Recredited Mus

MUSEletter

Tom Wilson*, Inez in Dover,* 1988 Oil on canvas, 22 x 30 inches

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Biggs Museum of American

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PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Biggs Museum of American Art shares with Delaware's diverse communities — the arts and cultural legacy —

of the Mid-Atlantic region.

STAFF

Administration

Michael Dudich, Director Natalie Osorio, Administrative Assistant to the Director and Facility Rentals Coordinator

Curatorial

Laura Fravel, Sewell C. Biggs Endowed Curator of American Art Rebecca Davidson, Registrar/Preparator

Development

Brent Mundt, Development Consultant Angela Moore, Development Systems Manager

Education

Kristen Matulewicz, Curator of Community and Academic Programs Josh Balcena, Department Assistant: Education and Curatorial Jaylin Harrison, Education Intern Taylor Lipski, Child Education Specialist Janet Tomaszewski, School and Family Programs Facilitator

Marketing & Public Relations

Kerri Lacey, Director of Marketing and Public Relations Shannel Fraser, Marketing Intern

Visitor Services & Membership

Nya Lightfoot, Head of Visitor Experience and Member Services Kiara Florez, Visitor Services Assistant Manager & Preparation Assistant Kassandra Florez, Visitor Services Associate Ursula Sadiq, Visitor Services Associate Stephanie Seeman, Visitor Services Associate

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



LETTER Dear Friends of the Biggs Museum

It is with some sadness that I announce that this will be the last Museletter where I address you as Director of the Biggs Museum of American Art. As of June 30, I will be retiring after 45 years in the museum field at eight public and university art museums and archives in Colorado, Wyoming, Arizona, New York and Delaware. It has been a thrilling adventure working with many of the most prominent artists of our time, and gifted and talented individuals breaking new ground as professional artists. Equally important has been the experience of working with amazing colleagues across the field as well as staff and boards who cherish and support the work we do in art museums every day.

The Biggs Museum has been the last adventure, an opportunity to lead an important institution to its rightful place as a Museum accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (October 2021). I joined the Biggs six years ago with a staff of four and a Board with great leadership, and a vision and enthusiasm for the future of the Museum. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Biggs' current staff of twelve, former staff, and our amazing board, the Biggs is at a turning point in its 28 year history.

The Covid 19 Pandemic created enormous challenges and threats to the Biggs during a timeframe when many museums closed their doors permanently. The Biggs, through careful management and determined fundraising weathered the storm, and positioned itself to rebound with exciting new programs for our diverse community. The intact staff worked remotely during the darkest days, and discovered new virtual programming opportunities through ZOOM and other technologies. To succeed in this new arena, we purchased sophisticated additional equipment to maximize the opportunity to reach even greater audiences nationally. That said, however, as we continue virtual offerings, we have a long way to go as we return to some sense of normalcy by attracting our visitors back to in person visits to the Museum through an exciting new exhibition schedule and more diverse interpretation of the permanent collection.

The recent acquisition of two adjacent historic properties to the Biggs on the Dover Green point the way to an exciting new future for the Biggs. Over ten years in consideration and negotiation, in October of 2021, #15 and #21 The Green were gifted to the Biggs Museum by the State of Delaware to further the Biggs' cultural mission and to determine how best to integrate the histories of the Green into the artistic fabric of the Biggs. To that end, The SmithGroup, an architectural firm world renowned for its work on art museums has been selected to lead the institutional master planning effort. Master planning will help us to determine the architectural and programmatic future of the Biggs through discussions with the community, the State, our civic and educational partners, our staff and our Board.

It has been a privilege to lead the Biggs Museum of American Art over these past six years, and to contribute to its capabilities and successes as it embraces a very sound and exciting future.

Charles A. Gueriń Executive Director





PROJECT RESTORATION LOOKING GLASS RETURNS TO THE BIGGS

Rebecca Davidson

This looking glass was most likely created in Philadelphia in the 1770s. It is an ideal example of the American Rococo (Chippendale) style with its pierce-carved vines and gilded vegetative decorations. The large plate glass mirror would have been remarkably expensive at this time and together with the carved frame would have been a strong indicator of wealth and taste throughout the British colonial world.

