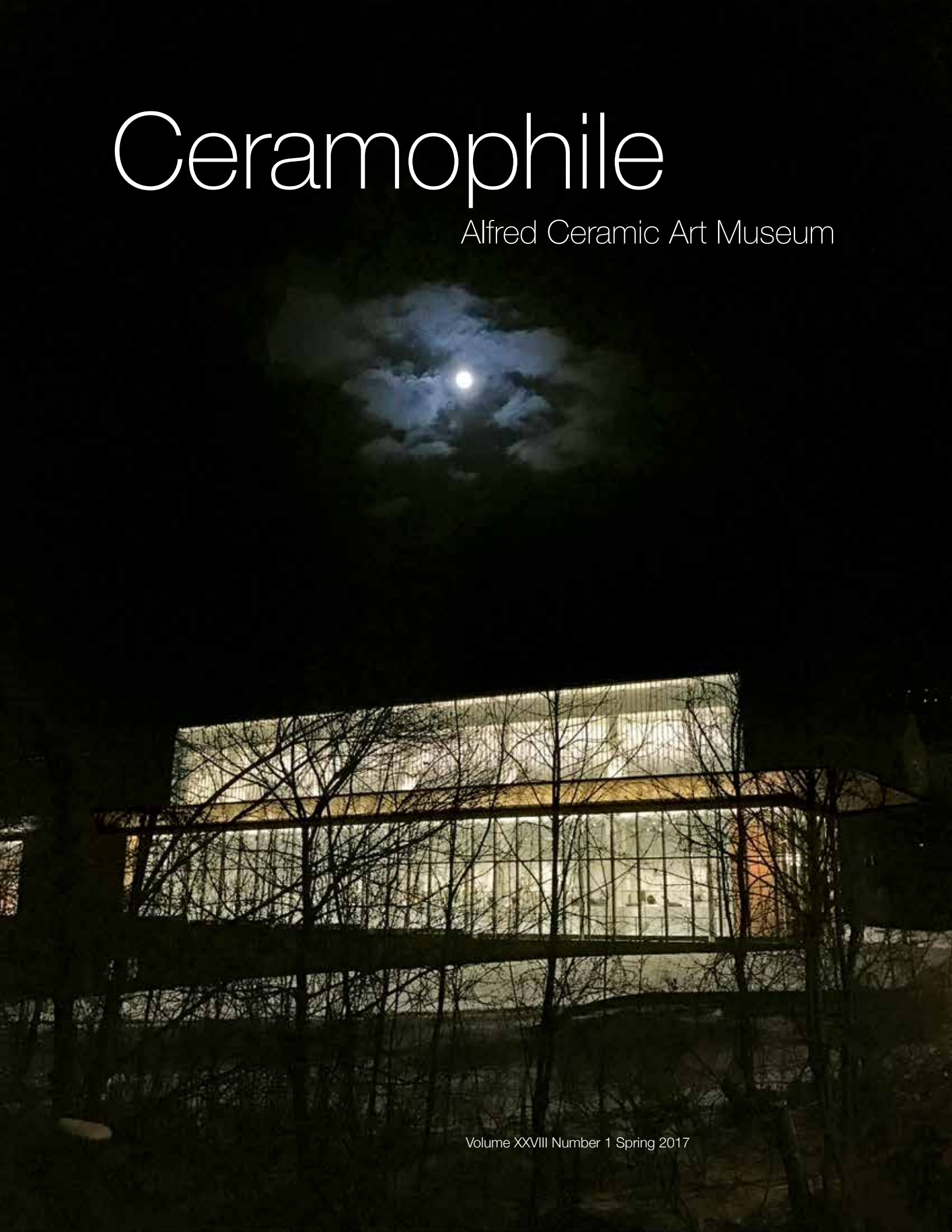


# Ceramophile

Alfred Ceramic Art Museum



Volume XXVIII Number 1 Spring 2017



## FEET OF CLAY

*For the opening of the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum*

*October 28, 2016*

How often he invoked it in his lectures,  
that ancient phrase, which meant *unsound, unfounded*.  
His voice inflected with Australian vowels,  
his hands inscribing crescents in the air,  
he spoke of monuments to human folly,  
of vain beliefs and systems of belief,  
entire cultures blown away like chaff.  
All were faulty. All had *feet of clay*.

I was a student then, untried, absorbent.  
How poignant to have spent the years between  
that time and this in a valley carved from clay,  
inhabiting an ethos sprung from clay,  
and witnessing with awe or joy or sorrow  
the human spirit mingling with the clay.  
Year upon year, the whirling calendar,  
the families dispersed or torn asunder.

But let me now invoke that counterforce:  
the form arising from the spinning wheel  
or built by hand from mud and human ardor.  
Call it *earthenware* or *porcelain*  
or name its particular glaze, as if by naming  
tools and materials we might appease  
the fierce god chafing in its vessel  
or limn the mystery contained therein.

And let me hail as well this risen form,  
which bears for good or ill the name *museum*,  
as though it might arrest entropic currents  
or hold within its walls the rush of time.  
*Rhodes. Turner. Cushing. Parry. Randall.*  
Like struck bells those names reverberate  
in memory as in this well-lit room  
and herald unnamed wonders yet to come.

