Dear Members,

I would normally make a comment here on the changing of the seasons, but this year has required overall changes in mostly everything! From the manner in which members and visitors access the Museum’s collection to something as simple as how we transport works of art to fellow museums, 2020 has taught us many unique lessons.

One thing that has not changed is our commitment to you, our valued Members. I speak for every employee at The Ringling when I say that we remain steadfast in our goal of bringing you the best museum experience—whether it be in person or virtual. Our education, curatorial, archives, and marketing departments have dedicated many hours to producing content to educate, entertain, and inspire you. Our facilities, grounds, and security staff have done their best to provide a safe place for visitors while taking superior care of our collections and grounds. Our development and membership teams have devoted themselves to keeping in touch with you and to let you know that even though distance may separate us, you are always on the top of our minds.

COVID-19 slowed us down, but it has not stopped The Ringling from working every day to further our mission and strategic goals of inclusion, inspiration, and excellence. As we look ahead, there will be many exciting new exhibitions to explore, including Kabuki Modern, opening November 13. We are also planning to bring you wonderful films and performances, and a chance to win an overnight stay at The Ringling as part of our UnGala Getaway event.

Most of all, I want to thank you for your continued support. Your generosity and participation are what drive this organization and we look forward to a time when we can all be together again on the beautiful grounds of The Ringling.

Steven High
Executive Director
We hope you enjoy this digital edition of *The Ringling Magazine*. Throughout, you will discover clickable content that will allow you to explore beyond the surface of the page.

Contact us at [info@ringling.org](mailto:info@ringling.org)

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**ABOVE:**

**ON THE COVER:** Yamamura Kōka (Toyonari) (Japanese, 1885–1942), *Ichikawa Shōchō II as Oman* (detail), 1920, published by Yamamura Kōka Hanga Kankōkai. Woodblock print; ink and color on paper with applied mica, 16 5/16 × 11 7/16 in. Gift of Charles and Robyn Citrin, 2019, SN11668.2
In January of this year, we completed the reinstallation of Gallery 21 in the Museum of Art, providing a new lens through which to view John Ringling’s purchases of 19th-century works of art. Though the gallery reopened in November 2019, it was not until January that we were able to install its final work: the enormous oil on canvas painting entitled Emperor Justinian (1886), by Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant. The conservation work on the painting, supported by a grant from the Getty Foundation through its Conserving Canvas initiative, was completed in January by a team of conservators under the supervision of ArtCare Conservation in Miami and The Ringling’s Chief Conservator, Barbara Ramsay.

Emperor Justinian returned to view in Gallery 21 without a frame. For reasons unknown, the frame it had in the 1940s, when it was last on view in our galleries, was no longer extant.
Therefore, while the painting was being conserved in Miami, we also had to plan for a new frame. In an extremely generous gesture, Ringling Board Member Meg Hausberg and her husband Mark offered to fund the cost of the new frame, enabling us to add the crowning touch to Emperor Justinian and thereby to complete the reinstallation of Gallery 21.

As is typical of our reinstallation projects, choosing the new frame for Emperor Justinian was also a collaborative process, involving staff members from multiple departments. Due to the monumental scale of the work (13 feet high by 22 feet long), we felt that the standard type of picture frame—where the painting is inserted into a freestanding frame, and the ensemble is then hung on the wall—would not be ideal. Instead, we favored a system that would allow the frame to be mounted to the wall, around the perimeter of the installed painting. The frame needed to be structurally robust to protect such a large work, and also needed to cover the unpainted edges of the canvas without obscuring important details, such as the artist’s signature at bottom left and the face of the figure at far right. On top of all this, I wanted the frame to function as a subtle enhancement to the painting rather than a conspicuous visual statement in itself. Finally, it needed to harmonize with other works in the gallery, and with the museum collections as a whole. This was no small order!

For help in realizing such a large frame, we approached Sarasota-based woodworker Dale Rieke, who fabricated the interior of the Nancy L. Ellis Teahouse at The Ringling in 2016. With decades of experience in creating custom wood designs, Dale was not deterred by the significant challenges involved in this project. He proposed using mahogany for the frame, a wood known for its beauty, durability, and resistance to warping. In consultation with Barbara Ramsay and Senior Preparator Keith Crowley, Dale devised a novel frame structure that included a subframe mounted to the wall and an outer frame that covered it. Steven High and I worked with him on the aesthetic aspects of the frame, including its profile, stain color, and final finish.