It is believed that this looking glass was part of a large suite of furniture that was purchased from leading Philadelphia cabinetmakers Benjamin Randolph and Thomas Affleck by Vincent Loockerman, Sr. to commemorate his 1774 marriage to his second wife Elizabeth Pryor. Loockerman's 1741 house on State Street, located just a few blocks from the Biggs, was undergoing many renovations during this period and the furniture the new couple purchased eventually landed in some of the most prestigious American art collections in the country including the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Diplomatic Reception Rooms of the US Secretary of State. Unlike much of the other 1770s furnishings that had been purchased for the house, the looking glass was never been sold off and remained in the home. Former Curator, Ryan Grover, negotiated it to be a promised gift to the Biggs Museum from Loockerman's last descendent to live in the house, Holly Johnson, to commemorate the Johnson/ Bradford family at the Biggs. Gallery 8 is named after them and is filled with the earliest furniture known to have been used at the Loockerman House.

The looking glass had been broken several times and was missing original carved elements. In late 2020, it was given to Bret Headley, of Headley Conservation Services to repair, restore, and stabilize for long-term display. In late 2021 it was returned to the Biggs in beautiful condition and rehung in Gallery 9 in January of 2022.



MEET THE **NEW DIRECTOR:** MICHAEL DUDICH

The Biggs is pleased to announce the appointment of Michael Dudich as the Museum's next Director. He will assume his responsibilities on July 1, 2022 upon the retirement of Charles Guerin who has led the museum for the past seven years.

Dudich most recently served as the Deputy Director – Operations & CFO for the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut. The Biggs's commitment to expanding its audience, partnering with the community, and the opportunity to reimagine and reposition the museum's physical spaces with the recent acquisition of 15/21 The Green, were noted by Dudich as key drivers in his decision for making the move to Dover.

"Michael brings 30+ years of valuable experience in the management of complex organizations, spanning both for-profit and non-profit institutions," said Kathy Dwyer Southern, President of the Board of Trustees. "He is well known to both the board and staff, having himself served as a Bigg's Trustee for the past five years, demonstrating a deep commitment to the Museum. Working with him has been a pure pleasure as we together look forward to the museum's growth and evolution."

"It is thrilling to have the opportunity to lead the Biggs into its next chapter," said Dudich. "Drawing on the expertise, energy, and ingenuity of people both in and outside the museum, I know we can build on the successes achieved during Charlie's tenure, to ensure we're an inviting, welcoming, and accessible place to connect with great art."

At the Wadsworth, with 50,000 works of art and more than 90,000 visitors per year, Dudich provided leadership for the effective operational and financial management of the museum including implementation of strategic objectives and key organizational initiatives. Prior to joining the Wadsworth, he was Director of Administration and Human Resources at Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens in Washington, DC, where he made his transition from the corporate sector. While a Biggs Trustee, Dudich was both a co-chair and member of the Museum's Development Committee. This breadth of arts leadership experience, underpinned by his business background, makes him an exceptional fit as the Biggs charts a path for its second quarter century of service to Dover, to Delaware, and to the region.

Dudich's educational background includes a Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Management from the University of Akron (Ohio) and post-graduate certifications in both mediation and arbitration. He and his husband, Buck Drummond, a veterinarian, will be settling in Old Dover and are eager to experience all that the area has to offer with being able to bike to work as an added bonus!

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dennis J. Coker

A lifelong resident of Kent County, Delaware, Dennis J. Coker has been honored to be elected Principal Chief of the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware since 1996. During his term, successful collaborations with the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office and the Federal Census Bureau, his Tribe was awarded a Census Designation Area allowing Tribal members to include their ethnicity as Lenape on the 2010 Census for the first time in history. On August 3, 2016 Delaware's Governor, Jack Markell, signed legislation officially recognizing the long and continued history of the Lenape Community in the state of Delaware.

Chief Coker's service as a past Chairman of the Confederation of Sovereign Nanticoke-Lenape Tribes of the Delaware Bay has allowed him to effect progress towards recognition of the Indigenous human rights of all member Tribes. His membership in the National Congress of the American Indian (NCIA) and founding membership in the Alliance of Colonial Era Tribes (ACET) has brought recognition, furthered understandings, and developed collaborations for the betterment of Delaware's Indigenous population.

Marcia DeWitt

Former Board President, Marcia DeWitt of Rehoboth Beach, has returned to the Biggs Museum's Board of Trustees. Attorney and Entrepreneur, Marcia DeWitt, founded GuilfordPare Ltd. (formerly the Guilford Group Ltd.), a workers' compensation and disability management firm serving national and international clients. Ms. DeWitt established GuilfordPare as a highly successful and sought after business resource for helping companies and non-profits save millions of dollars in workers' compensation/disability costs. Prior to founding GuilfordPare, Ms. DeWitt was the Executive Director of Harbor Holdings, Ltd., where she oversaw the profitability and strategic direction of Harbor Health Systems of Baltimore. Ms. DeWitt was also an Executive Vice President at John Hopkins Kennedy Krieger Institute and has held several university appointments.