– Ben Howard  
Alfred University  
Professor Emeritus of English



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*Inside cover - gallery photo – Center: Eva Hild, Loop #1, circa 2002, stoneware, paints and pigments, 26" x 27" x 27", promised gift of Marlin and Ginger Miller; left: Peter Voulkos, San Lucar, 1993, stoneware, wood-fired, 38" x 25" x 25", promised gift of Marlin and Ginger Miller; right: Waylande Gregory, Mother and Child, 1936, earthenware, glazed, 72" x 33" x 22", gift of the estate of Yolande Gregory, 2015. 14*

# Director's Remarks

The long awaited opening of the new Alfred Ceramic Art Museum building was celebrated on October 28, 2016. The opening exhibition, *Core Sample: Selections from The Permanent Collection* was a revelation to many, including myself. Numerous featured pieces had not been exhibited in a very long time. It was impressive to actually see how many wonderful and important works of ceramic art the Museum houses in its collection. Finally, we have the space to highlight the extent of the Museum's holdings.

*continued*



*From left, Wayne Higby, Marlin Miller, Ginger Miller, and AU President Mark Zupan cut the ribbon at the inaugural opening reception of the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum on October 28, 2016.*

The Museum's opening night was a huge event for Alfred and the Museum. That evening over 700 people were in attendance. There were individuals from the West Coast, the East Coast as well as Europe and Asia in attendance. There were VIP events and dual openings with a banquet in between as well as consecutive openings staged in the three galleries of the Art School. A Gala – it was. I have had the honor of working at Alfred University for 44 years and I have never experienced an evening like the one celebrating the opening of the renewed Alfred Ceramic Art Museum. A new era for Alfred has truly begun.

Since opening the doors of its magnificent new facility, the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum has seen 2,000 visitors, including visits from nearly 20 classes from Alfred University, Alfred State, area schools and a busload of students from Sheridan College in Toronto, Canada, who made the trip for the opening reception on October 28th.

This issue of *Ceramophile* heralds our new era of the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum. It is an expanded, art based, design sensitive newsletter that reflects the multi-dimensional mission of the Museum. Please refer to the contents at left to get the full outline of this expanded edition featuring a special interview with Mark Zupan the 14th President of Alfred University. It was a privilege and an honor to interview the new Alfred University President. He is a remarkable, accomplished individual who brings an



*Rob Turner, son of Robert Turner, Brier and John Turner, son of Robert Turner, and JT Turner, grandson of Robert Turner*

enthusiasm to his position as President that is especially energizing and inspiring.

Also featured in this issue is the beautiful poem that Professor Emeritus of English, Ben Howard, penned for the Gala opening of the Museum.

A big thank you goes out to Brian Oglesbee our good friend and totally remarkable photographer whose work makes our Museum and its collection look as beautiful as they truly are. His images along with the sensitivity of our publications designer Rick McLay are what drive the quality of *Ceramophile*. These two gifted professionals are essential to the visual voice of the Museum.

At this time, the Museum sadly acknowledges the recent passing of two of our important patrons Lewis and Jenny Krevolin who generously endowed the Museum with a major collection of Pre-Contact Ceramics. This collection of ceramics of the Ancient Americas continues to be of special importance to the Museum. Many pieces from this collection may be seen in our ongoing, opening exhibition. The Krevolin collection will continue to create important scholarship and is an outstanding reminder of what major Museum patrons can do for the world of ceramic art.

As I write these remarks a personal reflection on the museum comes to mind:

*Located in the heart of the expansive landscape of Western New York, the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum offers its visitors a unique location in which to pause and consider the poetic and profound gifts from the earth that ceramic art represents. The comprehensive nature of the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum offers a scholarly insight into modern and contemporary ceramic art in the context of objects, drawings and sculpture, which reflect the deep historical and global foundation of the art form. In studying the Alfred Ceramic Art Collection one comes face to face with the evolutionary arch of twentieth and twenty-first century ceramic art. An arch that has been born out of the 117-year history of education in the ceramic art that has flourished at Alfred University since 1900. As the Museum collection continues to grow it will, without question, increasingly enrich our understanding of the power of earth and fire to inform revelatory artistic achievement.*

*Ceramophile is a celebration of the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum. All of us at the Museum send our best wishes and invite you to visit us and our museum's remarkable collection.*

**Wayne Higby**  
**Director and Chief Curator**  
**Alfred Ceramic Art Museum at Alfred University**



*Lesley Brill and Megan Parry Brill, daughter of William Parry, and Wyn Parry Frechette, daughter of William Parry, and Christopher Frechette*



*From left, Hilary Weiss Swinson, great-granddaughter and Emily Swinson, great-great-granddaughter of Charles Fergus Binns, and David Weiss*

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# Interview with Alfred University President Mark Zupan



Wayne Higby, left, and Mark Zupan examine an earthenware Nigerian storage jar from the twentieth century from the Robert and Sue Turner Collection, gift of Robert and Sue Turner, 1999.<sup>59</sup>

January 23, 2016 Museum  
Director and Chief Curator  
Wayne Higby interviewed  
Alfred University President  
Mark Zupan. Here is their  
conversation in its entirety.

**W:** What was it that first inspired your interest in economics and public policy?

**M:** *I am the son of immigrants and so this country has been very good to my family. My parents basically showed up with a couple of suitcases in Rochester. In light of the great opportunities the United States provided them, I have always had this feeling of wanting to give back and I had the thought in high school, to maybe go into politics. However, I had a wonderful mentor through taking a required class in economics as an undergraduate at Harvard. He had a way of explaining patterns, that weren't apparent before landing in his class, and he inspired me to be both a teacher and an economist [mentor: Joseph Kalt, Harvard Kennedy School, Professor Emeritus].*

**W:** I'm still back to the picture of your parents arriving in Rochester and I see them carrying suitcases. Where did they come from?

