Dear Ringling Members,

I am so pleased that hurricane season has finally passed and that we can stop studying NOAA charts and hurricane apps for potential disturbances in the Atlantic or Gulf. This year was a first for me, with two hurricanes threatening The Ringling along with most of the state, causing us to move to generator power and to close for 8 days in total. Both storms came close to us. Fortunately, we had little damage to our buildings but some significant damage to our landscape. Our thoughts go out to the thousands of people, including many of our staff and volunteers, who were seriously impacted by Hurricanes Ian and Nicole.

Looking ahead over the next three months, we have exhibitions open or opening soon, including an exhibition in the Monda Gallery of Contemporary Art by the artist June Clark. Titled June Clark: Harlem Quilt, this exhibition is curated by Ola Wlusek, Keith D. and Linda L. Monda Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. Along with recent paintings and works on paper by Clark, the exhibition features Harlem Quilt (1997), an immersive installation of hundreds of images that have been photo-transferred onto pieces of fabric sourced from a local Goodwill store in the Harlem area, and illuminated by lights. An homage to the people, buildings, streets, and spirit of Harlem, June Clark: Harlem Quilt will be the first presentation of this work at a US museum since its first showing at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 1997.

Ola Wlusek also curated a major group exhibition of work by twelve contemporary Native American artists of the Seminole diaspora and with ancestral, historical, and present-day connections to Florida. Reclaiming Home: Contemporary Seminole Art, will mark the first exhibition of Native American art at The Ringling, and it will be accompanied by a catalog by Scala Arts Publishers. Last year, the museum added a first work by a Seminole artist to the collection, with the acquisition of Jessica Osceola’s ceramic self-portraits Portrait One, Portrait Two, and Portrait Three (2017). We are excited to celebrate this long overdue and significant exhibition of art by Native artists from Florida and beyond.

Don’t forget to check out what is happening at the Historic Asolo Theater (HAT)! There will be 6 different artists or groups performing in the HAT this January through April. Featuring artists from Miami to South Korea, you can always find a dynamic and fascinating performance in the HAT.

Thank you for your support as members of The Ringling. We value your interest, enthusiasm, and generosity. I look forward to seeing you soon at The Ringling.
PRESERVATION OF MORE THAN A FAÇADE

By Barbara A. Ramsay
Chief Conservator

Upon arrival at The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, visitors from around the world are greeted by the majestic main entrance on the east façade (fig. 1). Inspired by Italian Renaissance architecture, the museum’s façade signals the grand scale of the galleries and courtyard that lie beyond it. This magnificent building was designed by renowned architect John H. Phillips and construction was completed in 1929. The Museum of Art opened in October 1931 with limited access until John Ringling’s death in 1936, when he bequeathed his estate to the people of Florida.

The façade at the main entrance to the Museum of Art presents an expanse of pink stucco with an arch at each end (previously niches) bordered by cast stone. The central section, in cast stone, contains three arched doorways of equal height embellished by marble caryatids and half-caryatids as well as iron lanterns. Along the upper section are the cast stone balustrade and elaborate cornice that span the length of the east façade, as well as the easternmost sections of the north and south façades. The cornice consists of three courses: a crown molding at the top, a modillion course (with corbel brackets) in the middle, and a dentil course at the bottom (fig. 2). At the very top, the parapet level is adorned by six stone sculptures.

As stewards of the State Art Museum of Florida, The Ringling is responsible for not only the care and conservation of the collections objects but also preservation of its historic architecture. Over time, the most obvious deterioration suffered by the cast stone decoration on the Museum of Art was erosion caused by acid rain and previous harsh pressure washing techniques. The tenacious black moss that covers the eroded stone has infiltrated the structure with its prying “roots,” encouraging more growth, drawing more water into the structure, and breaking up the stone. Rebar used to attach corbels—thereby renewing the cycle of deterioration. During the initial assessment, many unstable corbels or fragments were removed from the cornice to prevent their falling, until resources could be secured for more comprehensive treatment.

