Dear Friends,

I must admit that this is not the letter that I had hoped to include in this issue of The Ringling Magazine. The world has changed in the blink of an eye and we hope that you and your families are safe and well.

Even as much of what we know is disrupted, I am hopeful as I look out my window onto the beautiful campus that is the legacy of John and Mable Ringling. Nevertheless, it is quiet here these days, and your presence is missed, a reminder of both these challenging times and how critical you are to the life of the Museum.

From its earliest days, The Ringling has known challenges and we have overcome them—together. We know it won’t be long before visitors will again fill our incredible galleries and green spaces, the laughter of our ROAR! children will echo in the library, brides and grooms will say “I do” at our magnificent Ca’ d’Zan and our curators will lead enlightening gallery talks. Even now, the work of the Museum continues, less visible perhaps, but true to the indomitable spirit that is the legacy of the Ringlings and is manifested daily by our dedicated staff.

Until we are together again, I invite you to explore all of the offerings that have been created to engage, educate, and delight you. The Museum from Home page on the website features virtual tours, eMuseum, and a myriad of activities—for both kids and adults—that can be enjoyed from the convenience of your home. Please keep engaged with our social media channels, including Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn. We would love to hear from you.

The distance between us is necessary but merely physical, for I know that The Ringling is always in your hearts and I thank you so much for your continued support.

Steven High
Executive Director
WELCOME to our first digital edition. Throughout the magazine, you will find clickable content that allows you to explore beyond the surface of the page. Enjoy!

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CONTACT US
info@ringling.org

Click the image to see an installation video of the wagon wheel wall in the newly renovated Historic Circus Galleries!

The Ringling’s 2019-2020 programming season is supported, in part, by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues.
POSTCARDS FROM THE PAST:  
Selections from The Ringling Archives

The early twentieth century witnessed a postcard craze with a wide variety of picture postcards becoming available. This popular trend continued with linen postcards, named for the textured paper resembling fabric, which became widespread from the 1930s to the 1950s. Drawing from the collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Archives and the Tibbals Circus Collection, a selection of postcards featuring Ca’ d’Zan, the Museum of Art, and Sarasota will be shown at Ca’ d’Zan in two six-week rotations over the summer.

Many of the popular Florida tourist attractions were printed in vivid colors by the leading American postcard producer Curt Teich & Co. using a patented C.T. Art Colortone linen process. Looking closely at each postcard, one can see how the image’s mood was intensified by retouching artists responsible for colorizing, sharpening details, and heightening contrasts of black-and-white source photos at Teich’s art department in Chicago. These images were reproduced in the thousands through lithography. Interestingly, this symbiotic relationship between photography and printing that had begun in the nineteenth century continued into the twentieth century with the proliferation of picture postcards. Such cards were commissioned by wholesale distributors and often offered as a full package of local views.

Photos, left to right:
Looking at the beautifully detailed postcards, one gains an appreciation for the creativity and technology that went into their creation. The postcard image of the gatehouse and driveway entrance to the Ringling estate set amidst lush tropical greenery and a light blue sky with wispy clouds invokes an optimistic sense of paradise found in Florida. The aerial view of Ca’ d’Zan highlights the mansion’s waterfront façade, with the brightness of the red tile roof exaggerated against the surrounding green landscape. Another postcard showing the interior of the Court shows how the arrangement of furnishings had already been altered to accommodate a stream of visitors, as Ca’ d’Zan had become a tourist attraction by the 1940s. The delicacy of the artist’s rendering of the reflections of blooms and Italianate architecture in the museum’s courtyard pool with black swans at its edge imparts a romantic quality. It shows considerable artistry went into crafting an aesthetic impact. Deciphering the handwritten messages and postage dates on the back are part of the charm. See these cards, and a variety of views in the foyer of Ca’ d’Zan and imagine you are one of the tourists visiting Sarasota at mid-century.