**M:** *My father was from Slovenia, which is a former part of Yugoslavia. My parents had a sponsor in Rochester who was willing to set my dad up with his first job. He lived out of the YMCA downtown and then my mother, also a Slovene by background, got a scholarship at the University of Rochester and was able to join him.*

**W:** With a degree in economics you could do other things besides teach, so that's a choice that is very particular it seems to me. You know, it's not one where there's a lot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

**M:** *Teaching is rewarding. While a graduate student at MIT, I taught the same Principles of Economics course at Harvard through which I first encountered my mentor. I realized how hard it was the first time I did it, and it gave me an even deeper appreciation while teaching the class. The students were the inspiration. When you get to interact with so many young and caring minds and hopeful minds...what a gift!*

**W:** Reading your bio I thought...wow... well, he was really successful as a teacher.

**M:** *Again, I had good mentors and wonderful students. Especially teaching Principles of Economics, because there*

*you get a chance, like art, to expose people to a new way of looking at the world.*

**W:** So, becoming President of Alfred University is kind of a continuation of teaching.

**M:** *I read an interesting book recently called Team of Teams by Stanley McChrystal. It talks about leadership, and how we need to get away from the model of leaders as heroes. Effective leaders nurture an organization's culture and thereby make it adaptable and resilient in today's rapidly changing world. A better conceptualization of leaders thus is as gardeners. You can't possibly know or keep track of all of the information that comes hurtling toward you these days. You need a diverse team that can capture that information and help guide the institution forward in the best possible way.*

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*I see the Museum  
attracting students,  
training students,  
bringing back alums  
and bringing in visiting  
scholars. We have  
an artistic Ellis Island  
somehow in our midst.*

**Mark Zupan**

**W:** There's a dual element here, because when I think about you and your experience, it's economics, but it's also public policy. When we see those two things written together there's something that happens in terms of how we understand economics from your point of view.

**M:** *It's ultimately a quest for how do we make a better society for our global community. Economics has been intimately tied to addressing those questions, so it draws on history, philosophy, and sociology. Today, it's become much more mathematical, much more game theoretic. It's lost some of its former obvious and direct links to political philosophy and public policy.*

**W:** To create policies that advance and care for public interest...that's a great debate and its ongoing all the time.

**M:** *Right. It's interesting even with the recent presidential elections. I have a book coming out next month [Inside Job: How Government Insiders Subvert the Public Interest, author Mark Zupan, Cambridge University Press] looking at whether government by the people actually results in government for the people. While Lincoln's Gettysburg Address essentially implied that it does, government by the people does not automatically imply government for the people. We should in general be cheered by the spread of democracy around the globe over the last two centuries, but we've had plenty of cases, whether it's Putin, Erdogan, or Chavez, where*  
*continued*



most prized gift would be books that I've acquired over the years, a number of which are signed by the authors. Something I still give to both sons for Christmas is either a treasured poem or a saying.

**W:** Can you remember the first time you saw a work of visual art, maybe in a museum...something that was meaningful to you?

**M:** The one that sticks out the most is in college when a good friend and I were working as interns on Capitol Hill. We spent a fair bit of time in the National Gallery and the I.M. Pei East Wing. The space that was created by Pei and then beautiful art inside, especially the Impressionist paintings on display is probably my earliest substantive memory of visual art.

**W:** You know, that building just reminds you that architecture is art.

**M:** There's a parallel to what you've created here at the Museum. So, it's not just objects inside, but it's the space

that's been created to house the artwork and to tell these stories.

**W:** In that sense, you know it's those works of architecture, certainly our Museum, which invite you to look at the work. The building itself invites you, and perhaps you have that experience first just by seeing it on the outside.

**M:** It's a beacon every time I come up Main Street.

**W:** Do you have a favorite work of art? Visual art?

**M:** Probably the Impressionists. I'm a big Van Gogh fan, but also Georges Seurat. Those two still rank up there as favorites.

**W:** I remember in high school when I saw *Starry Night*. I'm thinking about you reading Hemingway. That painting just changed me. I walked away from that and haven't been the same since. Art can transform you. I think it's true certainly of all the arts, you know, music for example...that's why we have the MostArts Festival, which is transforming every time it takes place here at Alfred.

**W:** Do you have a favorite work here at ACAM? Have you had time to walk around and think about that? You can have more than one if you wish.

**M:** In a sense the question is the one about children "do you have a favorite?" Since you asked, however, my favorite part of the Museum is the MFA collection. Seeing the MFA collection makes you that much prouder and honored to be a part of Alfred University, given that the works have been created by our students. In May, I went to my first Senior Show and was just so taken with Alfred University's rich tradition of students that have impacted the world. I feel like a kid in a china shop...there are still a lot of discoveries to be made in my role and I'm looking forward to it.

**W:** You know I have a special feeling for the MFA Collection, of course, because I've been in the midst of that for a number of years. I do think it's a very important part in terms of what the Museum has to offer, because it tracks the evolution of ceramic art in this country as well as internationally. If you were to study the evolution of 20th and 21st century ceramic art, you would be obliged to study that collection.

**W:** We always like to ask this question: Does anything make you want to touch it?

**M:** The Eric Van Eimeren little teapot. What a wonderful piece. It makes me think "Could I have something like this at the house?" It's just such a marvelous combination of creativity and engineering.

**W:** The Eric Van Eimeren [Alfred MFA 1990] is unusual. It makes you think.

Pouring is so succinctly presented to you, but then you have to navigate, well, how would I do that? You're invited to touch it in your mind, right? Which is a different experience than you have with most two-dimensional works. The teapot is something that is understood as a functional thing. You're having an aesthetic experience with it, through this virtual touching. It called to you.