In 2019, EverGreene completed the first phase of major treatment involving the north and south façades at the northeast and southeast corners of the Museum of Art. The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted planned treatment of the east façade in early 2020, so another emergency intervention was necessary in September 2020 to remove more insecure corbel fragments. EverGreene, working as a subcontractor to Willis Smith Construction, finally was able to carry out the second phase of the major treatment on the east façade from May through September of 2022 (figs. 3 and 4). An immense scaffolding covered the height of the east façade and spanned one half of the building at a time (fig. 5). The north and south façades were treated using an articulating boom lift.

Because the Museum of Art is an historically significant building, it was necessary to bring in architectural preservation experts to assess the condition of the cast stone elements. Conservators from Conservation Solutions, Inc., now a division of EverGreene Architectural Arts, working with Standard Restoration & Waterproofing, were contracted in 2017 to examine the cast stone balustrade and cornice on the Museum of Art. Their comprehensive assessment identified the original materials and construction techniques employed, as well as previous restoration methods. They revealed that a failed waterproofing membrane on the crown molding had created an ideal environment for biological growth to become established on the stone. Old caulking materials from various interventions had failed, leaving stone elements unsecured and allowing more water to penetrate—also corroding iron reinforcements inside corbels—thereby renewing the cycle of deterioration. During the initial assessment, many unstable corbels or fragments were removed from the cornice to prevent their falling, until resources could be secured for more comprehensive treatment.

Conservation of the cast stone elements was a painstaking and time-intensive process. By carefully cleaning the stone—removing the large amounts of entrenched black moss, algae, and woody plants, plus applying an architectural biocide solution—conservators not only transformed the appearance of the Museum of Art but also helped to mitigate deterioration by both biological agents and water. To help maintain the structural integrity of the building, failed caulking and waterproofing materials were removed and consolidation or stabilization of the disaggregated stone was carried out on the balustrade and cornice. This was followed by repositioning of the mortar joints, patching of areas of loss of stone, and replacement of the failed waterproofing system. Numerous missing or severely damaged cast stone corbels were replicated and installed using an anchoring system less prone to corrosion. In addition, during the major treatment of the east façade, maintenance treatment of the north and south façades was carried out, involving general cleaning, moss removal, and waterproofing.

The structural and waterproofing conservation work described above will prolong the stability of the cast stone decoration on the Museum of Art for many years. An annual condition survey will be implemented to verify the condition of untreated and presently intact corbels. Also, periodic maintenance treatment will be required to help prevent—and remove wherever necessary—new biological growth that thrives in our tropical climate. The Ringling Conservators will continue working with the Facilities department and the Curator responsible to monitor the condition of this impressive example of historic architecture. It is our intention to continue to take appropriate action to ensure the preservation of the Museum of Art as an important part of the legacy of John Ringling.
REMEMBERING WARREN AND MARGOT COVILLE
Curators Marissa Hershon and Christopher Jones share their memories of Warren and Margot Coville.

By Marissa Hershon
Curator of Ca’ d’Zan and Decorative Arts

The philanthropic legacy of Warren and Margot Coville is visible in The Kotler-Coville Glass Pavilion, which opened to the public in 2018, thanks to funding from the Covilles and Philip and Nancy Kotler. This 2-story gallery welcomes visitors daily for free to enjoy The Museum’s studio glass collection. Since 2015, the Covilles have generously donated works of glass art, establishing The Ringling’s holdings of 20th and 21st-century glass, and Warren Coville’s bequest will expand the artistic visions and glassmaking techniques represented in the museum’s holdings, including important figures like Toots Zynsky, Therian Statom, and Gianni Tosò.

After I joined The Ringling in 2019, Warren and Margot Coville warmly welcomed me into their home and shared memories about building a glass collection together over their 72-year marriage. In the late 1970s, Margot first became interested in glass when she saw a work by Mark Peiser in a gallery window while visiting Florida. Eventually, they acquired a number of works by this pioneer in the American Studio Glass Movement.