Our work to finalize the details of the frame continued during the period of the museum’s closure due to the coronavirus, and the frame was installed at the end of June. We are especially grateful to the Getty Foundation and to Meg and Mark Hausberg for making it possible to bring Emperor Justinian back to a place of honor in the Museum of Art galleries.

Click the image to watch a time-lapse video of the installation!
As stewards of Ca’ d’Zan, a nearly 100-year-old mansion, the work to maintain this architectural gem is ongoing. Two major restoration projects have been carried out concurrently at Ca’ d’Zan over the summer of 2020, with the goals of preserving the historic integrity of the house and reducing the intrusion of water into the West façade. Poorly sealed glass on windows and doors has enabled water to seep into the mansion’s interior during storms (fig. 1) and failed mortar in terra cotta joints has allowed the infiltration of water and salt. Together, these conditions can result in damage to the terra cotta and architectural structure, as well as interior decorative finishes.

In order to execute these projects, The Ringling collaborates with experienced historic preservation professionals, including a team of architectural conservators from EverGreene Architectural Arts, window restoration specialists from Femenella & Associates, and stone masons from Standard Restoration & Waterproofing. All conservation and restoration work is carried out in conformity with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

The terra cotta and windows throughout Ca’ d’Zan are greatly admired for the distinctive colorful quality these materials impart (fig. 2). In June, fourteen windows from the Mezzanine level of the Court and one window and door from the servant’s wing were removed (fig. 3) and taken to a glass restoration workshop in Pennsylvania where they were disassembled, cleaned, and re-leaded; steel frames were cleaned,
 repaired, and repainted. The deteriorated lead caming holding the glass panes together was replaced with a stronger lead alloy that will seal better and be more durable in the marine environment than the caming provided during the previous 1990s restoration. Metal subframes attached to the openings for the windows were cleaned and then repainted and caulked using more flexible and durable materials.

Over the years, damaged windows at Ca’ d’Zan have been repaired or replaced. It is believed that virtually no original window panes survive from John and Mable’s lifetimes. Replica glass, matched in color and fabrication technique and dating to various generations of renovations, is found throughout the house. For the current project, most existing panes have been retained. Only the most damaged panes have been replaced, using high-quality glass matched in color and texture and manufactured by Lambertsglas in Germany.

Glazed architectural terra cotta for Ca’ d’Zan was originally custom-made by the Pennsylvania-based firm, O.W. Ketcham Terra Cotta Works. Glazed terra cotta is a stable material that ages well—unless the glaze is disturbed, the mortar fails, or cracking or loss enables the infiltration of water and salt. Annually, The Ringling enlists consulting architectural conservators to examine the condition of terra cotta on all façades of Ca’ d’Zan and identify problem areas that need immediate attention to prevent further damage.

In 2018, during replacement and repointing of structurally unstable terra cotta elements, we concentrated on the Belvedere Tower and the balcony of John Ringling’s office. During the 2020 treatment, the upper areas of the West façade have been addressed (fig. 4). By carefully removing cracked and crumbled mortar from joints between terra cotta elements and replacing this with a durable mixture matched to the original mortar, the building’s envelope is sealed better against water intrusion (fig. 5). Structural reinforcement of significant terra cotta elements in the NW and SW corners of the Court also resulted in stabilization of those parts of the mansion.

With major funding provided by Florida State University, as well as generous grants from The Wohler Family Foundation, and visitors’ contributions to donation boxes at Ca’ d’Zan, we have been able to make significant progress this year in ensuring the historic preservation of Ca’ d’Zan. Now that the terra cotta repointing on the second floor of the West façade has been completed and the restored glass windows and door reinstalled, we will continue to raise funds to enable the continuation of these necessary preservation efforts throughout the mansion.
by Elizabeth Doud
Currie-Kohlmans Curator of Performance

The pre-COVID-19 plan for the Art of Performance 2020-2021 Season included a series of artist residencies that would facilitate periods of inventive development by creatives who could dedicate time to new projects and publicly share previews of their work in the form of artist talks and work-in-progress showings. Since canceling all Art of Performance activities in March, plans for all public engagement have been reimagined. This response, which placed the health and safety of patrons, staff, and artists at the forefront, has allowed us to prioritize creative growth in the form of artist residencies. During a time when touring is on hold, we have opened up our spaces for individual artists to reflect, plan, and cultivate the dynamic artistic responses of tomorrow. Plans to host a group of resident artists that include choreographers, filmmakers, playwrights, activists, conceptual artists, and performers has invigorated us in uncertain times.