**M:** *It's something still that could be viewed as just every day - to see the inspiration that's provided - to look in a different way. It retains its functionality, but just blossoms in front of you in terms of creativity.*

**W:** Thinking again about Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, there's another way to be transformed by art...a quiet, simple, daily way an object like a teapot can change how you lead your life...the way you pick it up, the way you hold it, the way you move through space with it. Those objects, right in the intimacy of how we navigate our lives, are potentially works of art, which inform and change how we relate to very simple things like getting up in the morning and having a cup of tea.

**M:** *This is precisely what Steve Jobs and his team did at Apple, it wasn't just the functionality, but it was the beauty of their designs that captivated us.*

**W:** Have you ever worked in clay or plan to do that?

**M:** *Never have. Looking forward to throwing my first pot and would welcome an invitation.*

**W:** OK, we could be co-conspirators and work out a way.

**M:** *I look forward to it.*

**W:** We talked a little bit about the Museum building. You mentioned it being a beacon.

**M:** *Every time I drive Main Street coming in, it's like I feel lighter and happier. It's a beacon. To have this gem right in our midst...it does great homage to our history, but more importantly it provides the means to inspire future generations, and thereby helps us focus on building the future. How can we support this gem?*

**W:** I think now you're talking about the vision for the role of the Museum, and how you see the role of the Museum within the University.

**M:** *I see the Museum attracting students, training students, bringing back alums and bringing in visiting scholars. We have an artistic Ellis Island somehow in our midst.*

**W:** That's an interesting way of thinking about it.

**M:** *If you wanted to be at ground zero for ceramic art, this is it.*

**W:** If we could expand on that a bit and talk not just about the University, but also about the community - locally, regionally or beyond...some kind of grand picture of how all those parts might fit together. How they impact each other?

**M:** *The Museum actually helps bring us together. I love the sense of community here, but how do we further nurture it? We have so much to offer in such an intimate setting. Beyond just the University, beyond the other activities, we have a world class Museum right in our midst. We can be immensely grateful, but we also have to decide how to get the word out. I'm intrigued by what you and Caitlin [Caitlin Brown, Programs and Projects Manager for the Museum] have done on Facebook and Instagram because social media provides that invitation to the broader world. We've been given this gift, now how do we pay it forward? It's a very potent asset, creating a place of enchantment for*  
*continued*



*people who want to see the world in a new way and better understand the world and our potential in it. It's a huge opportunity for us. How do we build on this marvelous foundation that you and Marlin [Dr. Marlin Miller, Jr. Alfred University alumnus '54, HD '89] have chiseled?*

**W:** You know we've had a museum, but it's been tucked away. Now we're here. We are here and we're welcoming and really want to have interaction with people. We want to hear how people think about it - the kind of experience they had, or what kind of ideas they have about it. We're still on that learning curve trying to continually gather as much information as we can.

**M:** *I remember just a few months ago when you were still setting up for the opening and my youngest son was able*

*to drop by unannounced. It will forever be part of what is special about the Alfred experience.*

**W:** Right - Walker - that's great. When we're transitioning or doing something and you just need someone to see it, we will welcome them.

**M:** *Keep extending the invitation, Wayne, like you did with these questions. I'm honored to be here, and honored to help with the interview. So, the big encouragement would be how can we continue to assist you with what you're doing? How can we keep nurturing this garden?*

**W:** That certainly opens the door...that sense that we're in this together is really what's inspiring. To know that someone of your background and vision and expertise, and all the things you're trying

to do as Alfred University's President, that you are offering a hand and saying - here's the threshold, let's keep talking and trying to answer the question. That's inspiring to all of us.

**M:** *It's been my pleasure, and honor and the inspiration you provide isn't just in the art dimension, but it inspires the philosophy for all of us at Alfred that "we can reach for the stars" so don't underestimate the power of that ripple that you have created.*

**W:** Thank you, Mark.

*Assistant professor Matt Kelleher with his junior pottery students during a visit to the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum.*



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# Art History Club



On December 1, nearly 40 people enjoyed a discussion of functional ceramics on view at the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum with Division Chair and Professor of Ceramics Linda Sikora and Theodore Randall International Chair in Art and Design Takeshi Yasuda. This an event was sponsored by the Art History Club at Alfred University. Grant Akiyama and Max Mustardo, BS in Art History and Theory candidates, moderated the discussion, which addressed questions such as: How do studio pottery, industrial design, and fine art address notions of function? What is the relationship between function, art, and craft? What are the effects on performance resulting from mechanical and handmade processes? How do design elements in ceramics reflect cultural contexts?

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## Facebook Live

Alfred Ceramic Art Museum dipped its toes into the world of Facebook Live on Monday, November 28th. Over two thousand people joined Director and Chief Curator Wayne Higby from the comfort of their own phones for a live gallery tour of the exhibition Core Sample: Selections from the Permanent Collection.



# Upcoming Exhibitions

This coming fall the Museum will open a spectacular three-part exhibition on October 19 featuring the cutting edge work of Kelsey Chase Folsom. Chase is a formidable, contemporary ceramic sculptor who is increasingly gathering important, national recognition. He holds the highly competitive position of Alfred University's, School of Art and Design, Turner Teaching Fellow in Ceramic Art.

