer. Inspired by the Dutch and Flemish still life painters of the 16th and 17th centuries, Laurin works in watercolors to capture the floral beauty of his beloved Mississippi. “My paintings of magnolias are full of drama and prove, once again, that white is not just white,” McCracken comments.



Kiss and Make-up
Berry Fritz

Others in the show include Brian O’Neill, a signature member of The Pastel Society of America, who has seen his work showcased in galleries in America, Canada, Japan and England. He is most noted for his floral paintings and still lifes. He teaches fundamental drawing and painting skills at the Memorial Art Gallery Creative Workshop in Rochester, New York.

British-born Berry Fritz, who now lives in McAllen, Texas, names Netherland artists of the 17th century as well as American artists of the late 19th century as her inspiration. She works with oil on linen in her still lifes, in which her subject matter might be whimsical, and/or traditional, but always provocative.

Charles Kapsner of Little Falls, Minnesota, studied art in Florence, Italy. He notes that he taught himself to paint with still lifes. While he executes work in other media, he hews to the advice of his mentor, Nerina Simi, to “use still life as my educational tool for painting. It also allows the painter to tell stories whether they be personal interest, statements of today’s world, *Vanitas*, and sometimes just a still life,” he remarks.

This is a remarkable exhibit with works and artists from down the road and across the country. Join us at the Norton, and you can be the first to see this premiere exhibition as it begins its life traveling to museums around the nation and the world.

GF



Crystal & Silver with Magnolia on Linen
Laurin McCracken



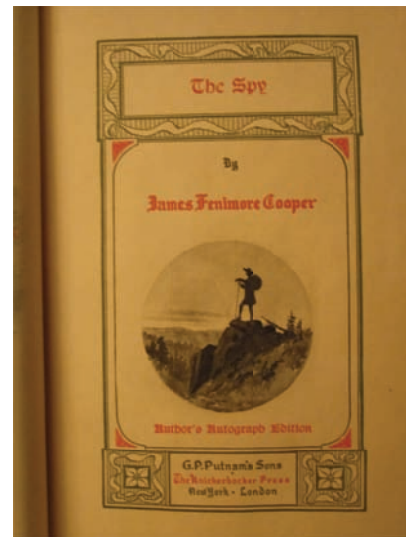
White Napkin
Soon Warren

With Our Apologies

The remodeling of the Norton continues. Sadly, the South Wing will be closed until further notice, which should come sometime this spring. Be reassured when re-open, there will be a number of freshly redecorated and thematically re-organized galleries for your enjoyment and edification. Keep an eye in our newsletters, so you’ll know when opening day has arrived!

**Currently Showing: *Men of Letters* Exhibit in the Research Library
Saturdays & Sundays, 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Through 1 June**

Men of Letters features some of the remarkable works from the autograph section of the Norton's Rare and Antiquarian Book Collection. These include both fiction and non-fiction by some of the most famous writers in the world. Remarkably, even some that were dead at the time of the book's publication! How is that possible, you ask? Special leather-bound, limited edition versions of their complete works were able to include a letter or document signed by the author during his/her lifetime. For instance, an edition of *The Works of James Fenimore Cooper*, published more than a half-century after Cooper's death, includes a letter written by Cooper. Another special edition of the works of Mark Twain is known as the "death edition", because the author was persuaded to autograph the first page of each copy on his deathbed. Happier circumstances surround the signature of Louisiana native, Lyle Saxon, who autographed a copy for the Norton family. Other autographed copies include some by major political figures and presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. A very special autograph rendered for the early 19th-century version of *Calvin and Hobbes*, Percy Crosby's *Skippy and Other Humor*, includes an original cartoon on the frontispiece along with his signature. Visit our "Research Library" to see this surprisingly personal example of the writers' art.