WHAT IS AN ARTIST RESIDENCY AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?
There are many different kinds of artist residencies and spaces. Some are discipline specific, or require public facing outcomes, while others specialize in secluded research and interdisciplinary collaboration. Some bring prizes and visibility for a singular project or for long-term career support. Fundamentally, artist residencies reinforce the essentials for artistic creation, which are surprisingly lacking for today’s practitioners: time, space and resources to experiment and iterate while prototyping works for public presentations, exhibitions and touring. In all disciplines, most new works develop in multi-year incubation periods, and this is why artist residencies privilege process over product.
The majority of performance is made in rehearsal periods that are limited by financial constraints and deadlines to perform, and this producing cycle often pressures artists to move from idea to product without needed laboratory time to test possibilities, explore curiosities and make brilliant mistakes in between. The Ringling artist residencies aim to be experiences where artists can absorb the creative energy and beauty of the campus, practice and research in the distinct spaces of the museum, and dialogue with staff and community members without the expectation of a final product.

Artist residencies also offer the institutional leverage that is often lacking in the independent artist ecosystem. Museum staff can work with artists to strategize resource development and provide institutional endorsements and marketing to enable additional funding and critical press. Ideally, these multi-year relationships last beyond the fixed residency dates, and yield real impacts for artists, institutions and audiences. Clearly, institutions that host residencies and support participating artists benefit from these exchanges as they glean visibility, learning and funding outcomes from the creative excellence brought to the table by the names that create the content.

Despite an abundance of caution in all things these days, there seems to be no danger in having more opportunities for artists to develop new performance. To this end, the Art of Performance will host artists in residence in which choreographers, composers, circus artists, theater makers and other practitioners can gestate ideas, experiment with new artistic language and invest in the performance of tomorrow. As a public museum committed to access, inspiration and innovative ideas, we can’t think of a better time to have artists working on campus in safe yet fertile conditions.

We encourage you to follow our artists in residence in the coming months:

**JOHN SIMS**
Conceptual artist, writer, and social justice activist

**LIONY GARCIA**
Dancer and choreographer

**RANDY VALDÉS**
Filmmaker

**LEGNA RODRIGUEZ**
Poet

**JOSEPH KECKLER**
Playwright

**CHANTAL BILODEAU**
Climate activist

**MOIRA FINUCANE**
Actor and burlesque performer

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**OPPOSITE PAGE:**
Photo of Liony Garcia, courtesy of the artist.

**THIS PAGE:**
Photo of Randy Valdés, courtesy of the artist.

**DISCOVER MORE @ ringling.org**
KABUKI MODERN

by Rhiannon Paget
Curator of Asian Art

Actors of kabuki, Japan’s distinctive form of popular theater, were superstars between the 17th and early 20th centuries, and continue to command cultural and celebrity status today. Their fame was fueled by mass-produced woodblock-printed actor portraits, or yakusha-e, that were sold as affordable mementoes of the theater experience, as well as by paintings for wealthy patrons.

As Japan modernized from the late 19th century, theaters adapted their repertoire to cater to shifting tastes and social mores. New stories and foreign ideas invigorated kabuki and attracted diverse audiences and patronage. In response to these developments and the rise of photography, publishers, print designers and painters updated their stylistic and technical approaches to yakusha-e, thereby propelling the genre into the modern era.

Opening this fall in the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Center for Asian Art, Kabuki Modern presents recent acquisitions and local loans of kabuki imagery created between the 1890s and the 1950s. As featured in the last issue of this magazine, a painstakingly detailed painting of the interior of Kyoto’s Minamiza theater by Murakami Michiho (1899–1938) that recently returned to the Museum following conservation treatment will take center stage.

Among the objects on view is a concertina-bound album of the complete print series One Hundred Roles of Baikō (1893) by Toyohara Kunichika (1835–1900), who dominated the yakusha-e field during the Meiji period (1868–1912). Baikō, a pseudonym of the pioneering actor Onoe Kikugorō V (1844–1903), invited the playwright Kawatake Mokuami (1838–1903) to write kabuki plays that reflected Japan’s rapidly modernizing society. These plays were called zangirimono, or “cropped-hair plays,” after the newly fashionable Western-style hairdos sported by the actors that appeared in them. Kunichika’s album, meticulously printed
in vivid colors with embossing, burnishing, and shimmering mica, contains one hundred highly stylized portraits of Baikō in conventional and zangirimono roles (fig. 1).