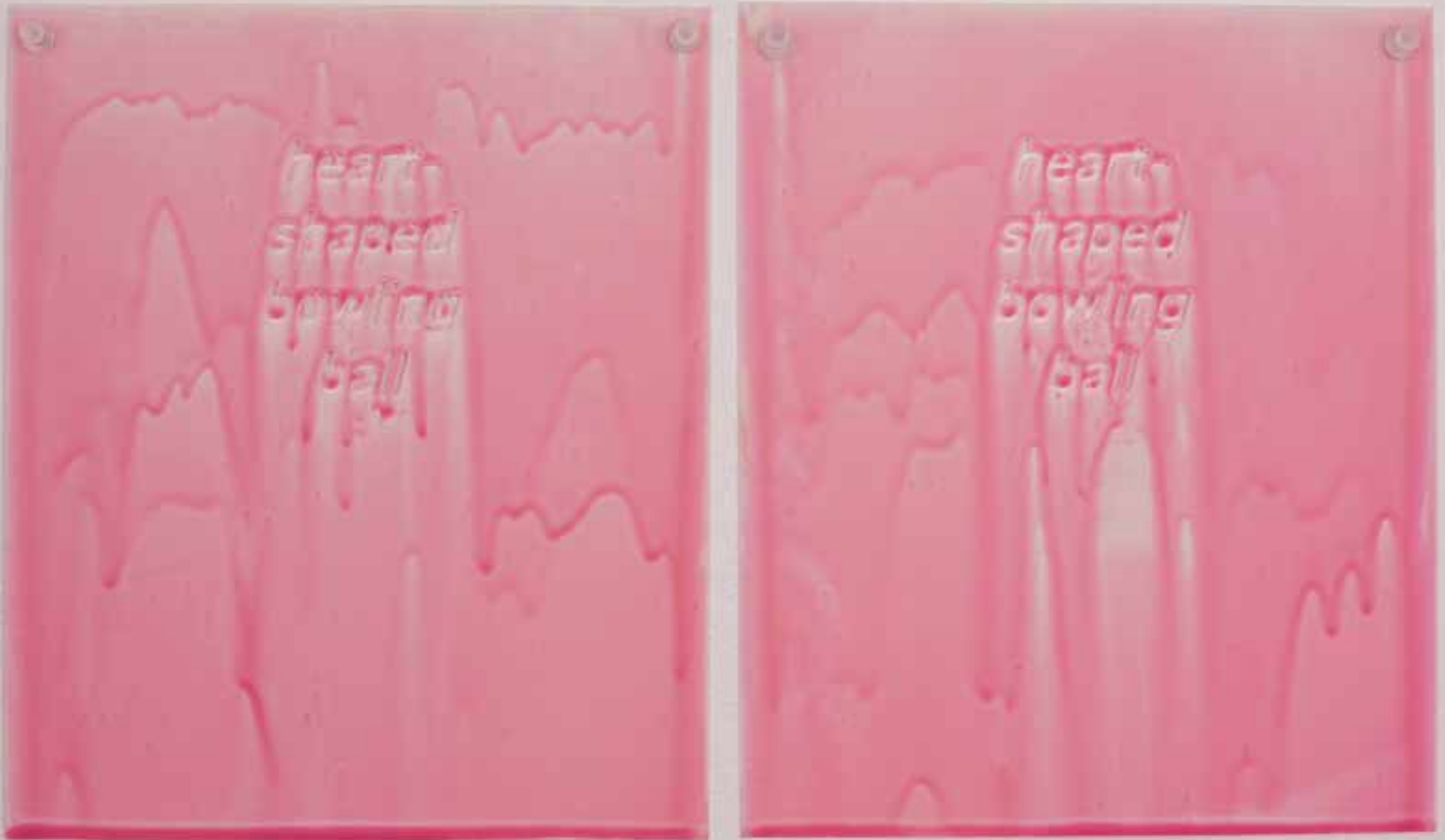
Additionally, the Museum is greatly honored to be able to share in collaboration with the Bennington Art Museum the career retrospective of Stanley Rosen who received his MFA from Alfred in 1957. This exhibition is a revelation and will no doubt serve to elevate Stanley Rosen to the stature of one of the most innovative ceramic artists of the mid-to-late twentieth century.



*Above – Stanley Rosen, sculpture, stoneware, unglazed 13 ¼" x 9 ½" x 10" 1966-68, Collection of Susan Sobel*

*Right – Chinese Folk Pot, Anhui Province PRC, Earthenware, 16" x 11", 20th Century*





*Kelsey Chase Folsom, Heart-Shaped Bowling Ball, porcelain, crystal push pins, Pepto Bismol, 11" x 17" x 1/2", 2016  
Collection of the artist*

A selection of Chinese Folk Pottery curated by the distinguished American ceramic artists Marie Woo, John Stephenson and Susanne Stephenson will also be on view. Marie Woo and John Stephenson received a Rockefeller Foundation, Asian Cultural Council grant to visit folk kilns across China in order to select work representing a

unique voice of Chinese ceramic art at risk of extinction in today's competitive marketplace. This work celebrates the epic journey of life in rural China.

This complex exhibition, opening fall 2017, clearly represents the extraordinary opportunity Alfred University now has to show case the multi-faceted dimensions

of ceramic art. The Museum's new facilities offer the general visitor, the student and the scholar an experience of rare and particular insight into the world of art.