Ms. DeWitt has served on the boards in leadership positions of more than 20 educational, arts, and cultural organizations.

Rex Varner

Rex Varner will be joining the Board of Trustees as the new Treasurer. Varner is a senior executive with over 20 years of leadership and management experience, both domestic and abroad. As the Sole Proprietor and an Independent Strategic Management Consultant at BVE Strategy, he has been successful at start-ups and turn-arounds. Known to be a keen problem solver; he is equally adept at developing strategy and executing plans. Rex brings with him a wealth of experience and expertise with the proven ability to develop senior executive relationships, meet revenue goals, and build teams.









NEW FACES AT THE BIGGS

FULL-TIME STAFF

Rebecca Davidson - Registrar/Preparator

Rebecca Davidson is thrilled to be a permanent part of the Biggs staff. She began in September as a Curatorial Intern, was hired as the Interim Assistant Collections Manager in November at the end of her internship, and accepted the permanent position of Registrar. Rebecca earned her B.A. in Studio Art from Delaware State University, and M.F.A. in Painting from Savannah College of Art & Design.

In addition caring for the collection of art at The Biggs, Rebecca is a working artist, an art juror, and an aspiring curator and arts writer. The bulk of Rebecca's research interests involve intersectionality and the representation of artists from marginalized backgrounds within art history and in contemporary practice.

Kiara Florez - Assistant Manager of Visitor Experiences and Preparation Assistant

Kiara began working at the Biggs in October 2021 as a preparation assistant. She also now works at the front desk as a Visitor Services Assistant Manager. She received her education at Delaware State University with a degree in Studio Art and has since then been involved in museums and galleries/exhibitions. Her side hustle is promoting her works in art shows. Kiara was recently awarded a fellowship from the Delaware Division of the Arts for Visual Arts - Painting in the Emerging Artist Category. Her work can be seen in the exhibition Award Winners XXII currently on display on the 3rd floor.

Before coming to the Biggs, Laura served as the Robert and Elizabeth Owens Curatorial Fellow at Winterthur, Museum, Garden & Library. Prior to that, she spent two years at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum as the American Art specialist in the Drawings, Prints & Graphic Design Department. Previously, Laura worked at the Philadelphia Museum of Art as the Exhibition Assistant for "American Watercolor in the Age of Homer and Sargent" and organized a related installation in the PMA's permanent collection dedicated to "Philadelphia Illustrators." In addition, she has held curatorial positions and fellowships at museums

Laura Fravel - Sewell C. Biggs Endowed Curator of American Art

including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the North Carolina Museum of Art, and the Ackland Art Museum. She attended Duke University for her B.A. before pursuing Art History in graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Nya Lightfoot - Head of Visitor Experience and Member Services

Nya Lightfoot is the new Visitor Experience and Membership Manager. Nya is a recent graduate of the Delaware State Business program with a focus in Business Management. Nya has come to the Biggs after over 6 years of helping to grow her family business in Columbia, MD. Nya has been inspired by the hard work she witnessed, as her parents built a successful business from scratch. She applies these lessons to her leadership style and management techniques. Some extracurricular activities that Nya enjoys, include: playing volleyball, playing tennis and working with youth sports programs. On her free time Nya also enjoys painting and finding ways to be creative. "This new venture will give me the opportunity to expand my horizons into a new field and put my customer service and management background to good use. I love the environment at the Biggs and I hope to maximize the visitor and membership experience so that all who come will enjoy the museum as much as I do."



PART - TIME STAFF

Josh Balcena – Department Assistant: Education & Curatorial Josh is a recent graduate of Caesar Rodney High School who began with the Biggs as an Education Intern. He has always had a love for history and literature. He loves museums and aspires to work in the curatorial world. Upon completion of his internship, the Biggs created a position to keep this young talent on board as he pursues a degree in art history. He participates in tennis, composes music, and was heavily involved in his school's performing arts program. If you can't find him hiding behind the cover a book or writing songs, look wherever the music is playing and he'll be singing along!

Kassandra Florez – Visitor Experience Associate

Kassandra is forever inspired by the world around her. She is a Latin-American illustrator from New York who enjoys expressing herself artistically and through fashion, jewelry and makeup.After studing Advertising Design at Delaware Technical Community College, she now creates graphic and traditional illustrations with her favorite medium being charcoal. When she's not creating art, she'll usually be reading a new book with her cat, listening to her favorite songs, exploring new places or spending time with family and friends.