With Warren’s primary interest in photography and Margot’s focus on glass, they bought artworks as gifts to each other for birthdays and anniversaries. They began going to glass shows at Michigan galleries as well as art fairs in the early 1980s. At a Chicago art fair in 2002, Margot and Warren split up to cover the huge expanse of booths and then met up at lunchtime. Both said they had something to show the other, and it turned out they were thinking of the exact same piece! They acquired Masai by Lino Tagliapietra, who is considered one of the greatest Italian maestros, and donated this work to The Ringling in 2020, where it is a high point of the glass collection (fig. 1).

The Covilles didn’t just collect glass; they became supporters of artists throughout their careers, visiting their studios and becoming close friends. They first bought a work by Sally Rogers when she was a B.F.A. student at the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit, and they later commissioned a large-scale outdoor sculpture from her mid-career. Likewise, they acquired a number of amulet baskets by Laura Donefer, and became good friends, spending time together over the years. Yellow Amulet Basket (fig. 2) was one of the last pieces they bought, and it was one of Warren’s favorite works in glass.

In addition to amazing works of art, Warren Coville’s bequest includes $500,000 to establish the Warren and Margot Coville Art Acquisition Fund for photography and glass. Furthermore, in the Searing Wing of the Museum of Art, Gallery G will be named the Warren and Margot Coville Gallery, as a testament to their generosity and philanthropic legacy.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT:
FIG. 1 Lino Tagliapietra (Italian, born 1934), Masai, 2002. Glass, 84 × 104 × 24 in. Gift of Warren and Margot Coville. 2020.3.3
FIG. 3 Clarence H. White and Alfred Stieglitz, Torso (Miss Thompson), 1907. Platinum print, Gift of Warren J. and Margot Coville, 2022. TR2022.24.63
By Christopher Jones
Stanton B. and Nancy W. Kaplan Curator of Photography and Media Arts

Warren J. and Margot Coville’s gift of their photography collection to The Ringling was an unprecedented donation. Not since John Ringling’s original bequest founding the art museum had so many works of art been donated by a collector at once. The initial gift in 2012 was over 1,000 objects, even more came later, and although the museum had several notable works of photography in its holdings, the Coville gift was groundbreaking in that it established photography as a substantial new area of collecting. The Coville gift of photography has also inspired other collectors to take notice and over the decade, the collection has grown significantly into a new curatorial purview.

My personal connection with The Ringling began because of the Coville’s gift. In 2012, I started at the museum as a curatorial fellow, tasked with researching the new collection and developing a program of photography exhibitions. It was incredibly exciting for me to work firsthand with such an impressive collection and quickly I came to treasure the visits with Warren and Margot and the conversations that would ensue. I was amazed to learn how inexorably intwined passion for collecting photography was with Warren’s life, from his work as a studio assistant in his teens and later service as an Army Air Forces photographer flying B-17 bombers over Europe, to his establishment of a highly successful national photo-finishing business after the war. To my surprise, it wasn’t until 1975, when Margot bought Warren a 1954 photograph of the Spanish cellist Pablo Casals by Yousef Karsh (Armenian-Canadian, 1908–2002) (fig. 4) for his birthday that the two discovered a passion for collecting photography.

The Covilles began collecting right as the photography market took off in the mid-1970s, a time when photography had finally achieved mainstream acceptance by art museum curators and over the decade, the collection has grown significantly into a new curatorial purview.

The Covilles also were among the first to appreciate the importance of press photography and photojournalism, creating another significant collection of work that spans the twentieth century and includes iconic images such as the crash of the Hindenburg in 1937, Alfred Eisenstaedt’s (1899-1995) now classic scene of the sailor and nurse on V-J Day in Times Square, to the photographs capturing the horrors of the terrorist attacks on 9/11. This unique collection, part of the 2012 donation to The Ringling, speaks to the importance of photography in giving visual expression to our shared history.