EA

The Spy
James Fenimore Cooper

**First Saturday Tour: *Perils of Pigment*
1 March, 2:00 p.m.**

Were the old masters hastening themselves into an early grave? How much are artists willing to risk their lives in the pursuit of their art even today? You'll meet our new docent, Mary Joris, in the museum lobby, and she'll whisk you away on this *Perils of Pigment* tour. Don't worry; nearly all the peril has passed. This tour explores the toxic nature of many artists' colors through the centuries; even today some artists extol the brilliant sheen that can only be acquired by using the dangerous lead white. In the centuries before prepared paints were available, Mary will reveal, artists mixed their own colors for their canvases. This wasn't a matter of simply grinding away with pestle and mortar to form a powder; the coarseness of the grain often determined the color or its shade. Follow Mary down the hall, and you'll see paintings with toxic lead white that not only affected the artist physiologically, but psychologically as well, influencing the characteristics of his works. You'll learn how an artist such as Francisco Goya changed from happy society painter to a dark-hearted genius. Goya went deaf, other artists went insane or committed suicide, all suffered from aches, pains, and illnesses that were the price of grinding and mixing substances injurious to their health. With this tour, you'll see art in a new light and with a far greater appreciation for artists making sacrifices for their work.



Sunset, La Rita, New Mexico
Thomas Moran

EA

In the Gardens: *At Long Last, Spring!*

Ah, March.

It's been a cold winter here in Louisiana, too (at least cold for us). Since late last year, cold rain, sleet and snow has forced the gardening staff inside. On drier days, we've shivered in icy winds while working outdoors. Yes, we'll still have cool days in early March, but this month the days grow warmer, our forty acres of grounds and botanical gardens turn green, and blooms burst into color. Among the first colors to arrive are those that our eastern redbud trees sport. Redbuds are truly harbingers of spring in Louisiana. The blooms are actually pink and swell on bare branches as

In the Gardens (cont'd)

February turns to March. Eastern redbuds grow as far south as northern Florida and as far west as east and central Texas and Oklahoma. You'll see them a lot along our roadsides in Louisiana, as part of the understory of our forests, as well as on residential lawns. We love them for our home landscapes; they require little space and blush in such beautiful color in a time when around them remains wintry bare and brown.



Forsythia

Beneath the redbuds, bushes of forsythia spread the butter of their beautiful, yellow blossoms on long, elegant stems. I can't help but smile when I see forsythia, a plant that is as bright as a new day. After touring the museum, you may think of the color of forsythia as cadmium yellow, the tone many of the artists used in their works. In your own landscape, forsythia makes delightful border plantings. They provide a living wall that is delightful to the eye while ensuring privacy.

No less brightly yellow is our witch hazel, while Lenten roses cover beds in our Upper Ridge Garden. I love Lenten roses. Even when they stop blooming, their greenery makes for excellent ground cover.

Tulips also spring forth in March, their flowers crowning the long green stems in red, pink and white. Standing high, too, are plantings of our narcissus. Few flowers say "spring" so much as narcissus, part of a genus in which some members are daffodils and jonquils. The flowers of these bulbous perennials might be as yellow as the sun or as dazzling white as bridal satin. They are a delight to see, swaying in a warming breeze.

Don't forget to pause and admire our color beds that brighten these transition days from winter to spring. Dianthus resembles pink cheeks. Tall, wavering snapdragons in many colors rise above pansies and orbs of flowering kale.

Of course, in a few weeks the month's glorious finale comes, as if with a flourish of trumpets, when the flowers that symbolize spring at the Norton begin to bloom - our azaleas. More on our azaleas next month; know we are adding even more planting areas around the pond, a place you can watch azaleas grow to reach the same height and fullness as our mature plantings. Enjoy March, and welcome to spring at the Norton!

