



# The Art of Conservation

**One of the major responsibilities of all museums is to care for the collections they hold in public trust.**

A collection's care for artwork typically consists of very careful cleaning, using a dry, very soft paint bush to remove dust. When an artwork's condition is a threat to its own survival then conservation of the work is required. The definition of "art conservation" from the Conservation Center is: "Preservation, repair, and/or stabilization of artworks and other cultural property for the future."

The Springfield Museum of Art's permanent collection overall is in remarkably good condition. There are a few works of art that need some more careful attention including conservation. One of those works, Alice Archer Sewall James' portrait of Lucie M. Robbins, was recently conserved.

The Museum works with Columbus based art conservator Fred Fochtman for this kind of specialized work. Before any work begins, a thorough examination and description of the work is made. For this particular restoration Fred enlisted the specialized help of Val Pennington, a conservator of works of art on paper.

Fred's initial assessment of the portrait of Lucie M. Robbins by Alice Archer Sewall James dated Nov. 1929, stated that it "...is a 27.25" x 35.25" soft pastel application with charcoal over a tan laid paper. The paper shows some darkening in the areas without pigment. As well as buckling throughout from the inability to lay flat. The paper has been attached (glued) to an original cardboard backing with what appears to be a Hyde-glue around the entire perimeter of the piece. The soft pastel surface appears to be in excellent



Alice Archer Sewall James | PORTRAIT OF LUCIE M. ROBBINS | pastel over pencil | 1929  
original condition without any evidence of a fixative application."

The first step towards restoration involved removal of the pastel from the cardboard backing. This process included a combination of appropriate solvents and scalpels. However, there is usually a memory edge where the solvent stops wicking into the paper. All precautions were taken to lessen the impact from water or solvents but it needs to be noted that this is part of the process. The glue was limited to the perimeter of the work only and the new matting has covered any edges impacted from the removal process. Once the piece was removed from its backing it was humidified and laid as flat as possible to

**From top right down:**  
corner showing buckling; removing pastel from backing board with scalpel; signature on back showing buckling.



lessen the age related buckling and waves in the paper.

When Fred and Val removed the pastel from its backing, they modified the humidification process because the pastel on the surface of the paper is quite fugitive and could easily lift off from the paper. A two-ply rag paper was laid over the surface of the pastel, folded and gently clipped over the edges of the work to keep it in place, while

[continued on page 3](#)

## Members Matter!

Our annual membership renewal is coming up January 1, and this year we've got an exciting new benefit. In addition to Smithsonian discounts, and the Arts Ohio reciprocal membership, all members at Family Plus level and higher will now have reciprocal privileges at more than 700 museums nationwide! See page 3 for details.



Debra Joyce Dawson | PRAIRIE, FEBRUARY | 2014

OHIO PLEIN AIR SOCIETY —

## Painting Ohio Prairies

Dec 6 marks the opening of the Ohio Plein Air Society's exhibition, "Ohio Prairies: A Year in the Life," at the Springfield Museum of Art.

The Ohio Plein Air Society (OPAS) show brings together painters from around Ohio and beyond, all dedicated to painting in the "plein air" tradition – painting outdoors regardless of the weather. OPAS artists focus primarily on painting the landscapes of Ohio while braving the elements, whether in the heat of the summer or the cold of the winter, or even darkest night or in gloomy rain. The OPAS painter, depending on his or her preference, may create works in oil, acrylic, watercolor, pastel or perhaps some other medium. Each medium is unique and provides the artist with challenges and rewards that differ from another medium.