Marissa Hershon, Curator of Ca’ d’Zan and Decorative Arts, is collecting oral histories related to reconstructing the family, social, and business networks of John and Mable Ringling in order to better understand how they spent their time during their residency at Ca’ d’Zan. If you have anecdotes, connections, or ephemera (such as period correspondence or photographs) related to this topic that you are interested in sharing, please email marissa.hershon@ringling.org.

Click here to follow Marissa Hershon on Instagram to see developments in preservation projects, curatorial research, and what’s going on behind-the-scenes at Ca’ d’Zan.
Artist Perspective

HOWIE TSUI

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

The Ringling is proud to present Vancouver-based artist Howie Tsui’s recent project, *Retainers of Anarchy* (2017), in the Monda Gallery for Contemporary Art. This exhibition, which will be extended due to the Museum’s closure, marks the first US solo presentation of this epic work by Tsui. Ola Wlusek dialogues with the artist about his ambitious multimedia project:

OLA WLUSEK Retainers of Anarchy is your first major animation. What inspired your transition from predominantly working in drawing and sculpture to exploring animation and sound, specifically on such a large scale?

HOWIE TSUI In 2010, I started playing with the idea of moving images when I developed a performance using magic lantern projectors called Celestials of Saltwater City. I was intrigued by the result and wanted to explore further, but needed to wrap my head around how I can incorporate animation into future projects. The scale of Retainers of Anarchy, despite the technical challenges of edge-blending five projectors, was necessary in order to echo the River of Wisdom—the animated scroll presented during the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, that I wanted to respond to.

OW What sparked your interest in the grotesque as depicted in Chinese mythology? You’ve been exploring this subject in your work for a long time.

HT Initially, I was drawn to the grotesque as a way to satirize the pervasive climate of fear that I felt (real or imagined)—to disarm monstrosity through exaggeration. However, the idea of the grotesque and abject became more significant in my practice once coupled with the examination of othering strategies employed against Asian communities throughout time, and even presently, in the West. From depictions of Yellow Peril caricatures, celestial beings, the occult, MSG syndrome, cuisine, etc.

When I was young, Canadian kids would ask me if we served cats in our restaurant. I asked my mother that question and she said, “silly child, how much work would it require to catch, skin and prepare a cat when you can just buy a turkey that yields so much more meat.” I think these kinds of problematic experiences emboldened me to weaponize the grotesque as a way to puncture stereotypes. As a result, several projects took shape that utilized Chinese mythological figures (from the Classics of Mountain and Seas)
as avatars for Chinatown elders, who were interviewed and generously shared their stories of pain and trauma relating to their struggles establishing a life here in Vancouver. Their accounts were rendered in drawing and enacted through depictions of otherworldly creatures. The fantastical imagery was used to obscure the sensitive and vulnerable nature of the narratives that stemmed from the participants; while also, aligning distinct mythical characters with members of a community generally portrayed as a nondescript mass.

In *The Unfortunates of D’Arcy Island*, I reanimated the history of a 19th century Chinese leper island colony, off the coast of Vancouver. The work raised questions around our collective paranoia towards the infected ‘other’, particularly in relation to British Columbia’s legacy of socio-spatial segregation. By re-examining a dark history of exile, isolation, and dehumanization, *The Unfortunates* conflates the marooned lepers with those currently susceptible to socio-economic extradition and class war.

**OW** *Retainers* presents a complex woven history, both ancient and recent, of a particular place and context associated with your own identity. How do you grapple with the diasporic nature of your work and your personal experience?