A generation later, photographic portraits had largely superseded woodblock prints as affordable souvenirs of the theatre experience. A new cohort of print designers including Yamamura Kōka (1885–1942, also known as Toyonari) responded to new technologies and audience preferences by creating more formally realistic portraits, often directly referencing photographs, which appealed not only to kabuki aficionados but also Japanese and Western print collectors. Several prints from Toyonari’s untitled series known as “Flowers of the Theatrical World” (1920–22), in which Toyonari masterfully captures the psychological drama of the stage, will be on display (fig. 2).

A special treat for visitors is Shin’ei’s (act. early 20th century) extremely rare and thoroughly chilling Onoe Baikō VI as Oiwa (1926). The print portrays the son and successor of the abovementioned Baikō V as the tragic and terrifying heroine of Ghost Story of Yotsuya on the Tōkaidō, a tale of domestic abuse, betrayal, murder, and revenge from beyond the grave. The lover of Oiwa’s faithless husband lemon and her family conspire to poison her, leaving her brutally disfigured. In death, she becomes a vengeful ghost. One by one, her tormentors are killed, and Oiwa haunts lemon mercilessly until he is slain by an enemy. Shin’ei likely consulted photographs of Baikō VI wearing elaborate make up and prostheses to convey Oiwa’s bruised face and drooping eye (fig. 3).

During the Pacific War (1937–1945), kabuki theaters were shuttered, but travelling troupes of actors put on plays for soldiers and workers, including the creative print (sōsaku hanga) artist Sekino Jun’ichirō (1914–1988), who was deployed at a factory, to boost morale. After the war, sōsaku hanga attracted patrons from among members of the Allied Occupation, and Sekino created portraits of the actors he met—principally for this new, foreign audience. Two prints by Sekino of kabuki stars offstage and putting on makeup, lent by Charles and Robyn Citrin, hint at the various layered identities embodied by actors in public and private life.

With stages now desolate in the United States, Kabuki Modern offers a glimpse into one of Japan’s most fascinating performing arts and the visual arts that celebrated it.
CHAMPIONING DIVERSITY

in the

Contemporary Exhibition Program

by Christopher Jones
Stanton B. and Nancy W. Kaplan Curator of Photography and Media Arts

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

The Ringling’s contemporary exhibition program is dedicated to creating a platform for diverse artistic voices and perspectives. Our galleries are devoted to celebrating the work of visionary artists whose practices reflect the fact that all human beings are unique yet deeply interconnected. These artists remind us that a democratic and equitable society depends on empathy, the celebration of diversity and tolerance for one another’s points of view.

The exhibition Syd Solomon: Concealed and Revealed honors the legacy of Syd Solomon (American, 1917–2004), the Sarasota and East Hamptons-based abstract expressionist. The beauty of
Florida’s Gulf Coast and the fragility of this local environment inspire Solomon’s paintings. He developed his own abstract style in response to the ebb and flow of changing atmospheric conditions that define life on the Florida coast. He was also an influential figure on the visual artist scene in Sarasota as he summoned many renowned painters and sculptors to teach with him at the Institute of Fine Arts at New College in the 1950s. Many of these artists relocated their studios to Sarasota and the area, contributing to a vibrant local art scene. Works by Solomon’s contemporaries, including David Budd, John Chamberlain, Jimmy Ernst, Gabriel Kohn, and Conrad Marca-Relli, are currently on view in the exhibition Remaking the World: Abstraction from the Permanent Collection. This exhibition also highlights work by historically underrepresented women artists from the New York School, including Sonia Gechtoff, Grace Hartigan, Joan Mitchell, and Kay Sage. Work by artists who migrated to New York City to seek freedom of expression and develop their own visual language, such as Carlos Alfonzo and Kikuo Saito, reminds us of the importance of immigrants in shaping the development of abstract art in the United States.