KD

Tips from Kip: *Prune, Plant, and Be Patient*

Weather dictates so much of what we can and cannot do in our gardens in a typical month. The only problem in March is figuring out the weather to know what chores to undertake. We've had snow in March. We've also gone swimming then. You can catch a cold or start a tan. Spring arrives on the 20th, but that doesn't necessarily mean we can throw open windows to warm breezes and singing birds that day. Watch the weather, and let it guide you in chores like these:

1. **Start with a Rake.** That should be the first tool from your garden shed to begin a clean up of winter's debris. Gather downed limbs, leaves, and cuttings - all things that provide nutritious ingredients for your compost pile.
2. **Plant for the Warm Season.** In mid-March, begin planting for late spring and summer, continuing into May. Get your petunias in the ground now. It's also time to set out your perennials.
3. **Think Ahead to Fall.** Got chrysanthemums? This is a good time to divide bulbs. You should be planting summer bulbs now.
4. **Prune Your Trees and Shrubs.** Hold your horses, gardening cowboys! I know you're ready to swagger out with shears like six-shooters and whack away. You can prune trees and shrubs, but wait until they finish blooming.
5. **Take It Easy.** March requires patience, mainly because of the weather and when things begin or end blooming. No need to risk frozen fingers and noses trying to accomplish herculean tasks on a cold weekend. Know what you can and can't do. Let the season run its course, and remember warm weather comes soon enough. Admire your spring bulbs and bedding plants. Jump for joy when azaleas burst forth, and enjoy warm, sunny days in this new season of gardening.

KD

Coming Soon

First Saturday Tour: Greco-Roman Outdoor Tour **5 April, 2:00 p.m.**

Sun, blue sky, and floral beauty set just the right backdrop for a museum tour that wends through the artistry of the outdoors. On this tour, however, you'll not just see our outdoors, but learn how rock, flower, and water itself tell stories thousands of years old. You'll meet your tour guide, Mary Joris, in the lobby of the museum, who will lead you around the building and into our botanical gardens. There you'll find a setting that helps tell the old, sweet stories of Greco-Roman mythology. As you stroll, you'll learn that such common objects as stones, reeds, and water mean much more when set in tales told so long ago. Your guide may pick up stones from our little purling stream and launch into a story of how mankind was created by goddesses throwing stones over their shoulders, each creating a man or a woman. Elsewhere, something as common as reeds in our pond relates a love story. Pan (meaning "all") thought he should fall in love with every nymph, including Syrinx. As he followed her into a river he threw his arms around her only to find himself clutching a clump of tall reeds. He broke off a group of reeds of different lengths and fashioned a musical instrument. Hence, pan flutes or pipes as they are known today, are sometimes called a syrinx. Look up at the tall oaks. These trees were sacred to the king of the gods, Zeus. Early Greeks prayed in oak groves, and it was said when heard, the leaves rustled and priests interpreted the sounds. Our outdoor sculptures also lend themselves to ancient tales. You'll learn about the meaning of the mountain lion, and that the pelican stands for more than simply the symbol of Louisiana. You'll hear a Greek legend associated with the bear and the pig (two other of our outdoor sculptures), along with the faun and the satyr. Among our plants, you'll admire azalea, iris, and narcissus and learn their roles in mythology. The garden is alive in the spring with flowers, green leaves, and even spirits of old.



GF

Pelican
Sandy Scott

From the Permanent Collection: *Grapes, Apple and Sliced Plum* **by Severin Roesen (1815 - ?1872)**



Grapes, Apple and Sliced Plum
Severin Roesen

One of America's pre-eminent still life artists, Severin Roesen, led a life steeped in mystery. Originally from Cologne, Germany, he apparently trained in Dusseldorf as a porcelain and enamel painter, before arriving in America in 1847. There is a brief record of someone by that name exhibiting a painting of flowers in Cologne early that year, but later the artist is listed as exhibiting two floral still-lives at the American Art-Union in New York City. He continued to exhibit at the Union until it closed in 1852. Abandoning the neo-classical restraint of American still-life painters like Raphaelle Peale, Roesen created a new, exuberant style that echoed the Baroque Dutch and German painters who inspired him. According to art historian William H. Gerdts:

Roesen appears to have introduced a form of still-life painting into American art which was...almost unknown here, at a propitious time for such an introduction... his still lifes were often large, bountiful works: luscious combinations of fruits or flowers or both...