**HT** I’m pretty comfortable with the diasporic nature of my work. To me, the work is an honest synthesis of the radial or prismatic perspective that I have adopted through a diverse range of lived experiences and contexts. It does come with challenges though when your identity is situated in a hyphenated space. Where do you belong? The binary is easier for audiences to understand or for curators to group you in. Grey areas are more complicated and require a more rigorous understanding of an artist’s convoluted contexts. I find this most challenging in exhibition programs organized around neat categories like nationality or geopolitical boundaries. That is why, for me, the avatar of the Kowloon Walled City in *Retainers* is meaningful; a self-built community that existed in an ungoverned zone between China and colonial Hong Kong. The liminal nature of that place (and now Hong Kong itself) echoes the state of oscillation inherent to diasporic experience. I’m very proud to be working in this manner and advocate for younger artists to feel empowered to work honestly in their voice, in their visual language, and not feel the pressure to gravitate towards a dominant center. Luckily, there seems to be an encouraging trend in the Canadian art community of incorporating more artistic voices from diasporic communities, thereby providing a more accurate and leveled reflection of cultural production in the country.

**OW** I also wanted to ask about the long-standing role propaganda plays within the visual culture, and how your work challenges this role. By depicting real people, activists, and individuals fighting injustice, did you want to bring awareness to this issue? What are some of the political implications of the cultural references your work brings to the fore? And do you feel they require a constant negotiation during the current political climate in North America and Hong Kong?

**HT** I did in a covert manner—with a scalpel and not a hammer. My approach is more allegorical, much like Jin Yong, the author who created the stories that many of the animations in *Retainers* are based on. Like him, there’s this idea of shooting from the shadows—of indirectly critiquing current politics through a narrative of the past. Perhaps, I’m returning a boomerang by intentionally using the censored form of fiction to critique the very political party responsible for initiating that ban; or by co-opting the medium of the animated scroll from the pavilion to raise awareness around the erosion and rupture of Hong Kong.

**OW** What does it mean for this particular project to be presented in the United States for the first time?

**HT** I’m honoured to be sharing this work to audiences in the US. I’ve participated in various group exhibitions in the past, but this will be my first museum solo. I’m hoping it will lead to a greater understanding of the Hong Kong diasporic community, and open up new, and more nuanced dialogue around Hong Kong, China, Canada, and the US. I should also note that throughout the decade of 2000–2010, I was pretty disengaged with Canadian art (in part due to its monocultural tendencies) and mostly followed and drew inspiration from US artists. Perhaps the tenor and vibe of the work will feel strangely at home in the US. Lastly, it meant a lot to see politicians from both American parties work together in passing the Hong Kong Freedom and democracy act this past fall. A certain senator from Florida was one of the leaders who guided that bill through the house and I’m happy to be exhibiting this work in his home state museum.
When the idea for a Circus Museum was put forth by The Ringling’s first Director, Everett “Chick” Austin, he promised that “the circus showplace will evoke the circus spirit...big top performers will regard it as a unique, authentic center of circus art.” Austin quickly began growing the collections of historic circus wagons, original costumes, props, posters, and prints. Although it was named The Museum of the American Circus when it first opened in 1948, the collections immediately reflected the international reach of the circus arts.

To house the growing collection, Austin repurposed a historic structure that had once served as the garage for John and Mable Ringling’s automobiles. To those three bays he added a semi-circular Rotunda to evoke the small one ring tents of the earliest American circuses. The galleries were installed with a flamboyant mix of circus posters, costumes, and wagons placed in spaces decorated with gilded sconces and elaborate entryways purchased by John Ringling from the estates of such Gilded Age titans as the Astor family.

Over time, new spaces were added to the building, to show more of the collections and, eventually, enclosing an exterior wagon yard to protect the one-of-a-kind collection objects from the elements. With the projects to build and later extend the Circus Museum’s Tibbals Learning Center, attention was drawn away from the Historic Galleries, aside from the extraordinary installation in 2008 of The Wisconsin Pullman car.

Recognizing the charm of the historic building as well as the need to update the galleries, in 2019 The Ringling embarked upon a project to reinstall the Historic Circus Museum galleries. The project had a number of goals. First and foremost is to assure the care and presentation of the Circus collection. In the Wagon Room, refinished galleries and a new lighting plan allow us to once again showcase the biggest objects in The Ringling collections: our beautiful parade wagons and the magnificent Wisconsin.