As much as the excitement of searching, bidding, and acquiring was to the Covilles, I learned that the connections and friendships they made while collecting were just as important to the couple. Warren told me of tracking down the esteemed Life magazine photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt, and how excited he was to sit down for coffee and conversation with “Eisie,” one of his heroes. Warren and Margot also cherished the time they spent with Walter (1919-2006) and Naomi Rosenblum (1926-2021) whenever they were in New York, often staying with them when in town for auctions. Walter was a storied photo documentarian and teacher, and Naomi was a pioneering photo historian who wrote A History of Women Photographers (1994).

I can only imagine the stories that the Rosenblums and Covilles must have exchanged during those visits—I would give anything to have been a fly on the wall then—but what Margot told me she remembered most was how much she looked forward to Naomi’s home cooking. Everyone who had the good fortune to meet Warren and Margot Coville will miss them deeply, but I am grateful that their passion for photography and love for philanthropy will live on in the collection that they have left for our community and visitors to enjoy for generations to come.

By Elizabeth Doud
Currie-Kohlmann Curator of Performance

“Are you over 65 and still thinking about sex? We want to talk (just talk) to you!”

This is the way the artists of Mammalian Diving Reflex (MDR) open a conversation about their touring work All the Sex I’ve Ever Had, which will be presented at the HAT April 20–23. The company named themselves after a reflex found in mammals, which increases the chances of survival when they’re plunged into a cold water environment. They say this is a metaphor for surviving difficult times, not through a comprehensive national plan, but by getting the mind out of the way and letting the body do its job. They also refer to what they do as “social acupuncture” and base their work on two central assumptions about the world: people are generous and there is abundance. The company has become the standard bearer of what is known as socially engaged performance.

Social engagement in the art world refers to a methodology that artists employ which involves community in the creation, performance or presentation of a work. It relies on contributions of community members—mostly non-artists—to achieve the final product and must be flexible and responsive to what each place and person brings to the process. MDR orchestrates the creation of the performances using conceptual structures, which indeed need generosity of the contributors, and an abundance of trust and adventurousness from producers such as The Ringling to be successful.

The Toronto-based theatre company was researching aging and sexuality when they built the socially engaged container of the wildly successful work All the Sex I’ve Ever Had. The work is created anew in each city where it is performed and counts on the participation of six local elders 65 years or older who share stories about the evolution of love and sexuality from the perspective of life’s later years.

The end result is a performance of the script they co-create with the artists, which incorporates their tales of romance and sexuality, resulting in a stirring, hilarious, and moving work that challenges what we think we know about the lives of our elders. The Ringling will host MDR for a month in residence while they craft a unique script with elders from the Manatee-Sarasota area... and we are actively recruiting participants!

Want to get involved? Email elizabeth.doud@ringling.org for more information.

**SOCIALLY ENGAGED PERFORMANCE**
EXHIBITION

By Ola Wlusek
Keith D. and Linda L. Monda
Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

In March, The Ringling will open a very special group exhibition titled *Reclaiming Home: Contemporary Seminole Art* in the Ulla R. and Arthur F. Searing Gallery Wing. This exciting and timely exhibition will mark The Ringling's first presentation of contemporary art by Native American artists with present-day connections and historical ties to Florida. An imperative step toward establishing a meaningful relationship with the Native American artistic community, *Reclaiming Home* will highlight the breadth and depth of the fantastic artwork by some of the most outstanding Seminole, Miccosukee, and mixed-heritage artists from Florida, including Noah Billie, Wilson Bowers, Houston R. Cypress, Alyssa Osceola, Jessica Osceola, Brian Zepeda, Corinne Zepeda, and Pedro Zepeda. Presented with the important work by the internationally-recognized artists of Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole descent from Oklahoma and beyond—Elisa Harkins, C. Maxx Stevens, Tony Tiger, and Hulleah J. Tahnehjahnie—the exhibition will expand the conceptual framework of Native American art made in Florida today and provide a fuller understanding of the complexities of issues within the art of the Seminole diaspora.