Shannel Fraser – Summer 2022 Marketing Intern

Shannel Fraser is a rising junior at Washington College and the new Marketing Intern at the Biggs Museum of American Art. She is majoring in Business Management and double minoring in International Business and Marketing. She is a sister of Alpha Chi Omega. Shannel is from Alexandria, Virginia but lives in West Palm Beach, Florida. When she is not focusing on her studies, she is watching sports, getting involved on campus, and being around friends. She hopes to gain real work experience in the field of marketing and expand on her interpersonal skills.

Jaylin Harrison - Summer 2022 Education Intern

Jaylin is a Delaware native and recent University of Delaware graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art History and minors in Africana Studies and Museum Studies.m"I am delighted to be working with Kristen Matulewicz, with whom I will be conducting research on Rock and Roll in photography and developing programming for both adults and children. I am thrilled to be interning at the Biggs Museum, and I am looking forward to learning more about how to create successful museum programming."

Taylor Lipski – Child Education Assistant

Taylor Lipski is one of the newest additions to the Biggs Museum team. With a background in youth care and instruction, she works as the museum's Child Education Specialist to develop engaging and informative programs for kids of all ages. In her free time, Taylor enjoys visiting state parks, volunteering at a local animal shelter, and has recently taken up crochet. Some of the upcoming Biggs programs Taylor looks forward to the most include the "Let's Get Messy" summer camps in June and July, and "Biggs After Dark Flashlight Tour" in October.

AWARD WINNERS XXII

Congratulations Kiara Florez!

BIGGS STAFF HONORED AS 2022 DELAWARE DIVISION OF THE ARTS AWARD WINNER

This year marked the 22nd annual Delaware Division of the Arts Award Winners Show. Each year, the Biggs Museum of American Art, in partnership with the Delaware Division of the Arts, exhibits the work of the Division's annual Individual Artist Fellows at the Award Winners exhibition. The Division recognizes artists throughout the state for their outstanding quality of work in the areas of choreography, folk art, jazz, literature, media arts, music, and visual arts through these awards.

While it's always an honor to celebrate the established and up and coming artists of Delaware, this year was especially near and dear to our hearts because a member of the Biggs' Staff was recognized for her artistic talents. Kiara Florez - Visitor Experience Assistant Manager and Preparation Assistant, was awarded with a fellowship in the Emerging Artist Category for her Paintings. On behalf of the museum staff and the board of Trustees, we'd like to congratulate Kiara for her accomplishments, and for all of the hard work she put in to making the exhibition an event to remember for her fellow Award Winners.

This exhibition will be on view through July 23.



About Kiara Florez

The young artist has lived in Delaware for six years, but she was born in Bronx, New York, the oldest of four children. With her family, Florez has also lived in Florida and Maryland, coming to the First State in 2016. To finance her college education, she worked in retail and interior painting, for a time commuting to Philadelphia. But since receiving the Fellowship and securing a new job in Delaware, she's planning on "staying here to continue my artistic path."

While painting, Florez listens to music and works near a window with a view to nature, two things that consistently spark her imagination. She is also inspired by "any kind of art," thanks to mentors and friends who afforded her new experiences, and she is especially grateful to her art teachers as she carries on "the knowledge and experience given from them."

Based on intuition, her works begin with a faint idea of "how I want the painting to come to life." But that process is often challenging. Since a work in progress can "change form and go in any direction it pleases," it can require her to overpaint or even begin again. But while each work springs from a personal message, she leaves any "interpretation and analysis" up to her viewers and is especially gratified when her paintings "speak not just to the mind, but to the soul as well."

Remaining from her earlier artistic explorations is a love of jewelry making, a hobby to which she returned during COVID quarantine, when she had "a lot of time to think about my artistic path." Florez was still in college during the pandemic, painting her senior project, and those works "became a visual representation of my personal journey . . . and a healing process."

Florez is enormously grateful to receive an Emerging Artist award. "Getting the acceptance email was honestly the best surprise of my life!" The award has given her "the biggest step forward in expanding my artistic career." She plans to resume painting (halted for a bit after her 2021 graduation), trying new techniques, expanding her career, and collaborating with other artists. And the Fellowship will also afford her a solo exhibition, a "dream come true."