The center galleries continue to honor the history of the Ringling family circus, welcoming visitors with the White Ticket Wagon, originally built in 1911. Once tucked into the Backyard gallery with the baggage wagons, this beautiful
example of circus craftsmanship is now visible from the moment visitors enter the building. Filling up the small center gallery, the wagon is juxtaposed with the ornate architectural arch and the Wisconsin Railroad Car. Creating this visual relationship helps highlight the beautiful craftsmanship, which is mirrored in the construction of the 1904 Wisconsin Car. Learn more about the White Ticket Wagon, and see related photographs and objects in the collection, by clicking the photo below.

The Ringling Family galleries feature objects that relate directly to the family and the early years of the circus—from saddles embossed with the names of the brothers to the 1882 herald for the Yankee Robinson and Ringling Bros. Great Double Shows, the only season that the Ringling name took second billing. As curatorial research expands through increased access to historic newspapers and other materials, the inclusion of more objects in these spaces will allow flexibility in sharing the stories of John Ringling and his brothers.

The most significant change in the galleries is the newly installed Rotunda, featuring “Curiosities of the Collection.” The gallery provides a space for rotating the rich diversity of objects that are part of the collection through thematic displays organized around history and cultural trends. The current installation celebrates the breadth of the Circus collection. Of the forty-three pieces shown in the Rotunda, only five have been on display in the museum in the last two decades or more.

Two banners painted by Frans De Vos for the front of a small Belgian circus in the early 1900s are centerpieces of the space. In 2005, these two banners along with two others by the artist were donated to the museum by Howard and Janice Tibbals. A special piece of the story of the De Vos banners was that their restoration in the ARTEX Conservation Laboratory was overseen by Barbara A. Ramsay before she was hired as The Ringling’s Chief Conservator in 2014. After years of restoration work, the four banners were proudly displayed in the Searing Wing later that year. Just as they once welcomed audiences to a circus, they now draw museum visitors into the galleries. These beautiful paintings depict a variety of acrobatic feats set against pastoral scenes, and remind us that all forms of the arts are integrated into the world of the circus.

The artistry of the De Vos banners is in wonderful contrast with other objects in the gallery, including a simple steel bucket lettered with the name “Concello.” This modest object is a representation of the logistical genius of the tented circus.
Each performer received two buckets of water on the circus lot for cleaning. This particular bucket belonged to Arthur Concello, who was a famous trapeze artist before becoming a legendary General Manager for the Ringling show. His knowledge and creativity left a mark on many aspects of the circus industry and he was part of the community who made their home here in Sarasota. Learn more about Concello’s bucket and some related objects that illustrate the life of Charlotte Shive, a performer with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey in the early 20th century.

Another circus performer who made his home in Sarasota is represented in the Rotunda by a whimsical marionette. Writer and performer Bill Ballantine toured as a clown with the Ringling show in the late 1940s and would return to become Dean of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Clown College from 1969 to 1977. Ballantine’s friend Bill Baird, a renowned puppet maker known for performing “The Lonely Goatherd” puppet show in *The Sound of Music*, created the puppet of Ballantine in his clown costume.

The gallery also includes twelve prints, ranging in date across the 18th and 19th centuries, which were early additions to the Circus collections. The Engravings and other widely distributed forms of popular print frequently included subjects from the circus and allied arts. As such they represent both unique objects from the artistic tradition of print and wonderful documents of the ubiquity of the circus arts in western culture. Such prints were among the earliest objects added to the Circus collection under the tenure of Everett “Chick” Austin and represent a fascination with the circus arts that predate the advent of the modern circus as we know it. Viewed with the knowledge of the 21st century, many of these prints represent individuals and events which are now recognized as foundational to circus history.