**Ohio Prairies: A Year in the Life** promises to be distinctive for two reasons: its focus on Ohio's prairies and it presents high quality local work. OPAS painters

chose to focus on the "prairies" of Ohio over the past year and a half. Many think of prairies as being limited to the Plains states like Kansas or Oklahoma or Nebraska, however much of Ohio was once covered by sweeping expanses of tall grasses, few trees, and low, rolling hills. Indeed, the land on which Springfield sits is considered prairie land. Many of these prairies still abound, some patches of virgin ground around this part of the state that have never been turned by a plow. In the exhibition, you will see paintings of the nearby Bigelow pioneer cemetery, swaths of land from along I-70, the gentle hills of Champaign County, and the grassy fields that now grow soy beans and corn to feed the world – these are all prairies of Ohio.

The other notable aspect of this show

is the quality of work presented by the artists. OPAS painters have honed their award winning skills over time and distance. Many of the group's artists are professional painters, who have won competitions throughout the United States. Some have traveled to Alaska, California, the Rocky Mountains, Florida, Maine, France, and even Cuba to paint en plein air. OPAS also welcomes up and coming artists, the ones who are developing the finesse and sophistication to perhaps soon join in national competitions, or maybe just the enjoyment of self-expression. Each artist has a story to tell through his or her work. The Ohio Plein Air Society is pleased and honored to present **Ohio Prairies: A Year in the Life** at the Museum, and we look forward to sharing our work with Museum visitors. Happy Holidays.

— Jon Browning, OPAS Exhibition Co-chair

### The OPAS Holiday Art Fair and Sale – Saturday, Dec 6, 9am-5pm

The halls of the Springfield Museum of Art will be decked with artwork by members of the Ohio Plein Air Society (OPAS) on Saturday, Dec 6 from 9am-5pm. Plein Air artists will bring in a selection of their work available to this special one-day art fair and sale. In addition to original works of art, there will be note cards and prints featuring artists' work. The **OPAS Holiday Art Fair and Sale** will also include a one-of-a-kind cut glass holiday ornament etched with the winning design from one of the Plein Air Society artists. The ornaments will sell for \$15 each for Museum members; \$20 for non-members; only one hundred ornaments will be produced. If you would like to pre-order and pay for an ornament before Dec 6, please contact the Museum at (937) 325-4673 or email to [smoa@springfieldart.net](mailto:smoa@springfieldart.net).

### OPAS Opening Reception

At 5:30 pm on Dec 6, the Museum will host a members' reception to open the Plein Air Society's juried exhibition **Ohio Prairies: A Year in the Life**. The reception is FREE to Museum members; \$5 per person for non-members. (See page 3 for information on the Members Matter and new benefits starting at the \$120 level). ■



From the **Director**

# It's Your Art Museum – Building a Model for Community Involvement

In September, the Museum received a prestigious Institute of Museum and Library Services grant of \$23,889 to develop a new program, **It's Your Art Museum – A Model for Community Involvement**, which will increase the number of people involved in the Museum through art education programs and volunteerism.

Over the past year, Deb Housh, Curator of Education and Exhibitions, has developed art education programs around the specific theme of using the Museum's exhibits and art collection while meeting the needs of targeted community partners. For example, at Springfield High's Learning Café, **Family: Fabric of Our Lives**, connected the children of English language learners with the Museum's textile exhibit, **Gathering** and explored how families "gather" together. An intensive, month-long art and language arts course at Catholic Central High School, "Personal Landscape," used American literature, Ohio landscape paintings, and the Ansel Adams photography exhibit to engage students in a study of shared concepts in art and literature through directed writing and

art-making.

The grant funds will enable the Museum to expand and improve our art education programs, making them even more connected to the community and increasing the ways in which the community is involved with the Museum. We will use the funding to understand what the most successful art education programs have been and why. We will work closely with our partners from last year and reach out to several new groups in order to increase our ability to develop the art education programs essential to our community. Ginnie Estrop, Museum Trustee and Chair of the Curatorial Affairs and Education Committee, noted that "this grant will help us demonstrate that an art museum isn't just 'nice,' it's necessary to a community."