Photography by artists recognized for creating new career paths and opportunities despite sexism, racism, and social pressure to conform to gender roles is on view in the exhibition Being Seen: Recent Acquisitions from The Ringling Photography Collection. This exhibition celebrates images by some of the most respected photographers working today, including Endia Beal, Deana Lawson, Rania Matar, Selina Román, Bea Nettles, and Zanele Muholi, whose work examines complexities of identity and the staging of selfhood. Alongside them are images by significant women photographers from the twentieth century, including Ruth Bernhard, Ilse Bing, and Lotte Jacobi, who created bold, innovative work in a male-dominated field. This exhibition offers visitors a rare opportunity to explore themes of agency, visibility, and gender through the lens of a broader historical context.

Historical and fictional narratives are interwoven in the large-scale animated scroll with sound titled Retainers of Anarchy by Vancouver based Howie Tsui, currently on view inside the Monda Gallery for Contemporary Art. The characters presented in the work include political figures from the Hong Kong Umbrella Protests, as well as protagonists from Chinese literature. The work considers wuxia, a genre of Chinese fiction concerning the adventures of martial artists in ancient China, as a tool for resistance and explores social and cultural anxieties around trauma and otherness through a distinctly outsider lens to advocate for diasporic experiences.

Beginning in late December, the Monda Gallery will feature a film and video program dedicated to contemporary visual artists whose work explores issues of race, representation, history, and social justice. The exhibition will celebrate nationally recognized artists, as well as feature diverse voices from Sarasota’s community and the region. This four-month-long program will offer diverse perspectives on complex socio-political topics as examined by some of the most exciting artists working in video today.

Contemporary exhibitions at The Ringling offer the viewer an opportunity to reflect on current events, fraught histories, and present day realities, through the varied perspectives of artists whose work provokes challenging yet necessary dialogue about the state of our world today.

Sponsor support for The Ringling Contemporary Exhibitions has been provided by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, and Herald-Tribune and also paid for in-part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues.


DISCOVER MORE @ ringling.org
PORCELAINS OF DEHUA
From Regional Kilns to Global Markets

FIG. 1 After He Chaozong (Chinese, active ca. 1610 - 1620), Wenchang, God of Literature, early 17th century. Dehua ware; porcelain with transparent glaze, 13 × 6 11/16 × 5 1/4 in. Gift of Ira and Nancy Koger, 2001. SN11122.83

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM:
This past March, dozens of Chinese ceramics were installed on the third floor of the Chao Center for Asian Art. These Dehua porcelains, as they are called, take their name from the county in which they were produced, located in the southeastern Chinese province of Fujian. Historically, they have also been known as blanc de Chine, a French term coined in the 19th century meaning “white from China.” Indeed, the pieces range from milky white to a warm pinkish hue.

The earliest Dehua wares date to the Song dynasty (960–1279), but the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644) was the golden age of Dehua’s porcelain production, when Fujian province experienced something of an economic boom, and the local ceramic industry flourished. Not only were the wares in high demand at home, but they were also widely exported, especially to Southeast Asia and Europe. The Dehua kilns produced a range of objects with various uses: Buddhist and Daoist icons, taper holders, censers, water droppers, wine pots, ewers, as well as genre scenes and pieces made specifically with the Western market in mind. While some of the pieces are relatively simple and served rather mundane purposes, many are elaborately detailed, testament to the high levels of craftsmanship achieved by Dehua potters.

Religious statuettes comprise a large portion of Dehua wares and tend to show one or more figures clad in robes, identifiable by their physical characteristics and accoutrement. An example of one of these icons is a statuette of Wenchang, God of Literature, produced in the early 17th century by renowned figure modeler He Chaozong (fig. 1). Wenchang wears the clothes and cap of a scholar official and holds in his hand a ruyi, a scepter for granting wishes.

Animals were also a favorite subject, and they were often ingeniously incorporated into objects for domestic and scholarly use, like this water dropper in the form of a crab (fig. 2). Animals often came in twos and were sometimes fitted with candle holders. Pairs of roosters and dogs are represented in The Ringling’s collection, as are mythical creatures such as qilin and shishi (guardian lions).

Dehua potters also produced a large number of genre scenes, often depicting popular stories. One such piece shows the Tang-dynasty poet Li Bai, who requests that the high-level court eunuch Gao Lishi remove his muddy boots, while imperial consort Yang Guifei stands in attendance (fig. 3). This may represent a staged account of the story, and its small size suggests it may have been made as a memento for a theatrical production.

The Ringling’s collection of Dehua ceramics is among the largest and most representative in the United States, gifted to the museum in 2001 by Ira and Nancy Koger. Most of the objects on view range in date from the 16th to the 18th centuries, with some pieces of more recent manufacture. While the golden age of Dehua wares may have passed, potters in the county continue to make ceramics of extremely high quality.