In showcasing a selection of the unseen treasures of the Circus collection, the Historic Circus Galleries encourage our guests to explore some of the unique stories of people and events that have shaped circus history.
SPOTLIGHT ON CIRCUS: SPINACUTA’S MONKEY AND THE WONDERS OF WIRE WALKING

by Jennifer Lemmer Posey
Tibbals Curator of Circus

The prints that came into the collection during Austin’s tenure represent such a range of topics. Because my knowledge is much stronger on American circus history, I made an initial checklist based on digital records, selecting images that were especially intriguing to me. When I saw the prints in person, all kinds of details jumped out.

The Curious and Uncommon Performances of a Monkey as They Will be Introduced Every Evening at Sadler’s Wells was the first revelation. The print had made the initial list because I was amused by the subject. But then, when it was in front of me, the relevance to circus history came into focus. First, I was taken by the fact that the performance, so like what we think of in the circus ring, took place in the year or so before Philip Astley debuted his equestrian performance in a ring, accompanied by tumblers and clowns, thus staging what is now viewed as the first modern circus. I knew circus arts were being performed long before Astley’s ring, but I was taken by the proximity of the dates.

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Next, I noticed the small type below the title which reads simply “By Spinacuta.” It is a marvel to me that in the 18th century these kinds of performances were given the kind of prominence that would result in a print and to have one’s name attached speaks to a growing notion of celebrity that is possible only with mass media. But those thoughts aside, the name Spinacuta is important. More than twenty years after presenting the monkey at Sadler’s Wells, Spinacuta would travel to the United States to perform with John Bill Ricketts’ show in Philadelphia, the country’s first circus.

I also noticed that in one frame Spinacuta’s monkey seemed to have some kind of light surrounding him. This was very similar to the print of The Descent of Madame Saqui Surrounded by Fireworks. In trying to discover what was happening in these images I came across references to the Catherine Wheel, a spinning firework display. The earliest traced reference was published in 1761, showing how quickly the spectacle of pyrotechnics was adopted by the performance community.

Explore more Spotlights on Circus and other Museum collections.
The Art of Performance’s 2019–2020 season was dedicated to delivering broad access to diverse and multidisciplinary live performances. We expanded upon past efforts and developed a solid foundation for community engagement programs. These engagement programs aim to create meaningful, shared experiences through performance across age groups and cultural identities, building multiple avenues of participation for artists to connect with diverse audiences.

We continued our relationship with local schools in order to become an extension of the classroom with our collaborations. Designed as a tool to bring artists directly into classrooms, our programs foster an understanding of performance, encourage the imagination, and build specific skills.

In December, we collaborated with Booker High School (BHS) to create a cultural immersion for students with the musical ensemble and dance troupe Son Luna y Jovenes Zapateadores from Veracruz, Mexico. Merging different rhythms and dance styles, including indigenous, Spanish and African inspired movements and sounds, the professional dancers and musicians visited the classroom to teach students about the Son Jarocho tradition. Following the workshop, students visited the Historic Asolo Theater for a matinee performance of ¡Vivelo!, and took a guided tour of the exhibition Manuel Alvarez Bravo: Specters and Parables, which portrayed daily life in Mexico as captured through the lens of the renowned Mexican photographer. In the weeks that followed, the students were instructed by their teacher, Courtney Smith, to create a new dance piece inspired by their time at the Museum and their experience working with the artists. The students performed in the Museum of Art Courtyard and in their school’s spring dance recital in March. To watch a video about this project, click the image of the students dancing above.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have forced nationwide school closures and the cancellation of the remaining programming in the 2019–2020 season, but we continue our commitment to working with students. Because we could not bring Brazilian dance group Companhia Urbana de Dança to perform, or host their planned in-school workshop with BHS students, we invited two of the company’s dancers to send students short dance videos to learn and practice while sequestered at home. The students responded with their own videos replicating the dance moves—check it out!