His crisply detailed and brilliantly colored compositions are some of the most complex paintings in the genre. Rather than painting from life (impossible given the short shelf life of the flowers and fruits compared to his large, painstaking works), he composed the arrangement from what scholar, Judith O'Toole Hansen, calls his "mental inventory of flowers and fruits", depicting each with a detailed degree of botanical accuracy. The lavish arrangements frequently ignore the reality of seasonal fruits and blooms, combining fruits and flowers that blossom at different times of the year, creating a perfected world in which all natural elements are at their peak simultaneously. His still-lives have become so associated

From the Permanent Collection (cont'd)

with 19th-century American taste and interior design that Jacqueline Kennedy chose to hang several of them during her historic refurbishment of the White House, and still others are displayed in the State Department's Diplomatic Reception Rooms. For most of these works, Roesen used a heightened color palette, paying detailed attention to each piece of fruit. John Wilmerding describes his work as "an inventory of lushness...with each of nature's creations exuberant in its individuality". This luxurious style, an innovation for its time, inspired students, followers, and imitators for the rest of the century.

Unfortunately, Roesen's personal life seems to have been less successful. In 1849 or 1850, he married Wilhelmina Ludwig, also a German immigrant, in New York. The couple had three children together, but shortly after the third was born in 1857, he moved to Pennsylvania without his family. He wandered about Philadelphia, Huntington, and other Pennsylvania communities before settling in Williamsport sometime in 1862. Without apparently ever reconciling with his family, he was often written about in newspaper accounts and other printed contemporary materials as a "genial, though often alcoholic, disheveled, and impoverished painter". He disappeared from public records in 1872, and nothing is known of the rest of his life or his death.

EA

Voices From the Archives Larry J. Hinton, U.S. Army, Vietnam War

Mr. Hinton served in South Vietnam as a radio research analyst, helping to gain information about the enemy. When he returned to the States, he considered making a career in the military. Then, he arrived at an American airport and was treated to a chilly reception many civilians gave all servicemen and women in uniform in that era. Mr. Hinton spoke movingly of those moments in his interview with our Oral History Project:

Interviewer: *What did you find when you got to Oakland?*

Hinton: *That was pretty interesting. Being that I'd been gone for two years, I had no idea what was going on in the States. I pulled up there and got off the plane, and people looked at you like you were dirt. You know, that kind of stuff. They didn't want to have anything to do with you, didn't even want to walk next to you. So, it was an eye opener.*

Mrs. Hinton: *Were you in your uniform?*

Hinton: *I was in full uniform, yeah. It wasn't fun.*

Interviewer: *Did anybody speak to you?*

Hinton: *No. Nobody spoke to me, but, you know, when they look at you, you'd get the idea. That was part of the reason why I decided to get out of the army back then.*



Mr. Hinton came home to Louisiana and later served thirty-five years with the Alexandria Fire Department. He is among more than 500 men and women from the Shreveport-Bossier City area and beyond who graciously gave their time to tell us their life stories of service and sacrifice. We're presenting these stories as part of our Oral History Project, an ongoing effort to interview veterans of conflicts from World War II to the present. We also seek the life stories of eyewitnesses to and participants in the civil rights struggle, pioneers of the energy industries, those who created "The Shreveport Sound" in music, and others.

Click [here](#) to read his bio, view additional photographs and to listen to this portion of the interview with Mr. Hinton's interview. If you or someone you know would like to share stories with us, please call (318) 865-4201 ext. 122, or contact ohp@rwnaf.org.

Did You Know?