# Acquisitions and Promised Gifts



Above – William Daley, Ovoid Balm, 1987, stoneware, unglazed, 15-1/2" x 26" x 24", gift of William & Catherine Daley and Thomas & Donna Weaverling Daley in honor of Marlin Miller, Jr., 2016.16. From left, William Daley, Mario Prisco, Wayne Higby and Peg Prisco



Left – Val Cushing, Storage Jar, Column Series, 2002, stoneware, glazed, 28" x 12", gift of Charlotte & Raul Herrera in honor of Elsie & Val Cushing, 2016.14. From left, Elsie Cushing, Eric Cushing, and Charlotte and Raul Herrera

Facing page – Chris Gustin, Vessel with Dimple #0510, 2005, stoneware, glazed, 35" x 25" x 24", gift of the artist, 2016.17



*Lee Somers, Scape IV, 2014, roof tiles, stoneware, porcelain, shards, epoxy, 26" x 41" x 5", gift of the artist, 2016.1*

*Chris Gustin, Embodiment Series #12, graphite, charcoal, paper, 22" x 30", framed, gift of the artist, 2016.18*





*Linda Sormin, Much of a Mouthful, 2016, stoneware, glaze, found ceramics including shard by Timothy Berg, 16" x 27" x 22", gift of the artist, 2016.23*





*Peter Voulkos, Platter, 1981, stoneware, wood-fired, 5" x 17" x 14", promised gift of Marlin and Ginger Miller*



*Left – Kang Hyo Lee, Box, 2016, stoneware, glazed, 9-1/2" x 10" x 9-1/2", Visiting Artist Collection, gift of the artist, 2016.13*

*Facing page – Robert Turner, Owerri II, 2000, ceramic, cinder glaze, 18" x 16", promised gift of Marlin and Ginger Miller*



*Walter McConnell, Black Lead Artifact, 2016, ceramic, lead glazed salvaged fragment from Of Fable And Facsimile, 2015 installation American University Art Museum, Washington, DC, 19" x 17" x 14", gift of the artist, 2016.<sup>24</sup>*



*Matt Kelleher, Pitcher, 2015, red clay, soda-fired,  
13-1/2" x 9" x 6", gift of the artist, 2016.19*

# Staff Profiles

## Caitlin Brown Alfred Ceramic Art Museum Operations and Programs Manager

Caitlin Brown received a BFA from the University of Hartford, Hartford Art School in 2000, spent a post-baccalaureate year at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and earned an MFA from the University of Nebraska Lincoln in 2007. Also in 2007, Caitlin was the recipient of the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant. She has been a resident artist at the Mendocino Art Center in Mendocino, CA, Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha, NE and Clay Art Center in Port Chester, NY. Caitlin has taught ceramics, drawing, foundations and professional practices at SUNY Cortland, Penn State, Queens College, Marymount Manhattan College, 92Y, Clay Art Center and at the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. Caitlin was the Program Manager at Clay Art Center in Port Chester, NY from 2012- 2015 where she had the opportunity to create and implement programming in

the Gallery and Shop, adult education and workshops, and oversee the marketing, social media and website.

Caitlin and her husband Cory moved to Alfred in July 2015. Cory entered the MFA program in Ceramic Art at the New York State College of Ceramics, where he expects to complete his degree in May, 2017. Caitlin joined the professional staff at the New York State College of Ceramics as the Director and Chief Curator at the Cohen Center Gallery, adjunct faculty, and as the Museum Assistant and Membership Coordinator at the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum.

In May, 2016, Caitlin was hired full time as the Operations and Programs Manager at Alfred Ceramic Art Museum. As an artist, she spent her first year in Alfred redefining her practice; away from narrative figure sculpture and toward a study of utilitarian objects. Drawing inspiration from her surroundings in the Museum and Alfred itself, she has become less interested in what her work says, and more focused on what it does. In

this way, she uses energy once reserved exclusively for the studio, more fluidly between her time in the Museum, teaching, making pottery, and home renovation.

Caitlin was born and raised in the Finger Lakes Region and is happy to be close to home after spending most of her adult life away. She and Cory fell in love with the Alfred community and its rich history of ceramics and decided to put down roots. In December, they bought a building on South Main Street in Alfred, the old Sun Publishing building (c.1895), where they plan to renovate the space as a home and studio.



## Mahlon Huston Alfred Ceramic Art Museum Chief Perparator and Exhibitions Specialist

Mahlon graduated from the New York State College of Ceramics in 2011 with an MFA in Ceramic Art. Upon completing his degree, he began working with Wayne Higby as his lead technical specialist and collaborative assistant. Mahlon was instrumental in the design, fabrication and installation of Mr. Higby's exhibitions both nationally and internationally from 2011 through 2016. In 2012, Mahlon was appointed to the position of adjunct faculty member in what was at the time the new Digital Fabrication Lab at the NYSCC. For the next three years he taught intro to 3D Design and Rapid Prototyping. In the spring of 2016, Mahlon was hired as the Chief Preparator and Exhibition Specialist for the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum.

Mahlon, a proud mid-westerner, was born and raised in Bryan, Ohio, a small town located in the most Northwestern corner of the state. He received a BFA from the School of Fine Art at Ohio University in 2008 and completed a post baccalaureate through The School of Art at Louisiana State University in 2009. As a student at OU, Mahlon was the recipient of the 2008 Art Regina Brown Undergraduate Fellowship from the National Council for the Education of Ceramic Art. The work created from this fellowship can be seen in Lark's 500 Ceramic Sculptures.

In the years following graduate school, Mahlon has dedicated his time to the research and

making of fine furniture. In 2013, he founded Huston Projects, a wood studio, in Hornell, New York, where he maintains a highly rigorous studio practice as Principal Designer and Chief Workman. Since the founding of Huston Projects, Mahlon has exhibited work nationally and has taken on several commissions, one of which was the design and fabrication of two benches for the lobby of the Miller Performance Arts Complex at Alfred University designed by Kallman, McKinnell and Wood architects, Boston, MA. Mahlon is currently in the final process of designing and producing a new furniture collection for the Philadelphia Furniture Show in April of 2017. His work can be seen at [mahlonhuston.com](http://mahlonhuston.com), and follow Mahlon's Instagram [@hustonprojects](https://www.instagram.com/hustonprojects).