As we look forward to next season, we remain committed to offering a wide range of opportunities that will enrich learning for youth and local audiences. We will renew our pledge to partner with diverse audiences through partnerships with schools, community, and social service organizations such as Booker High School, New College, Ringling College, UnidosNow, CreArte Latino, Second Chance Last Opportunity, and NewTown Alive, whose contributions to our programs have been inspiring and generous.
In all of the uncertainty, fear, and isolation happening around COVID-19, there are also inspiring moments of brightness and connectivity. The arrival of the crisis to our region galvanized The Ringling’s Education Department into action. Even before The Ringling closed, the team began brainstorming ways to translate in-person programs to digital offerings. We recognized that we needed to think critically about what our community needed and how we could provide support.

We also wanted to embrace a new ethos—one that continued to tap into our collective years of professionalism but that let go of preciousness. We no longer have the luxury of agonizing over projects for weeks or months before releasing them to the public. We have to act responsively, decisively, and confidently.

Some of what we produce, like the Learn from Home activities, are highly polished and incredibly well-thought out. Other programs, like our Virtual Gallery Talks, are more informal by the very nature of having been planned and recorded from home. We are embracing the spectrum.

In all that we do, we are trying to be fearless, authentic, and creative. To that end, we decided to introduce ourselves to our new digital world by creating a team art project that we completed together while remaining separated in our respective homes. We wanted to show our audiences that projects can be messily imperfect while still being fun and thought-provoking. We hope to demonstrate the power of art to unite people through a common experience, reminding us that even while apart, we are together.

Each member of the Education team serves a specific museum audience, and we’re continuing to support our constituents during this strange and scary time.

FAMILY PROGRAMS  We’ve developed downloadable worksheets so that grown-ups can facilitate activities at home with their kids. We’re sorting them by difficulty level and listing required materials to help caregivers easily select the ones that are right for them. For our earliest learners, we have Ringling Read Along videos that give kids access to books they may not have at home, which is especially important given the temporary closure of public libraries. These stories are sure to bring a smile to faces of all ages and are accompanied by a suggested activity to continue the learning.

SCHOOL AND TEACHER PROGRAMS  At-home activity guides (30+ and counting) are being updated to include Florida state standards so that both parents and teachers can connect the projects to curriculum. These guides focus on STEAM learning and are centered on objects in The Ringling Collection. We are also recording a variety of virtual school tours for each of the different grade levels. Our School and Teacher Programs Coordinator communicates with the school district about how to best support the distance learning needs of teachers as they transition to this new world, and helped start a task force, Suncoast Arts REACH, to collate and distribute local arts lessons, activities, and play directly to parents.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS  We are continuing to engage our Where Everyone Belongs (WEB) family members and support our non-profit partners in creative ways. We are sharing our at-home learning resources with them and having one-on-one conversations about what they need from us.

DOCENTS  A new training class of twenty Museum of Art docents had just begun before the Museum closed, so we quickly transformed the 40 week in-person training to an online learning platform. The docents-in-training take weekly classes, and our current docents will be participating in ongoing virtual refresher trainings. We continue to send regular updates to the entire corps of 120 docents to ensure we stay connected to them during this time of physical separation.

ADULT LEARNING  We are experimenting with hosting live programs for Members via video conferencing, and we also continue to record programs—conversations, lectures, Q&As, and others—that we can share with all our audiences.

The needs of each of our audiences manifest slightly differently, but all share the same basic desire to be engaged, to remain stimulated, and to feel like a part of something greater than themselves. We are here to make that happen.

The generosity of our members makes all of the above programs possible—thank you!
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT
Dr. Willie and Mrs. Leteria Clemons

When and how did you hear about The Ringling?
LC Before moving to Florida from Atlanta, we visited friends over a period of five years. Our friends knew of our love for the museum and introduced us to The Ringling. We knew Sarasota was a place filled with arts and culture. And, museums have always been at the top of our list of things to do whenever we visit new cities. Going to the museum was a family affair. Hence, our daughters developed an appreciation for the museums. In Atlanta, we were involved in the arts and members of cultural institutions such as the High Museum of Arts. We were also involved in the early development of the Center for Civil and Human Rights Museum.