As part of The Ringling's ongoing commitment to acquire work by artists with a connection to Florida, the museum will unveil Jessica Osceola’s *Portrait One, Portrait Two, and Portrait Three* (2017) as the first work by a Seminole artist to be added to The Ringling's collection of modern and contemporary art. The support of the Daniel J. Denton Florida Art Acquisition Fund allowed the museum to pursue this extremely impactful and meaningful acquisition, which significantly enriches the context of The Ringling’s collections and helps to fill a gap in the representation of Native voices within the museum’s holdings and exhibitions.

In addition to Jessica Osceola’s work in clay, the members of the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes of Florida are represented by visual artists who work, or have worked, in textiles, woodworking, beadwork, and painting, as well as explore multidisciplinary approaches to their material practice—including installation art, digital art, and film—to offer a reflection on their present-day experiences. Their works offer an intimate look into the artists’ lived experiences and further a dialogue on Native visual sovereignty, ancestry and representation, urbanization and environmental issues, and interfaith and traditional ways of knowing in Florida’s Native communities.

As Seminoles were one of the five Southeastern nations—along with the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Muscogee (Creek)—who were forcibly relocated in the nineteenth century to present-day Oklahoma and other southern states as a result of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the exhibition includes work by Seminole and Muscogee (Creek) artists based in Oklahoma and beyond in order to acknowledge this significant historical connection. Drawing from photo-based and digital collage techniques, performance, video, installation art, and mixed media, artists from the Seminole diaspora explore image-making, Muskogean languages, and offer diverse perspectives on issues of memory, relocation, identity, ancestry, health, and representation within their Native communities.

Reclaiming Home will result in the first collaboration between Florida’s Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum of Seminole culture and history, located on the Big Cypress Indian Reservation, as several important loans from the museum will be featured in the exhibition. The support of additional
prestigious lending institutions, including the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico; and the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art in Indianapolis, Indiana, allowed us to include work by some of the most renowned Native American artists working in the twenty-first century.

Once again, The Ringling was able to partner with the team at Scala Arts Publishers, who have delivered an exhibition catalog with insightful essays by Durante Blais-Billie and Dr. Stacy E. Pratt, both of whom offer critical approaches on the role of museums and the representation of Native voices from Florida and Oklahoma within the contemporary art lexicon.

The poignant essay by exhibition artist Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie, as well as an interview with artists Jessica Osceola and Tony Tiger, help to center Indigenous sovereignty and Native self-determination at the heart of this project.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT:
- Corrine Depada (Seminole/Mexican, b. 1967), For Your Tribute, 2020. Seed beaded leather with pin attachment. 3 x 1 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Tiger, help to center Indigenous sovereignty and Native self-determination at the heart of this project.

Exhibition catalog will be available for purchase beginning in March. $45.00
New College intern Kyla Baal and Chief Archivist Heidi Connor have uncovered a set of 100-year-old over-sized documents belonging to John N. Ringling, 1866-1936. Materials include blueprints, surveys, illustrations, maps, plats, and drawings dealing with the development and infrastructure projects Ringling undertook in his planning for properties he held in the Sarasota area and surrounds. These documents are evidence of Ringling’s vision for Sarasota County where he amassed extensive real estate holdings.

One document stands out with no direct reference to a Ringling real estate project, but it does link him to a critical moment in global engineering history and development. It is a 1934 retracing from a blueprint for a Bilby Tower which is a structure designed and created by Jasper S. Bilby in 1927 that was used for conducting geodetic surveys. A geodetic survey determines the precise position of permanent points on the earth’s surface, noting the shape, size, and curvature of the surface of the earth. Geodetic surveys are used to map shorelines, determine land boundaries, and improve navigation and transportation safety.