Kiara installs the exhibition in front of her own hung paintings



In Between the Two by Melissa Sutherland Moss WINS PUBLIC VOICE AWARD

The Biggs Museum of American Art recently concluded the juried exhibition *Visions & Voices*, which was designed to highlight the work of African American artists from the Mid-Atlantic region through visual art media including, painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, craft, fiber, and video. From the title of the exhibition, "Visions" represented the physical artwork, while "Voices" represented the amplification of voices which have been historically underrepresented in the art community. Instead of the typical museum practice of interpreting the works, the Biggs quietly took the back seat to allow the artists to tell their stories, in their voices, in ways that were meaningful to them.

With so many powerful themes represented in the body of work, the Biggs saw this as an opportunity to thoughtfully expand its collection in a way that was important and impactful to the community. Following the theme of community listening, the museum collected the public's feedback on their favorite artwork through the duration of this exhibition. In an unprecedented move, a new addition to the permanent collection was chosen from a field of finalists entirely by public vote, in what was deemed the Public Voice Award. Once the votes were tallied, collagist Melissa Sutherland Moss of Brooklyn, NY was named the winning artist for her piece *In Between the Two*.

Melissa Sutherland Moss is an interdisciplinary artist working across collage, assemblage, installation and social engagement. Through a hybrid of mediums, her practice is dedicated to preserving and celebrating the history of African and Caribbean diasporas within contemporary media. Today, she expands upon an immersive body of work that evokes the fragility and diversity within the black community. The project celebrates the lost, the forgotten and highlights the people who are dedicated to being change agents within the diaspora. Melissa's work has been exhibited at The Biggs Museum of American Art and supported by residencies including ArtCrawl Harlem, Chrysalis Institute for Emerging Artists, and The Alliance of Artist Communities. She is currently a recipient of the Zea Mays Printmaking mentorship program. Melissa's work has been written about in several publications, including *Black Enterprise, Forbes, Essence,* and *Refinery 29*. She currently is an MFA candidate at the Maryland Institute College of Art and serves as a Director of Creative Innovation & Ideation for sk.ArtSpace.

Scan QR code to watch the Artist Talk by the award winning artist, Melissa Sutherland Moss.





MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: ERIC W. ZIPPE

Full Name: Eric W Zippe

How long have you been a Delaware by Hand Member? Six years or so years...

What do you enjoy most about being a DBH member? The best thing about being in Delaware by Hand Member is the partnership with the Biggs Museum and getting to meet different artists and crafters at the Delaware by Hand Events. One really nice perk of membership is being able to visit the exhibits at the Biggs Museum which have been a big inspiration to me over the years

What types of art do you specialize in? I specialize in visual arts. Every piece of artwork that I make starts off as a photograph. I then decide which direction to take it. Some become photographic prints, some get transferred onto wood, and others go through distillation process and then put on other substrates or laser engraved.

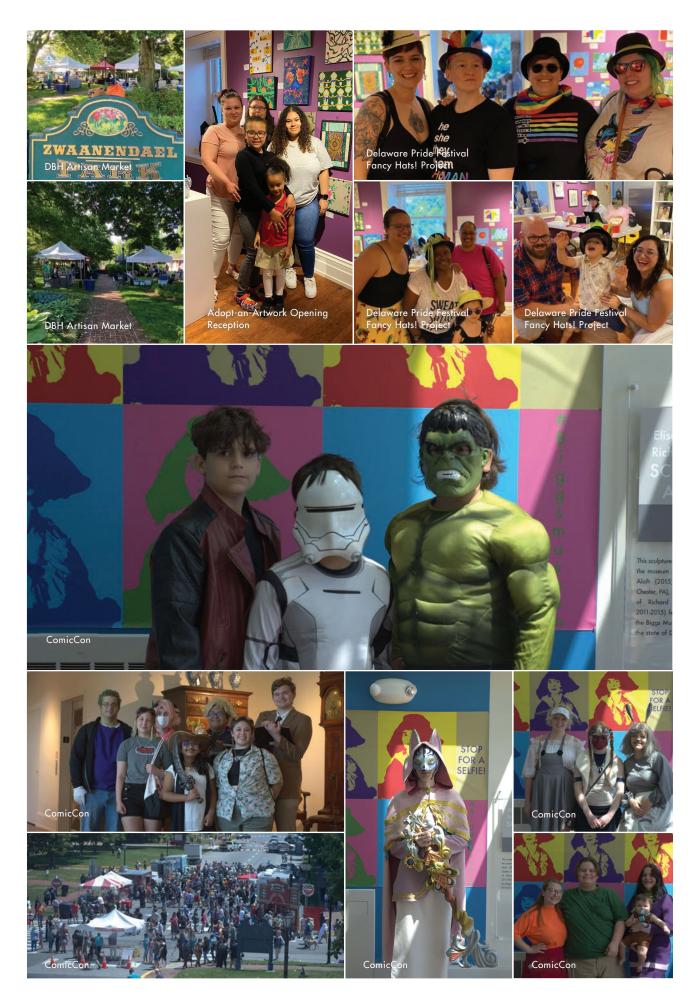
What drew you to working in the arts? My parents both encouraged the creativity of both my sister and I with lots of art supplies and visits to museums. I grew up on a small farm and lower New Castle County. My parents, in their spare time on the farm would always have some sort of creative project they were working on, whether knitting or cross stitch, latch hook rugs, linoleum block printing, or folk art sculpture using found discarded farm equipment. 4-H what's also a big influence on my creative life and in my teenage years I discovered photography and fell in love with a medium.