Mahlon states: "I am honored to be a part of the staff at the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum and very grateful to have the opportunity to apply my abilities to this fantastic institution".





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# Rosanjin Lecture at Alfred – 1954

*The following is a formal talk given by the Japanese Potter Kitaoji Rosanjin to the students of the New York State College of Ceramics, April, 1954*

*Translated and interpreted from Japanese by Mrs. Beate Gordon of the Japan Society, Inc., New York*

*Edited for length by Wayne Higby, Director and Chief Curator Alfred Ceramic Art Museum*

*Rosanjin Kitaoji, bottle, 1954, stoneware, wood-fired, ash glazed, Visiting Artist Collection, gift of the artist, 1954.2*

Since my ceramic art is unique, even in Japan (and my work is so different), I can scarcely find adequate expression in teaching younger people, and I wonder if I can make myself understood in this country, where conditions are quite different.

In making pottery, I use very few machines. Pottery is an art of the mind and depends solely on beauty of mind. I always regard the beauty of nature as my teacher. I am learning by it and am trying to produce pottery as fine art in accordance with the principle of art for art's sake. Work done by machines is after all only that, and I think it is said to be almost wanton to try to produce a piece of art by machine. I believe that in pottery, as in all arts, a work is of no value unless it moves the human mind and appeals to the human soul. If you take, for example, paintings or sculpture, you will notice that all famous masterpieces move our minds and urge us to reform our minds.

In the category of pottery, too, if we study the whole world, those classical works made more than 500 or 600 years ago invariably have artistic life. In Japan, too, those works made within the last 300 or 400 years, with the exceptions of the works or a few artists such as Kenzan, Koetsu, Chojiro, Ninsei, and Nokubei, are almost all craftsman's works, among which there is no real work of art. This is also the case in China and Korea, where pottery made in the last 300 years may all, with possibly very rare exceptions, be said to be unable to move our minds or delight our minds, although there may be some pieces of inferior quality which would merely delight our eyes. I presume that this would be the case in Europe and America, too. I think the cause is the difference between the individual who attaches significance to the usefulness of machines and the individual who takes the beauty of the pure mind as his sole inspiration.

As for pottery of daily use which must, of necessity, be of cheap or moderate price, I think there is nothing wrong at all with manufacturing it by machine, so that it may be widely used. It is all right to develop or improve this kind of pottery as such, but once a man wishes to appeal to the eyes of people of cultured artistic tastes, or going a step further, once a man wishes to become an artist determined to dedicate his mind to the creation of really high-class art, he must disregard the advantages of machines.

*continued*

In other words, the fine arts are all activities of the mind, and are not affected by the development or advancement of our knowledge, intelligence, or reason alone. Some of the porcelain ware which is made in Japan now, no matter how exquisite it appears, is low-class pottery for daily use, nothing but kitchen utensils. As it is sold in large quantities, the makers are endeavoring solely to manufacture it in maximum quantity. This is because the maker, with their spirit of commercialism, are mindful only of the economics of production.

I hear that the Japanese Fine Arts Exhibition recently held in the United State won acclaim everywhere, and I think this was inevitable, because excellent things are excellent to everybody's eyes, and it is natural that one thinks a beautiful thing beautiful—unless he has a warped way of thinking or a distorted taste. However, it is possible that he may not appreciate it rightly at first, if he is not used to seeing that sort of thing. This can also be said regarding pottery. If we study with close attention the famous pieces, the mater pieces, pieces with classical artistic value, and continue untiring comparison and study, we may come to appreciate them.

I understand that in America, the fine arts have been developing for only 300 years from the time when the fine arts had already disappeared in Japan. But this means that eyes, minds and ways of thinking of the American people are relatively new. Therefore, I feel the fine arts, including the ceramics art, will develop as rapidly as the buds of trees do in springtime. As far as the history of fine arts is concerned, the United states may be behind Japan, but I believe a

marvelous artistic civilization will develop in the US, and in another 100 years magnificent works, worthy of wonder and admiration, will be produced.

The pieces exhibited at the Japanese Fine Arts Exhibition, were, I hear, subdued in color and, if I put it in our Japanese expression, unsuitable for women and children. That is to say, red, blue, or other brightly colored works which may be readily appreciated by women and children were very few in number, yet the fact that so many people

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appreciated those pieces shows that that was due to the unbiased intuitive spirit of the American people. This is a great delight to us Japanese. In the paintings, too, the Japanese were quite surprised upon hearing that the American people praised and admired the several paintings in black and white, like those of Sesshu. Even in Japan, those who can appreciate black and white pictures are said to be limited to a few outstanding connoisseurs. Nevertheless, the American people immediately admired those pictures. From this fact, I, as a Japanese, was very much delighted to

note that the American people's liking is by no means restricted to “Ukiyoe”. Judging from such appreciation, I feel that the time is not too distant when artistic pottery will be rightly appreciated.

If the work of the mind of a man who detaches himself from our mechanized civilization and combines delicacy with natural force of fire is understood by many people, then the happiness of living in real peace is discovered. However, both those who use pottery as a creative medium and those who appreciate it, are, after all, human beings. Therefore, the first thing a man must do in turning to pottery as an art form is to attain higher education. Unless higher education is first attained, one cannot expect to become a real artist or a real connoisseur. In Japan, too, there are no such real artists, and ceramic art is in a state of stagnation. To make matters worse, the tragedy of war, with its suffering and difficulties, has made people indifferent. People are repeating errors and mistakes in every kind of work. Above all, since those who are engaged in making pottery generally are of a low cultural level, it may be said that real masterpieces which would be praised for generations to come, cannot be expected for some time.