Jasper S. Bilby was a Chief Signalman for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, the federal agency that defines and manages a national coordinate system. Bilby recognized first-hand the problems with the technology surveyors were using. In response, he created a galvanized steel survey tower that was portable, reusable, and enduring. It was composed of two towers, with the smaller inside the larger. The inner tower was the surveying medium, and the outer tower shielded the inner from movement interference and was a place for the recorders and operators of the tower to stand. His tower was designed to elevate the line of measurement above the tree line to avoid obstruction and it exponentiated the amount and the dimensionality of measured angles, which improved the accuracy of the captured coordinates. It was widely used by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey (C&GS), U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, the U.S. Air Force, the U. S. Geological Survey, the Inter-American Geodetic Survey (in Central and South America), the Geodetic Survey of Canada, and the Ordnance of the United Kingdom. The surveys done on a Bilby Tower by the C&GS became the backbone of the National Spatial Reference System—a consistent coordinate system still used today that defines latitude, longitudes, height, scale, gravity, and orientation throughout the United States.

Several Bilby Towers were erected in Florida in the 1920s and 30s, the nearest to Sarasota was in Naples, Florida. Why would Ringling possess a drawing of a Bilby Tower? In 1934 when the drawing was retraced, what land holdings and shorelines would Ringling need to have surveyed and why? Investigating the various engineers and architects that Ringling worked with reveals a possible clue. A connection to this document takes us to Chas. S. Wadsworth, the engineer behind Ringling’s Harbor proposal at New Pass. The document, Harbor Section of Sarasota, FL of 1927 largely features intricate topographical line plots, demonstrating Wadsworth’s knowledge of geodetic survey technologies. Many of the documents in this collection that Wadsworth produced for Ringling point towards Wadsworth’s frequent use of survey technologies, such as the blueprint Map of Sarasota County completed in 1926 and the Original Plat of Ringling Property in Sugar Bowl District, Sarasota in 1931 which is the area in Sarasota County where Ringling constructed an oil rig. Is it possible that a copy of this civil engineering document was produced for a civil engineer Ringling worked with? Archives will continue to investigate Ringling’s association with this document to determine why this cultural record is in his collection.

The Ringling’s collection of documentation offers a visual historical explanation for many of his real estate projects. To broaden understanding of John Ringling beyond the museum’s campus and support the legacy he has given the museum and our community, this documentation is now accessible in the Archives.
**MEMBER EXHIBITION PREVIEWS**

**RECLAIMING HOME: CONTEMPORARY SEMINOLE ART**

This event is by invitation only.

**WED, MAR 15, 5:30–9:00 PM**

Join Steven High, Executive Director, and Ola Wlusek, Keith D. and Linda L. Monda Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, for a preview and dinner before this exhibition opens to the public.

**GENERAL MEMBER EXHIBITION PREVIEW**

**FRI, MAR 17, 5:30–7:30 PM**

All members are invited to join us for hors d’oeuvres and a self-guided walk through of the exhibition before it opens to the public. The event is free for members to attend, but RSVP is required. Details to be announced.

**ADDITIONAL MEMBER EVENTS**

**ACOUSTIC SUNSETS FOR MEMBERS**

**WEDNESDAYS, $15**

Members at any level may register to attend this event featuring an evening with a live solo musician on Ca’ d’Zan Terrace while the sun sets on Sarasota Bay.

**JAN 18, 5:30 PM**

**FEB 15, 5:30 PM**

**MAR 15, 6:00 PM**

**APR 12, 6:00 PM**

Refreshments will be available for purchase on the Terrace, and the Ringling Grillroom is offering other options for pre-order.

**ARTFUL PHILANTHROPY**

**WED, JAN 25, 10:30 AM**

Chao Lecture Hall

Estate and Gift Planning Essentials for Artful Philanthropy

Presented by Betsy Pennewell, General Counsel for the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and Fletcher Rush, Board Certified Willis, Trusts, and Estates Attorney at Williams Parker. Generosity comes in many forms, and it’s often the best way for you to support important causes that matter most in your life. Learn more about how to plan for your legacy with creative gift planning essentials.

**THU, FEB 23, 10:30 AM**

Chao Lecture Hall

Charitable Giving & Market Volatility: How Can You Best Plan for the Future?