At the end of next year, we will measure our performance by the number of returning community partners and new groups asking to become involved, how much Museum attendance has increased and why, and the number of Museum volunteers. ■

– Ann Fortescue

## The Art of Conservation

**continued**

steam was used to slowly flatten the buckling in the paper that gives it the appearance of waves. Once the flattening process was completed, the rag paper covering was removed and the pastel was stretched. Finally the pastel was reinstalled in the original frame with new glass, and an 8-ply rag mat with archival backing. The rag mat and archival backing are acid-free papers and will help prevent further acidification (embrittlement, discoloration and fading) of the pastel's paper.

The pastel will be on view in the Halley Gallery beginning in November 2014.

## Behind the Restoration

Lucie M. Robbins (1906-1990) was a life-long resident of Springfield and a supporter of the Springfield Museum of Art since its inception. Lucie, or Locket as she was known to family and friends, resided on Ardmore Road where her portrait hung in the living room, a snug and convivial space still remembered with fondness and pleasure by those lucky enough to have spent an evening in her company. The restoration of the portrait was made possible by a generous donation from Lucie's niece Elisabeth Cole Carpentieri of Florence, Italy, who is pleased that the picture has been returned to its original condition and thankful that it can be seen again by visitors to the Museum. ■

# Members Matter!

**Our 2015 Membership Campaign is underway! Please show your support for the Museum by renewing your membership. All members who join at the \$120 Family Plus level and higher are included in our reciprocal museum programs.**

The Springfield Museum of Art participates in 3 Reciprocal Programs: The Smithsonian Affiliate Membership, the Ohio Reciprocal Membership program (Art Ohio) and the North American Reciprocal Museum (NARM) program. Please visit our website for downloadable and printable lists of participating institutions.

The **Smithsonian** membership includes a subscription to the Smithsonian magazine as well as discounts on travel and selected merchandise and membership benefits at participating Smithsonian affiliates

**Art Ohio** extends membership benefits to 15 art museums in Ohio.

**NARM** (New for 2015) extends membership benefits and discounts to over 709 arts/cultural institutions in North and Central America.

Renew now and get your new card in November (expires 12/31/2015)! Perfect for travelling over the holidays. Look for membership information arriving in your mailbox or join online at [www.springfieldart.museum](http://www.springfieldart.museum) >

Support > Join the Museum ■



Smithsonian Institution  
Affiliations Program

## 45TH ANNUAL ARTBALL

# A License to Thrill Does Just That

The 45th Annual ArtBall was a great success, with more than 150 “agents” taking part in the evening’s festivities.

## Art Ball Donors and Sponsors

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IN THE CHAKERES INTERACTIVE ART LAB —

## JafaGirls Are at the Museum!

Corrine Bayraktaroglu and Nancy Mellon, the artist duo known as the JafaGirls, are best known for their outdoor installations throughout the Village of Yellow Springs. The two-woman art team has displayed their work at the Dayton Art Institute and is highlighted in the book, *Craft Activism: People, Ideas, and Projects from the New Community of Handmade and How You Can Join In*. Their notoriety began in 2008 with their “Knit Knot Tree,” which garnered international press through the Washington Post, NY Times and International Herald Tribune, among other news sources. That project sparked a flurry of yarn bombing, felt flowering and guerilla art acts and displays by the JafaGirls.

In the spring of 2014, Springfield Museum of Art was invited to participate in the Dayton Culture Works’ Power2Give crowd source funding program. This successful internet fundraising campaign allowed the Museum to offer support and stipends to local artists, inviting them to create displays in our Chakeres Interactive Art Lab. SMOA’s **Power2Give Artist Exhibit Interactive** program focuses on visual and hands-on learning. Artists display their own works alongside one or more art making stations designed collaboratively by the artists and our Museum Curator of Education and Exhibitions, Deb Housh. Interactive displays in the Art Lab give insight into other museum exhibits as well. The Art Lab helps museum visitors process the ideas in artwork and it’s fun for all ages.