What has your journey as an artist been like? My journey as an artist has been very eclectic. Started work as a freelance photojournalist for the Delaware State News in the early 90s. For the next 30 years I would work as a commercial freelance photographer but would also pursue fine art photography and immerse myself in many different mediums. In 2008 I finalized my formal arts education with the Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Delaware.

Where do you draw your inspiration from? All my artwork starts off from a photographic source of mine own. So unlike many photographers I draw inspiration for many different mediums and forms of expression. Painters, sculptors, writers and dancers all provide inspiration and lend their way into my artwork. One of my biggest inspirations, as far as subjects is the natural world. One specific subject has been individual trees and they're unique personalities and structures and forms.

How was your experience being a part of the "Award Winners" exhibition in 2021? Being part of 2021 fellowship Award Winners XXI exhibition at the Biggs was an incredible experience and a highlight of being a Delaware Division of the Arts Individual Artist Fellow. I was thrilled to have my work displayed alongside the artworks in the collection of the Biggs Museum. The pairing of my artwork and the artwork in the Biggs collection provided valuable insight to me as an artist and also made me feel validated in my many years of artistic pursuits.









Saving the Past Shaping the Future with First State Heritage Park





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Delaware The Biggs is supported in part by a grant from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts The division promotes Delaware Arts events on www.DelawareScene.com.







ON THE COVER

Tom Wilson: Super-Realist/Surrealist July 1 - October 16, 2022

Delawarean Tom Wilson studied art at the Rhode Island School of Design. Living in New York and eventually Paris, Wilson enjoyed the new visibility of LGBTQ artists while working as a top fashion model of the 1970s. After returning to Lewes in 1981, Wilson built a career on rendering photorealistic architectural studies of southern Delaware before succumbing to complications of the AIDS virus in 1995. This exhibition unveils the work of this artist and the community that supported his career.

WHAT'S NEXT

Art Deco Glass from the Huchthausen Collection Coming November 2022

Characterized by clean lines, geometric shapes and bright colors, Art Deco glass emerged in the late 19th century, and resurged in popularity in the 1970s. This exhibition features early 20th century glassworks by iconic Art Deco studios such as René Lalique, Daum Frères, Pierre d'Avesn, Charles Schneider, Muller Frères, Marius-Ernest Sabino, Steuben Glass Works, and many others.

This exhibition will be accompanied by a Children's Art Deco competition & Exhibition.





(Red Vase) Verreries Schneider (French, founded 1913 – closed 1981) Charles Schneider (French, 1881-1953) Vase Nénuphar((Water Lily Vase) from Le Verre Français line, circa 1926-1929 Mold-blown glass with interior and exterior crushed and powdered glass frits and single surface acid cutting 19 x 7 in. (48.3 x 17.8 cm)

(Clear Vase With fan shape) Pierre D'Avesn (French, 1901–1990) Vase with spiral design, circa 1926-1931 Press-molded opal glass 7 1/2 x 8 1/4 in. (19.1 x 21.0 cm)

(Vase with dancing nudes) Consolidated Lamp and Glass Company (American, founded 1893 – 1963), Vase with dancing nude design, circa 1928 a-1932, Mold-blown and frosted glass surface enamel wash, 12 x 9 in. (30.5 x 22.9 cm)

(Red Circle Tray) Unknown Manufacturer (American) Trays, circa 1925-1929, Reverse-painted glass with metal frame and wooden handles 18 x 12 1/4 x 1/2 in. (45.7 x 31.1 x 1.3 cm)