The exhibition was curated by Rachel Quist, PhD candidate at The University of Kansas, with contributions from Kyle Mancuso, curatorial research fellow.
THANK YOU MEMBERS

We are so grateful to you, our members, for your continued support as we weather the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, your support is essential for maintaining our collections, programs, and exhibitions.

Along with the trials, the pandemic presented us with the opportunity to grow and learn. As a result, The Ringling staff has been truly inspired creating virtual programming for you to enjoy. This fall, we hope to invite you back to in-person events, but will continue to provide virtual content for those unable to attend in-person.

We will continue to follow safety guidelines to keep everyone safe and healthy while we strive to provide you with the quality programming and exhibitions that you expect from The Ringling.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

If you haven’t taken The Ringling membership survey yet, now is your chance—it only takes about 5–10 minutes to complete! This survey will provide valuable information to help us understand what you enjoy most about your membership and how we can improve to better meet your needs.

Click to take the survey!

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

The following programs are free for members. Tickets are required and will be available 30 days prior to each program.

**ARTIST TALK**
Howie Tsui with Curator Ola Wlusek  
WED, OCT 7, 3:00 PM

**BEHIND THE SCENES**
of the Howard Bros. Circus Model  
WED, OCT 14, 10:30 AM

**GALLERY CONVERSATION**
Spooky Stories  
WED, OCT 28, 1:00 PM

**CONTEMPORARY QUESTIONS**
About the Historic Circus  
WED, NOV 4, 1:00 PM

**VIRTUAL GALLERY TALK**
Syd Solomon  
MON, NOV 9, 1:00 PM

**GALLERY CONVERSATION**
Feeling Thankful  
WED, NOV 18, 1:00 PM

**GALLERY TALK**
Kabuki Modern  
WED, DEC 2, 1:00 PM

VIP AND CIRCLE MEMBER EVENTS

Supporting, Partner, and Circle Members. These events are by invitation only.

**VIRTUAL COFFEE AND CONVERSATION**
with Executive Director, Steven High  
FRI, OCT 23, 9:00 AM

**ARTIST TALK**
with John Sims  
THU, OCT 29, 5:30 PM

**VIRTUAL STATE OF THE RINGLING**
with Executive Director, Steven High  
TUE, NOV 10, 10:00 AM

**VIRTUAL EXHIBITION PREVIEW**
Kabuki Modern  
FRI, NOV 20, 4:00 PM
INHALE BEAUTY. EXHALE STRESS.

Join us for Member Mornings, Thursdays from 9:00 – 10:00 AM. This exclusive opportunity allows Members to enjoy the beautiful Bayfront Gardens before the Museum opens to the public. A different venue will be featured for Members to explore each week, and Mable's Coffee and Tea will be open and offering special Member discounts. Jennifer Price, Deputy Director of The Ringling said, “Mornings are a very special time on the grounds. In the current high-stress climate, we thought it would be wonderful to offer our members an additional hour of respite in our tranquil setting. Members can feel safe in knowing that plenty of room for social distancing is available on our 66-acre estate.”

EAT, DRINK, AND SEE GREAT ART!

The Ringling is excited to announce the opening of Mable’s Coffee and Tea, located above the Museum Store inside the McKay Visitors Pavilion. Mable’s Coffee and Tea proudly serves Starbucks® hot and cold beverages and features a number of made fresh daily salads, sandwiches, and parfaits along with baked goods to satisfy your sweet tooth.

Two additional food service venues on the estate will open soon. Also in the McKay Visitors Pavilion, The Ringling Grillroom will provide fine dining and beverages, and is scheduled to open October 12. The Banyan Garden Bistro, a more casual dining alternative located near the Circus Museum, will open in early 2021.

Be on the lookout for special pricing and events, exclusively for Members!

FUN FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES!

CIRCUS ABC
$14.95
Learn your ABCs at the circus with beautifully illustrated images of vintage circus posters from the Tibbals Circus Collection.

MEMBER DOUBLE DISCOUNT DAYS
DEC 6–12
Members receive 20% off (excludes sale items)

Support The Ringling by shopping for your holiday gifts at the Museum Store!

The Ringling
MUSEUM STORE
Open Daily 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM
Thursdays 9:00 AM – 5:30 PM
Located in the McKay Visitors Pavilion
941.359.5700 x1110
Jeff Hotchkiss, Board Chair

How long have you been affiliated with The Ringling? What, initially, piqued your interest in the Museum?