In 2013 SMOA Executive Director, Ann Fortescue, met the JafaGirls on a museum tour and invited them to create a textile work of art for the tree on the Museum’s front patio. When the 2014 fall exhibit **Compelled: Folk Art and Vision** was being planned for the Deer Gallery, the JafaGirls were recruited



Visitors are invited to draw, design and “yarn bomb” in the Art Lab

for our second Power2Give Artist Exhibit Interactive installation due to their focus on traditional folk art materials and processes. Their work is a perfect complement to the Folk Art exhibit and they even inspired Deb Housh’s selection of works for this show. The JafaGirls’ Art Lab installation includes half a dozen individual works by each artist including paintings, textiles and mixed media, as well as several works jointly created by the duo. Their display also presents an interactive park bench

equipped with a basket of yarn, instructing visitors to “yarn bomb” the bench as the JafaGirls have in various public places. There are painted chalkboard trees with encouragement to play and draw textile designs like the famous Knit Knot tree. Mr. Plato, a felt-adorned mannequin “philosopher,” sits with a magnetic poetry panel, encouraging visitors to share their wisdom. And Mr. Plato’s alter ego is there too as a felt board shadow to be designed with whimsical shapes and bold patterns.

The JafaGirls use processes and forms of art often considered too ladylike, too old fashioned or irrelevant for high art and they question the very notion of



Nancy and Corrine – the JafaGirls

“what is art?” Nancy and Corrine craft for a purpose – to bring community together, to encourage viewers to question their surroundings and to make people smile. The theme of using craft for community building is a thread that weaves through JafaGirls works. The Springfield Museum of Art, which is deeply committed to reaching out to our surrounding communities, is pleased to collaborate with these two artists. The JafaGirls display will be up through early spring of 2015. ■

### Thanks to Our Power2Give Donors

Bob Bingenheimer  
Ann & Glenn Collier  
Teresa Demana  
Mark Elliot  
Eve Fleck  
Ann Fortescue  
Arthur Helmsetter  
Deborah Housh  
Marilyn Kreider  
Jamie McGregor  
Ross McGregor  
Christine Roberts  
Elizabeth Rudolf  
Alma Rutherford  
Louise Samosky  
Bob Swaney

# Springfield High Students Bring Astronomy and Art Together

The Springfield Museum of Art was selected to participate in the Smithsonian's STEAM education program, "Youth Capture the Colorful Cosmos." The program, designed for Smithsonian Affiliate museums to work with a local school district, develops the science, technology, engineering, art and math skills of high-school students using remote access to Smithsonian-Harvard Astrophysical MicroObservatory telescopes.

The **Youth Capture the Colorful Cosmos** program is a collaboration between the Museum and Springfield High School. Funded with a grant from the Smithsonian, the program is co-taught by Museum Curator of Education and Exhibitions, Deb Housh, and Springfield High's Lisa Cunningham (Science) with support from SHS art teacher, Joel Murphy. The Springfield High teachers announced the opportunity to participate to students in their classes, and a core group of 11th and 12th graders with keen interests in art and/or science began the project.

At the first meeting students and teachers brainstormed together about what they wanted to know about the universe, ideas for how they could share what they learned, and concepts for the exhibit they would produce collaboratively. The discussion became more animated when the students began talking about the audience for their exhibit. They agreed fifth graders would be the target age for learning through the exhibit, having sufficient reading and cognitive skills, and they would enjoy doing activities in the exhibit. However they concluded that the content would be appropriate and enjoyable for all ages. Ms. Cunningham offered to set up a field trip to Simon Kenton Elementary so the high school students could interview a class of 5th graders to learn more about what



they'd want to know about the universe.

"This collaboration comes at the absolutely right time for us as our mentor teachers, like Lisa Cunningham, are modeling new instructional practices that use projects as the focus of connected learning and assessment. And teachers like Joel Murphy are seeking ways to fully integrate arts into academic subjects that mirror the work place experiences we are preparing our students for," said Kim Fish, Springfield City Schools Communications and Special Projects Consultant.