In our new “Living in America Gallery” we’ve had a fun time exploring how our ancestors worked, played and traveled, as celebrated in a variety of art and artifacts. One of the paintings in the gallery is new to the Norton, Reginald Marsh’s *Pennsylvania Railroad*. Marsh’s work, besides being visually stimulating, reminds us of the primacy of the railroads to most of 19th century and their impact on the nation at large, which extended beyond merely getting from point A to point B. Its diagonal composition gives you a feel for the rush and force of the mighty diesel locomotive powering the train. Until railroads, the most common forms of transportation were by foot or horse on road or by boat or ship over water, all relatively slow-moving, while involving varying degrees of effort. Trains changed all that by producing a rapid method of travel that called for little to no effort on the part of the passenger. This gave birth to a number of changes: the mobility of the population (it no longer involved a major effort and expenditure of time and money to move from one state to another, or even across the country), the pursuit of profit and the growth of companies (news and goods no longer took days or weeks to reach their destinations), and even the political system (presidents like Theodore Roosevelt were famous for campaigning from the back of a railcar at train station stops all over the country).



Pennsylvania Railroad
Reginald Marsh

There was a great deal of romance involved in the railroads back in the day. For instance, rather than bearing numbers, they had names, like Broadway Limited, Bar Harbor Express, Santa Fe de Luxe, Empire State Express, Sunrise Special and Sunset Limited. The famous Twentieth Century Limited of movie fame, which ran between New York and Chicago, left New York at 6:00 p.m. and arrived in Chicago twenty hours later. Along the way, passengers had the benefit of a barber, hairdresser, elegant dining car, bathrooms with hot baths, laundry facilities, an observation car with complimentary stationery, and even an available stenographer for the really busy businessman. It was not simply a mode of travel; it was a way of life.

But, of all the changes effected by the railroad, perhaps none has had as broad an impact on our daily lives as the establishment of time zones. Traveling by road or river, people had moved slowly enough that they noticed no real change in time (i.e., the position of the sun relative to their place on earth), but the rapid pace of trains changed all that. Before trains required timetables to establish arrival times, every town and village was free to set its own clocks and, thereby, its own time. But if the same “time” was being recorded as 2:00 in Cleveland and 2:32 in Cincinnati, and a train from Cleveland to Cincinnati took an hour and a half to arrive, what time was it when you got there? Clearly, there needed to be a standard time; yet equally clearly, the sun wasn’t setting at exactly the same moment in New York and San Francisco. Therefore, time zones were born. The four we recognize across the U.S. today were established by North American railroads on 18 November 1883. To design them, the powers-that-be recognized the meridian passing through Greenwich, England, as zero degrees longitude, a decision ratified by an international conference in 1884. It was all finally made legal with the Standard Time Act passed by Congress in 1918. Isn’t it lucky that it was all settled by the time airlines came along!

EA

Worth Quoting

All the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today.

Indian proverb



LIBRARY TOURS

Library tours are offered every Saturday and Sunday from 1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

FIRST SATURDAY TOURS

Regularly scheduled tours are offered on the first Saturday of every month at 2:00 p.m. No reservation is required. Groups of 10 or more are asked to call in advance to accommodate the group. All tours, like admission to the Norton, are free to the public.

GROUP TOURS

Seven group tours are offered at the Norton ranging from the Greco-Roman Tour: Myths and Wars to the Cowboy Artists Tour. Group tours are available by appointment year-round for groups of 10 or more and last approximately 45 minutes.

For more information or to schedule a tour or presentation, please call 318-865-4201, ext. 128.

SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS?

To offer us feedback or suggestions, please email Ashleigh:
anm@rwnaf.org

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The R.W. Norton Art Foundation is pursuing interviews with veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Iraq and Afghanistan. Also of interest are individuals who were involved in Louisiana's civil rights struggle, energy explorers, and those who gave the state of Louisiana and the city of Shreveport its musical and artistic heritage. Each interview will be digitally recorded by the Norton to be stored and used for historical purposes, and each interview subject will also be given a copy of the recording to share and preserve his or her memories for family and friends.

If you are interested in participating in or would like more information about the Oral History Project, please call 318-865-4201 ext. 122 or visit the Norton's website:
www.rwnaf.org

MUSEUM LOCATION AND HOURS:

4747 Creswell Avenue
Shreveport, LA 71106
318-865-4201

www.rwnaf.org

Tuesday through Friday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Closed Mondays and National Holidays