I’ve been on the board of The Ringling for seven years, joining in 2013 when I retired to Longboat Key (LBK) from Boston. During the 90s, my family would vacation on LBK during the March school break and I would bring my two daughters for a day of touring The Ringling. They loved walking the grounds, visiting the circus exhibits and touring Ca’ d’Zan. I always had an interest in museums and art from growing up in Pittsburgh and living in Boston and enjoyed the outstanding institutions in those cities. The Ringling has been a great way to introduce my daughters to the arts and develop their interest in museums. Since moving to LBK in 2012, it has been wonderful to see the growth and progress at The Ringling. It is a vastly different and dramatically improved place than the museum that we visited in the 90s.

What has been your favorite exhibition at the museum? What is your “dream” exhibition?

It is hard for me to pick a favorite exhibition at The Ringling. One aspect of The Ringling that I find most exciting is the incredible range and diversity of what is available at the museum. On permanent display are a wide range of exhibits from the circus, to Renaissance art, to decorative glass, to contemporary art and more, as well as a remarkable range of visiting exhibitions. There are also live performances, social events, and beautiful grounds to explore. Every time I visit the museum, I find something that becomes my new favorite only to be surpassed on my next visit. This diversity of exhibits and programs is what I think make The Ringling such a great institution.

What are your goals for your term as Chair? What direction do you see the Museum taking?

I am fortunate to assume the chairmanship at a time when The Ringling has recently instituted an ambitious long-term strategic plan. That plan focuses on the Strategic Initiatives of Inclusion, Inspiration, and Excellence. I am committed to continuing to execute against that plan and build on the progress of the past few years. At the same time, we are challenged by the environment we have recently encountered with the COVID-19 pandemic. I am committed to ensuring that as a Foundation Board we protect and preserve the heritage and legacy of The Ringling.

In this turbulent time, how do you see the Museum best serving the membership and the greater community?

The Ringling can and will play a major role in serving our community during these turbulent times. During periods of stress and anxiety, people need a safe and peaceful place to go to relax and rejuvenate themselves. The Ringling is open and welcoming to all and can provide that respite to everyone in the community. Through art and entertainment, we have the ability to bring people together and foster a better understanding of diverse points of view. At the same time our exhibits and performances challenge our visitors and expand their perspective.

What one personal quality or past experience do you bring to this position that will be most beneficial in leading the museum board?

Throughout my professional career, I have focused on working with teams and organizations to collectively achieve excellence. At The Ringling, we have a complex organization including staff, volunteers, board members, FSU personnel, donors, and visitors. My experience will help me provide leadership and direction to ensure that we can meet the needs of all of these groups and continue to deliver on our goals of Inclusion, Inspiration, and Excellence.
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

As Ringling’s School and Teacher Program Coordinator Katie Nickel introduces a group of first graders to the first artwork on their tour, *Cat and Green Leaves* by Saitō Kiyoshi, she asks them to look closely and observe the details. There’s a moment of quiet, and then several children raise their hands. Katie calls on a little boy who notices the cat doesn’t have a nose. “Yes,” another little girl chimes in, “he doesn’t have whiskers either.” Katie introduces the concept of stylized art to the students, who dive into observing other examples in the print where things aren’t quite as they look in real life.

For all intents and purposes, this is a typical museum field trip experience. It is engaging, conversational, and encourages the participants to carefully study four key works in the collection connected by an age-appropriate overarching theme. There’s just one big difference: the students are not sitting spread out on the polished wood floors of the Museum galleries in front of the print itself—instead, they’re seated at tables in their respective homes, studying the image on a screen. While there’s certainly an ineffable magic about being physically present in front of an original object, these virtual field trips provide us an opportunity to support classroom learning and instill a love of art for the next generation.

Back on the tour, the students are now examining *Family of Deer* by Rosa Bonheur. Unlike *Cat and Green Leaves*, this painting is vividly realistic. One little girl states the painting feels nervous. Katie asks what she sees that makes her say nervous. “Well,” the little girl paused. “The deer in the front is alert, and he’s looking at something.” “Yes!” chimes in another little girl, “and that’s a boy deer because boy deer have those things on their head! What are they called again?” “Antlers,” several of the students clarify at once. Katie takes her next cue from the students’ knowledge. “Ah, so we know male deer have antlers. In this painting, what do you suppose he uses those antlers for?”