Building on the successes of six interdisciplinary art programs with school partnerships last year, the Museum's educational goals for 2014-15 include: "... expand outreach to Springfield community youth programs for in-depth learning through art and cross-disciplinary experiences; increase programs with underserved youth in visual art and academic areas; and explore ways to involve the Smithsonian in education programs and exhibitions."

"Youth Capture the Colorful Cosmos" program is exactly what we want to be doing to use our Smithsonian Affiliation to educate and benefit students in our community, said Museum Director Ann Fortescue.

When asked why they were motivated

to participate in this after-school learning opportunity, Springfield

High students responded:

"I want to be able to connect art with other subjects, not only to share but to learn more myself." (Cassie, 12th grade)

"The ability to put two of my favorite topics together; I really love art and astronomy." (Kennedy, 12th grade)

"This is an opportunity to share art and science that I couldn't pass up." (Will, 11th grade)

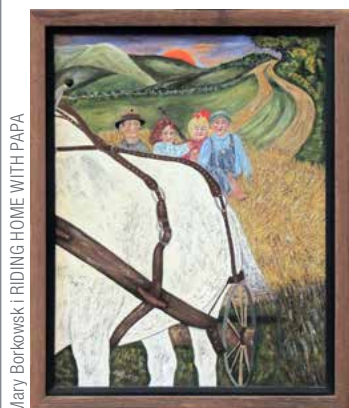
"I like learning about people's passions and this kind of includes passions of art, photography, and space." (Becky, 12th grade)

The students are working with Springfield High School's new, state-of-the-art Mac lab computers and will incorporate their experiences from a field trip to the Museum. Their final presentation will be an exhibition of the images of the universe delivered by the MicroObservatory telescopes that they studied and digitally manipulated, along with student-authored text and interactives in the Museum's Beach Gallery. The **Youth Capture the Colorful Cosmos** exhibit opens Friday, Dec 5. ■



IN THE DEER GALLERY

# Compelled: Folk Art & Vision



Mary Borkowski | RIDING HOME WITH PAPA



Charlie Willetto | FIGURE WITH LIGHTNING BOLT



Smoky Brown | LICENT MAN



Mary Francis Merrill | PINK RIBBON DOLL

The Springfield Museum of Art is fortunate to hold within our permanent collection an outstanding selection of art by nationally recognized self-taught artists. Folk Art, Outsider Art and Visionary Art are terms that have been used to describe the work of untrained artists who are recognized for unique talents refined to a point of mastery. Most artists in this exhibit did

not pursue formal artistic training through a university or art school, nor did they work extensively under an artist from the established art world. Our current Deer Gallery exhibition, **Compelled: Folk Art & Vision**, highlights this eclectic collection and poses questions to the viewer such as: "What is a folk art tradition?," "What motivates artists to create?" and "How has folk art

influenced contemporary art inside the art establishment?"

While some self-taught artists may deliberately sidestep the world or art academia, most of them lack access to formal art training due to economic, class, racial, health or geographic restrictions. Despite these challenges, the artists represented in this exhibit found their artistic voices and developed competent techniques that enabled them to communicate their messages. Many have been extremely prolific, producing hundreds if not thousands of pieces of art in their lifetimes. The talents of a number of these artists weren't discovered until late in their lives, some after death.

This October marked the 27th annual Folk Art Society of American conference. Held in a different U.S. city each year, this year the conference convened in Columbus, Ohio for four days of art exploration, scholarship and dialogue. On October 19 over fifty Folk Art Society members from across the country arrived via tour bus to the Springfield Museum of Art to view the new **Compelled: Folk Art & Vision** exhibit. Among the rave reviews, visitors commented on the whimsical yet stoic qualities of three Levent Isik pieces, the fragile and eager nature of Mary Merrill's dolls and textile pieces, and the impressive brushwork and magnitude of two Ralph Bell paintings. This "must see" show will remain on display in the Deer Gallery through the Spring of 2015. ■

## Building on Our Strengths

Deborah Birt Housh has been promoted to the full-time position of Curator of Education and Exhibitions. Her work over the past year and a half – creating and implementing the Museum's art education programs, developing the Chakeres Interactive Art Lab and curating two major exhibitions – have significantly contributed to the 125% increase in attendance and the over 400% increase in youth participation in the Museum.