What made you decide to become a Member?
LC Whenever we had out of town guests, we would bring them to The Ringling. After many visits someone in guest services noticed and suggested that I become a member. I asked about the benefits and was given a long list of events, offerings and the details about membership. It was clear that this is where I wanted to be a member.
WC I see The Ringling as an integral part of the Sarasota community. I am hoping that the Museum sees itself as a fundamental part of the community and understands the role it plays. When you start talking about inclusion, it is important for an institution to identify what that means as it pertains to people of all backgrounds.

What benefits do you appreciate the most, and why?
LC The benefits I appreciate most are the unlimited access of visitation, discounts to all of the events and having immediate access to the schedule.

Are there particular works of art or venues that are special to you? Which ones and why?
LC My favorite venue is the Museum of Art. I really enjoy the special collections that are a part of the Museum schedule. Of course, I love the circus! It brings a good feeling. We can identify with it growing up and waiting for the circus to come to town.

WC My favorite is Ca’ d’Zan. I love that place.
LC Well, you could say that we like it all. However, the Museum of Art is an incredibly special place. We are Episcopalian, and we enjoy connecting with the religious artwork. It is fascinating.
WC However, it was not until we took our first docent tour that we really got a different perspective and fell in love with the Museum of Art.
LC The docent tour told a story. It was interesting and fascinating to understand how one painting connected to another. I wish everyone would take the docent tour. Sometimes reading all the labels can be daunting, and docents really allow visitors to experience the art.

Do you have a story or favorite memory that you would like to share about The Ringling?
LC You are going to think this one is crazy. We really enjoy dining and entertaining at Muse restaurant. We go often enough that we have a favorite table outside. So, one day as we were having lunch a turtle came out of the water and stared at us for a long time. It was as if he knew us. The next visit to Muse, the turtle returned, head out of the water, and we name him George. So, every time we go to Muse we would look for George! Please tell him that we will see him soon.
A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP TEAM

While The Ringling is temporarily closed, we continue to provide the collection and the entire campus with the love and care it deserves—maintaining upkeep, security, and environmental controls.

We are busy developing virtual programming for you to enjoy from home, and we encourage you to visit ringling.org often to check the latest program offerings.

We have always valued our members and donors, and now, your support is even more crucial to sustaining our vitality through this difficult period of closure.

We are here to respond to your questions and concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact us.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES
membership@ringling.org or 941.360.7330

CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES
advancement@ringling.org or 941.348.0474

We hope that you and your family are safe and well, and look forward to seeing you in our galleries soon!

EXHIBITION DATES EXTENDED

SUN XUN: TIME SPY
THROUGH OCT 4, 2020

HOWIE TSUI: RETainers OF ANARCHY
THROUGH NOV 29, 2020

BEING SEEN: RECENT ACQUIsITIONS FROM THE RINGLING PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION
THROUGH JAN 3, 2021

SYD SOLOMON: CONCEALED AND REVEALED
THROUGH JAN 24, 2021

REMAKING THE WORLD: ABSTRACTION FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION
THROUGH MAY 2, 2021

UPCOMING EXHIBITION

KABUKI MODERN
NOV 13, 2020 – JUNE 27, 2021

Click the image to discover more!

Kabuki Modern
Yamamura Kōka (Toyonari) (Japanese, 1885–1942), Actor in a Chinese Opera (detail), 1924. Published by Yamamura Kōka Hanga Kankōkai. Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, 15 3/4 × 14 3/4 in. Gift of Charles and Robyn Citrin, 2019. SN11668.7
VIRTUAL BLOSSOMS GARDEN PARTY WRAP-UP

Members recently enjoyed a virtual morning in Mable’s Rose Garden. Hosted by The Ringling’s Head of Development, Mark Terman, this year’s Blossoms Garden Party was held via Zoom. Guests were treated to a craft project and an insider’s look at the recent rose garden renovation by Kai Sacco, Horticulturist.