Experiential learning opportunities across the nation have moved virtual, and The Ringling anticipated this shift by piloting virtual school tours earlier this spring. During the 2019–2020 school year, The Ringling served over 10,500 students on field trips before closing in March due to COVID-19. In 2020–2021, we will continue to make an impact through virtual programs, extending the opportunity to virtually visit our galleries to students throughout Florida. The chatter and laughter of students will be missed in the galleries this year, but they will continue to use Museum collections in their classrooms.

High school students will still make comparative studies of major Ringling works to the art history canon as they prepare to take the challenging AP Art History exam. Middle and high school students will continue to study Greek and Roman mythology and culture through painting and sculpture. Elementary students will continue to enhance their reading and writing skills by learning to draw evidence from a work of art to support a claim. Our littlest students will still engage in imaginative play, exploring works of art from inside the canvas. All students will still have full access to the transformative power of The Ringling’s collections without having to leave their classrooms or homes.

So what is the future of museum field trips? Are physical field trips a thing of the past or will virtual tours cease once the pandemic is over? Neither, according to Katie. She explains, “Virtual field trips provide us with the opportunity to expand our programming and impact throughout the state of Florida. We’ll continue this commitment even once in-person field trips resume and we have students physically returning to our galleries.”

Back on Zoom, the virtual field trip is just wrapping up when a student who hasn’t spoken yet raises his hand. Katie asks what is on his mind and he quietly says, “The cat reminds me of my grandma’s cat who died last year. He was black all over like that cat.” The tone in the virtual classroom grows serious. “You know, art is something that can help us when we feel sad,” Katie suggests, “Drawing nice memories you shared with your cat can help you smile when you remember him.” The little boy is quiet for a moment. Then, he says “I see what you mean. I think I’ll try to draw my grandma’s cat after this tour.”

Tours like this demonstrate the social and emotional benefits of conversations centered on art. Whether in-person or virtual, these experiences provide transformative opportunities for students to engage with the world and with one another.

The Ringling is proud to offer both pre-recorded virtual school tours and live educator-led virtual programs.

Click to learn more about virtual school programming.
More than 100 years after its use, the delicate silk riding costume of May Wirth gives little hint of her extraordinary feats like somersaulting from the back of one galloping horse to another. Instead, the beautifully handcrafted costume creates a palpable understanding of May Wirth's frame with a narrow waist and wide, powerful shoulders. The well-preserved red silk intimates the high quality of Wirth's act, but also suggests the great care the performer took in caring for such an expensive costume. In the galleries of the Circus Museum, this lovely costume brings to life the story of one of the circus' greatest performers, the "Somersaulting Queen of the Arena."

Born on June 6, 1894, in Queensland, Australia, May Wirth was adopted into the Wirth circus family and was taught balancing and acrobatic acts and equestrian skills. By the age of ten, she was a performing as a trick rider. She toured America on the 1912 Barnum & Bailey show, billed as "the Wonder Rider of the World," and was among the women who met with suffrage leaders while performing in New York. After touring throughout Europe, May Wirth returned to the United States to join the Ringling show in 1917 and was a featured attraction for almost two decades. Her act included feats like somersaulting backwards through rings while on horseback, leaping from the ground to the back of her galloping horse, and other feats that few other female riders have ever duplicated.

May Wirth was born in an era when her gender could easily have limited her options, but like many talented women before and after, she achieved extraordinary success through her talent, discipline, and dedication. The unique contributions of women like May Wirth to the circus—past and present—will be celebrated at The Ringling through a series of exhibitions and performance programs funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Unknown maker, Riding Costume worn by May Wirth, circa 1915. Red silk with white embroidery. Gift of May Wirth. SN1562.703.22.a
CHANCE TO WIN

- An overnight stay for two in The Ringling Guest Cottage
- Wine dinner in the Belvedere Tower of Ca’ d’Zan provided by Catering by Metz
- Bayfront breakfast served on Ca’ d’Zan Terrace provided by Catering by Metz
- A private tour of Ca’ d’Zan with Executive Director Steven High
- Two days of admission to the Museum of Art and Circus Museum
- Plus, splendid surprises curated especially for you!

CLICK FOR TICKETS + INFO

$100 per ticket. Watch the winning ticket be drawn on Facebook Live SAT, OCT 17 @ 6 PM!