"Deb's work connecting our audiences with the art in the Museum is at the core of our success over the past year," said Museum Director Ann Fortescue. "Her contributions have made such a significant difference in making the Museum more accessible through art education programs, the Chakeres Interactive Art Lab, and interpretive gallery guides, all of which have resulted in increases in attendance and memberships."

Deb holds a BA in The History of Art and Architecture with a minor in studio art from Miami University and an MA in Art Education with arts administration from The Ohio State University. Deb has taught in public and private schools in the United States and in Thailand, as well as designed arts curriculum for non-classroom learning

environments. She previously managed The Yellow Springs Arts Council Gallery and continues consultation with that organization as well as the Yellow Springs Arts Commission and various school art programs. In her expanded role at the Museum, Deb will continue her responsibilities for creating and implementing art education and curating original content for the Chakeres Interactive Art Lab. Additionally, she will take on new responsibilities for organizing and managing the Museum's exhibition schedule. Deb resides in Yellow Springs with her husband, Matt and sons, Tyson and Kenji. ■





## SPRINGFIELD MUSEUM OF ART

A Smithsonian Affiliate  
At the Springfield Center for the Arts  
107 Cliff Park Road  
Springfield, Ohio 45504  
smoa@springfieldart.net  
www.springfieldart.museum  
937.325.4673

NonProfit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
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Permit No. 151  
Springfield, OH

## Planning for Winter Art Classes Underway!

Adult and youth art classes will be offered this winter at the Museum. All classes will begin the week of January 28 and meet once a week for eight weeks ending by March 21.

Details will be available on our website and a brochure at the front desk of the Museum in early December. Go to [www.springfieldart.museum](http://www.springfieldart.museum) under the LEARN tab or email [smoa@springfieldart.net](mailto:smoa@springfieldart.net) for more information

### Calendar

Oct 2014-Jun 2015 Compelled: Folk Art & Vision (from the Permanent Collection)  
Nov 30 Come Find Art  
Dec 5 Youth Capture the Colorful Cosmos (Beach Gallery)  
Dec 6 OPAS Holiday Art Fair and Sale  
Dec 6 Women's Art (Halley Gallery)  
Dec 6, 2014-Feb 22, 2015 Ohio Plein Air Society Exhibition  
Jan 17 Mozart at the Museum  
Mar 14, 2015 Black & White Party

### Volunteers Needed

We need your help planning and manning special events at the Museum as a volunteer. To learn more, contact us at [smoa@springfieldart.net](mailto:smoa@springfieldart.net).

#### The Springfield Museum of Art

The Springfield Museum of Art, founded in 1946, is a non-profit organization designated 501(C)3 by the Internal Revenue Service.

The Springfield Museum of Art Library is open to members and to the public as a non-circulating art reference and study center.

#### Send Us Your Email Address

We send quick reminders of exhibition openings, gallery talks, etc. Please send us any new email addresses!

### Museum Hours

Wednesday-Saturday, 9 am-5 pm

Sundays 12:30-4:30 pm

Closed Mondays and Tuesdays

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Easter Sunday, Independence Day and the Sunday after ArtBall.

Admission is \$5 for adults and free for members and under 17. (Free admission during Come Find Art Sundays)

### Museum Staff

Ann Fortescue, Museum Director  
Eve Fleck, Museum Operations Manager  
Deb Housh, Curator of Education and Exhibitions

### Museum Trustees

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