Thank you to our Virtual Blossoms Garden Party guests and our sponsor, SRQ Media.

CLICK TO WATCH!

CIRCUS: WANDERING CITY

We are proud to present this full-length recording of Circus: Wandering City by Chicago-based string quartet ETHEL, recorded at their 2018 World Premiere performance in the Historic Asolo Theater.

Created during ETHEL’s developmental residency at The Ringling, Circus: Wandering City explores and honors the complex relationship between circus troupes, their performers, and the audiences they inspired. Combining their original music with projected images, films, and interviews mined from The Ringling Archives, ETHEL created a multimedia stage work that is both big-hearted and clear-eyed about the scintillating and debilitating sides of the circus industry and the passion and dedication of its community.

Circus: Wandering City was co-commissioned by The Ringling and Brooklyn Academy of Music’s 2018 Next Wave Festival.

It was sponsored in part by Daniel Denton and Ramses Serrano, Leon and Marge Ellin, Dr. Susan Brainerd and Alan R. Quinby.
CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

New Opportunities to Involve Your Brand

The Ringling is pleased to collaborate with many corporate sponsors in the Sarasota community. These essential partnerships help support exhibitions, events, and performances throughout the year. There is a reciprocal benefit for the sponsors in that they can present their brands while showing support for the arts to The Ringling’s ten thousand plus members!

As we move into the fiscal year 2020–2021, the corporate sponsorship program will be evolving. Organizations will have the opportunity to sponsor over various platforms, events, and performances to create custom packages that will benefit the organization and support The Ringling. More importantly, organizations will have the ability to entertain, create opportunities to access and connect with our patrons, obtain recognition and promotions, and reward their employees.

To become a sponsor, contact John Melleky at sponsorship@ringling.org.

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A recently acquired and newly conserved painting by Murakami Michiho (Japanese, 1899–1938) will soon take the stage in the exhibition, Kabuki Modern, in the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Center for Asian Art. The artwork presents a highly detailed exterior and interior view of Kyoto’s Minamiza theater during the annual “Kichirei kaomise” or “face-showing” festival. The event, held at the end of each year, featured actors from Tokyo performing together with those from Kyoto and Osaka, making it one of the most eagerly anticipated items on the kabuki calendar.

Onstage, the warrior Watanabe no Tsuna confronts a white-maned demon in the play Ibaraki. The boxes below jostle with almost three hundred audience members, including young men in military uniform, mothers with children, and apprentice geisha in their silken finery. Some are absorbed in the climactic scene unfolding before them, while others share hot tea or sake, read programs, or chat among themselves.

Murakami’s choice of subject—a crowded theater rendered in exaggerated linear perspective—derives from a genre of woodblock prints called uki-e or “floating pictures” because of the way the images appeared to float off the paper surface. Inspired by European engravings imported by Dutch traders, uki-e were popular in the mid- to late 18th century. The artist updated the theme to celebrate the continued vibrancy of kabuki in modern Japan.

The painting was first presented in the 1924 exhibition of the Imperial Art Exhibition, a government-organized juried show modeled after the French salon. Probably for ease of transport, Murakami had his painting cut in half and mounted as a two-panel folding screen. By the time The Ringling acquired the painting in 2017, the underlying structure had deteriorated, making remounting necessary. Rather than retain the folding screen format, however, the Museum opted instead for a single panel so as not to disrupt the dramatic geometry of the composition. A smaller version of the painting from 1927 on display at the Minamiza is mounted as a panel, suggesting that this would have been the artist’s preference. The Museum is grateful to the Peck Stacpoole Foundation for the grant that supported this conservation treatment.

Murakami Michiho (Japanese, 1899–1938), Theater, June 12, 1924 (detail), Taishō period (1912–1926). Painting mounted as a framed panel; ink, color, and gold on paper, 71 15/16 × 71 1/4 × 13/16 in. Museum purchase, 2017. SN11584
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TO SEEING YOU
WHEN WE REOPEN!