Presented by Paul Allen, CFP®, MS founder and president of Wealth Strategies Partners. Even with the best financial planning and forecasting, no one could have predicted the economic ups and downs of the past few years. As the economy comes back from the pandemic, investors and donors are faced with rising costs associated with inflation, a looming threat of recession, and a stock market downturn. In this entertaining and engaging presentation, you will learn about why inflation is so high and when it may normalize.

**CENTER RING + CIRCLE MEMBER EVENT**

This event is by invitation only.

**COFFEE & CONVERSATION WITH THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**TUE, APR 18, 9:30 AM**

The Ringling Grillroom

Supporting, Partner, and Circle members are invited to join Executive Director, Steven High, for an update on current projects and progress this year. Coffee and pastries will be provided.

**CIRCLE MEMBER EVENTS**

These events are by invitation only.

**CIRCLE DONOR SPOTLIGHT**

**WED, FEB 15, 5:30-7:30 PM**

Chao Lecture Hall

Join us for a panel discussion with Circle Chairman members Roy and Robin Grossman about their funding of the Outreach & Education Program to engage teaching artists in our community, and what inspired them. The discussion will include Katie Nickel, Head of Educational Programs, and the teaching artists.

**CIRCLE BEHIND THE SCENES BREAKFAST**

**WED, APR 5, 9:30-11:00 AM**

Conservation Laboratory

Join us for breakfast followed by a visit to the Conservation Laboratory for a discussion with Chief Conservator Barbara A. Ramsay and Conservator of Sculpture & Decorative Arts Emily Brown about how we analyze, preserve, and carry out intricate conservation treatments on paintings, sculpture, and decorative art objects, as well as historic architecture at The Ringling.

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* Please note that event details are subject to change. Visit ringling.org for the most up to date event information.

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A CLOSER LOOK

JUANA ROMANI
FEMME AU FOND ROUGE
(WOMAN ON A RED BACKGROUND)

By Sarah Cartwright, PhD
Ulla R. Searing Curator of Collections

Visitors to A Decade of Collecting will have noticed a stunning new addition to The Ringling’s collection of European paintings: Juana Romani’s Femme au fond rouge (Woman on a Red Background). Romani (1867–1924; born in Italy, active in France) began working as an artist’s model in her teens but soon began to study painting, first under Jean-Jacques Henner (1829–1905) and then with Ferdinand Roybet (1840–1920). Her talent was immediately recognized, and by the end of the 1890s, Romani had become quite famous, earning praise from critics for her technical skill and distinctive style. Unfortunately, by 1904, at the height of her fame, Romani’s mental health began deteriorating, and she spent the last part of her life in and out of asylums.

Romani was quickly forgotten, but in recent years has been rediscovered by art historians and collectors. Important exhibitions in her hometown of Velletri, Italy (2017–2018) and at the Musée Roybet Fould in Courbevoie, France (2021) have helped drive interest in her work. While several French and Italian museums possess Romani’s work, we are aware of only one other painting by her in a US museum, at Syracuse University.

Femme au fond rouge is typical of Romani’s mature work: a depiction of a woman dressed in luxurious textiles, gazing directly out at the viewer, set against a richly colored background. It is executed in her preferred medium of oil on wood, with characteristic passages of virtuosic brushwork and a bold signature at upper left. Though John Ringling did not own a work by Romani, he purchased two by her teacher Roybet, one of which—the small Study in White—is in fact a portrait of Romani, information that had been lost since before John purchased it and was recognized by the organizers of the exhibition in Velletri. That painting, which was displayed in the Museum of Art during John’s lifetime and was most recently on view in his office in Ca’ d’Zan, will be part of a special installation in the Museum of Art later this year featuring our new acquisition together with related works from The Ringling’s permanent collection.
MEMBER SALE
MAR 25 & 26
MEMBERS SAVE 20%*
*excludes clearance

The Ringling
MUSEUM STORE
MEMBERS SAVE 10%*
*excludes already discounted items

Open Daily
10:00 AM - 5:30 PM
Thursdays until 8:00 PM
Located in the McKay Visitors Pavilion