In this respect, I think that much can be expected from the United States which is starting from scratch. Nevertheless, those who wish to become artists must first of all enlarge their aesthetic background and become experts in appreciating beauty. They must keep trying until they become connoisseurs as far as “beauty” is concerned. In this respect, too, Japan is now totally devoid of such people.

We must be able to appreciate thoroughly the ancient arts of all the world, and the modern art of all the world. I wish to emphasize this point particularly because there are so many people "with eyes who do not see".

If a ceramic artist pays attention to pottery only and is not interested in other lines of fine art, he will be reduced to mere artisanship. He must search for beauty, love beauty, comprehend beauty, embrace beauty. If he does otherwise, I think that is the end of his life as an artist. It is his ardent love for art that counts.

What I should like to tell you next is that it is necessary for a potter first to approach pottery through drawing. Then he must make pottery with clay. Thus, we can judge how good a potter he is if we have a look at his paintings of pottery. I firmly believe that any ceramic artist should engage in clay work only after becoming fairly successful in the first principle of "making pottery", namely, painting before handling clay. For this purpose, I think it is necessary to copy-paint a number of the great masterpieces, both old and new. He should be completely absorbed in his work. By pursuing such study and training, his individuality will be developed, and thus, I believe, his art, which is only his, will be created. In this way alone will conviction be obtained. Then, weakness will disappear, and only strength will remain.

Ineffective works of art appear unsatisfactory to everyone. Strong works can only be made through strong life...strong and on a grand scale... this is what we are dreaming of. Things, only the surface of which are covered with beautiful design are now in vogue everywhere and in everything, but I like

to direct myself solely to the beauty of the content, without paying attention to current vogue or fashion. Take as an example a bottle of inferior perfume. We marvel at the beautifully designed bottle and pretty label, but the perfume contained within the bottle disappoints our expectations, ruining the whole. This applies to ceramic art too; if we concentrate on the surface, the result will be fruitless labor.

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*If a ceramic artist pays attention to pottery only and is not interested in other lines of fine art, he will be reduced to mere artisanship.*

Just as it is the content that counts in the case of the perfume, it is the content that is the life of a work of art. Porcelain which is of no value in its content, for example certain popular Japanese china, is not worthy of sincere admiration. I am not reproaching any one group, but the same thing can be said of all Japanese pottery today. Also in China and Korea, it was more than 300 or 400 years ago that really beautiful pieces were produced. I am afraid that there is no new work worthy of admiration being made at present in any other country either.

Things which are made at present can easily be understood by us because they belong to our own age, we can readily laugh at the defects. However, the real masterpieces of many generations ago

are entirely apart from our temporary fashions. Old, historical works of art cannot be appreciated by everybody because of the difference in age, but a thoughtful man should not ignore a so-called classical work of art, which was made by our ancestors as long ago as one or two thousand years. No matter how great the art is, the artist was a human being just as we are. The only difference being that he was born a few generations ago. Since his intention was also different from ours, we cannot be nearly as good as he was. He could make his great work of art only because he was born one, two or possibly three thousand years earlier than we. I think that the life of the ancient artist must have been free from unnatural strain, and he must have been able to see the beauty of Great Nature as clearly as a crystal on his palm. The fact that I feel like this, may be indicative of the failure of present day people to take notice of Great Nature and to be impressed by it. The important thing is to make men, and to imbue them with the desire to work. The making of men is the foundation for excellent works of art.

I am sorry my speech has proved to be a long and boring one. I am particularly afraid that what I have said at some length toward the end on my personal ideas must have been quite unpleasant for you. Please allow me, if I am not too presumptuous, to hope and pray that more connoisseurs, superior to all predecessors, will come out of this school to open a new road to the happiness of mankind. Thank you.

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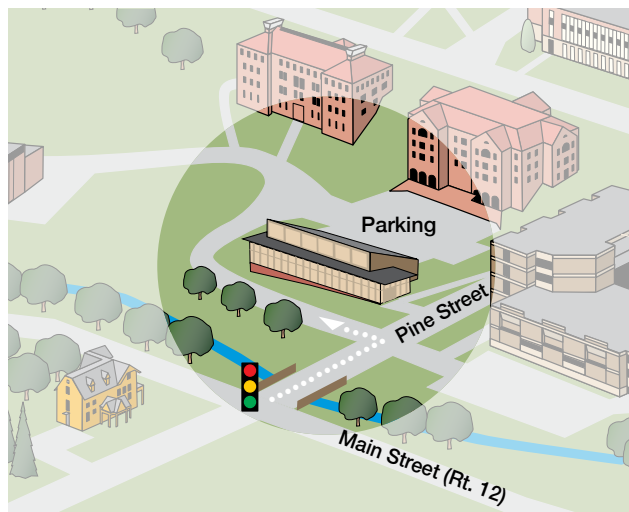
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From Interstate 86, Exit 33 in Almond, follow signs to Alfred University.  
From Main Street in Alfred, turn left onto Pine Street at the traffic light,  
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turn left immediately. The Museum will be on the right, and parking is  
behind the Museum.

#### Hours

Tuesday	10am – 5pm
Wednesday	10am – 5pm
Thursday	10am – 7pm
Friday	10am – 5pm
Saturday	10am – 4pm
Sunday	10am – 4pm

Closed Mondays and major holidays.

Please call for exhibition information and closing announcement.

#### Admission

\$7 Adults (18-54)  
\$5 55+  
\$3 Local Residents, non-Alfred students with ID, alumni,  
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FREE 17 & Under, AU and A-State faculty, staff and students (with ID)

Admission is FREE for Museum members, ESMRP and NARM  
members year-round

Admission is also free from 5-7 pm Thursdays

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