Dear Friends,

Please join me in welcoming the return of the printed Members Magazine! We are categorizing this as the first step in a return to a more normal sense of operations at The Ringling. Our team worked to initially reinvent the museum, and is now busy with reinvigorating all things Ringling. For inspiration, we simply have to look out the window at the breathtaking beauty of our 66-acre campus or take a stroll through our magnificent galleries. For the last year, we have made every effort to provide a safe, clean place of respite for our members and visitors. We will continue those efforts, as more of you are able to return to campus. And be assured that we will continue to reach out to you via our virtual and online initiatives as long as necessary. We don’t want you to miss a single program, exhibition, or event!

We are pleased to have on view Saitō Kiyoshi Graphic Awakening. This exhibition, running through August 15, 2021, is a brilliant display of this Japanese artist’s work and is his first retrospective in the United States. A beautiful catalogue accompanies the exhibition.

Skyway 2021: A Contemporary Collaboration opens June 21. This exhibition, created in collaboration with the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg; the Tampa Museum of Art; and the University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum, is a celebration of artistic practices and highlights the work of artists in the Tampa Bay area.

Circus is always in our hearts and vision. I invite you to learn more about The Ringling Archives and the work they are doing in restoring the historic circus films of Buster Bailey. We are honored to introduce you to fellow member Hudson Smith and his generous gift to the Museum, given as a tribute to his childhood memories of attending the circus with his grandfather. And, speaking of circus, don’t miss this issue’s story about The Circus in Motion: The Ringling Archives. We are honored to have on view Saitō Kiyoshi’s Feline Designs and his first retrospective in the United States.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

Steven High
Executive Director

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**A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS**

**Art of Performance**
Support provided by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, Hasting Foundation, Public Supermarket Charters, Jane Merritt, and the Joint Place Sarasota Bradenton Airport. Paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues. Additional programming support is provided through the generosity of the Sheik Family Foundation.

**Family Programs**
Support provided by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation.

**Saitō Kiyoshi Graphic Awakening**

**Skyway 2021: A Contemporary Collaboration**

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**Support provided by**

Embrace the Arts Foundation.

**Paid for in part by**

Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues. Support for this exhibition was provided by the Gobioff Foundation; Gulf Coast Community Foundation; Herald-Tribune Media Group; John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Gift of Charles and Raye Chinn; and the Arthur F. and Ulla R. Searing Ringling Endowment. Catalogue support provided by Brown & Brown Insurance and the Stanton Storer Family Foundation.

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**Additional programming support is provided through**

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From the first performances of the modern circus in the 18th century, women have been celebrated as performers, producers, and supporters. In contemporary circus arts, women continue to innovate the form, adapting their art to embrace social commentary and community engagement while continuing to explore limits of the human body’s agility, strength, and flexibility.

Curatorial collaborations between The Ringling’s Performance and Circus programs position the museum as a unique home for international dialogue about the circus arts past, present, and future. The opportunity to juxtapose posters and photographs from the historical collections with the accomplishments of living artists creates a space for artists to reflect on their work and for audiences to appreciate the continued vibrancy of the circus arts.

With support from the NEA, Herald-Tribune Media Group, and Sarasota Magazine, a year-long series of events entitled Women in Circus explores contemporary and historical questions of women, performance, and the community of the circus arts through shows, film, exhibition, and educational programming. Over the course of the next twelve months, The Ringling will host live engagements, poster exhibitions, films, and artist talks with related scholars and creatives, and will be host to the 5th international VariAbilities Conference in partnership with New College of Florida and the University of Winchester (UK). Entitled Exhibiting Humanity: Inhabiting the Body, this year’s conference activities will frame a thoughtful approach to exploring the embodied experience of performers and draw international audiences to our archives and campus through virtual and on-site events.

What we now know as theatre arts has its roots in the same foundations as circus, and the cross-pollination of what seem to be two distinct disciplinary worlds is fascinating and ongoing. The Ringling’s contemporary performance programs have often featured vanguard and traditional circus, and non-circus artists who use the genre as technical foundation, narrative inspiration, or aesthetic framing. What we now know as theatre arts has its roots in the same foundations as circus, and the cross-pollination of what seem to be two distinct disciplinary worlds is fascinating and ongoing. The Ringling’s contemporary performance programs have often featured vanguard and traditional circus, and non-circus artists who use the genre as technical foundation, narrative inspiration, or aesthetic framing. The performance facet of this project includes two engagements with artists who are applying concepts of circus to their work in direct and indirect ways to delight and to sophisticated impacts for audiences. The 2021–2022 Art of Performance series will feature Lifted by Mimbre (UK) and Link Link Circus by Isabella Rossellini (USA) in two distinct kinds of women-led projects.

Mimbre is a London-based company creating nuanced, breathtaking, and highly skilled acrobatic theatre. Co-directed by Lina Johansson and Silvia Fratelli, the company uses circus and dance innovatively as a physical language to illuminate human connections and promote a positive image of women. Like many contemporary circus companies, they are also dedicated to the development of the art of circus through in-depth artistic research, skill sharing, and collaborative work across borders. Besides outdoor performances on The Ringling’s grounds, they will give multi-generational circus workshops for the community and visitors.

Their performance Lifted has toured extensively to circus and street theater festivals internationally. The work mixes dance, theatre, and circus to celebrate the expressions and impressions among three strong women as they move, lift, and balance each other. Award-winning actress and filmmaker Isabella Rossellini takes inspiration from the natural world in her new theatricalized lecture Link Link Circus. Illustrated with short comic films, home movies, and animation, Link Link Circus addresses the latest scientific discoveries about animal minds, intelligence, and emotions.

While not exactly circus, the artist carefully stages her theatrical work using circus devices and metaphors, and expertly employs the skills and surprising revelations of her animal guests. In many ways, this work is aligned with the role of the early, tented circus as a purveyor of information and experience with animals (and humans) who were otherwise inaccessible to the broader American population. In menageries and through performance with human counterparts, seeing animals at the circus shared an understanding that would otherwise have been impossible. Rossellini, an animal studies scholar herself, shares the stage with Charles Darwin, dog actors, and animal puppets to teach us about evolution and human–non-human relationships. While in Sarasota, this multi-talented legend will complement the live performances with a screening of her film series Green Porno.
Among the holdings of The Ringling Archives are films, in a variety of formats, which document the rich history of the American circus. As moving images, these films convey the energy and excitement of a circus performance perhaps better than any other media. It is likely for this reason that the films are some of the most frequently requested materials in the archival collections. The archives has successfully secured grant funding to help preserve these films and make them more accessible to researchers.

The Ringling Archives received funds from the Council on Library and Information Research to digitize 221 films shot by circus fan Buster Bailey, generously donated to The Ringling by Howard and Janice Tibbals. The films have been stabilized, digitized, and are now accessible on Florida State University’s digital platform, DigiNole. Footage features a variety of acts including clowns, daredevils, ribbon dancers, unicyclists, and many more.

In collaboration with the Sherman Grinberg Film Library, The Ringling Archives received a grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation to digitize the silent Pathé 35mm newsreel entitled The Biggest Show on Earth Thrills the Coolidges. This recently rediscovered film features rare footage of circus owner John Ringling hosting President and Mrs. Coolidge at a performance of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows in 1928.

In the fall of 2020, The Ringling Archives was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to carry out an assessment of its Audio Visual collection. With the help of consultant Lance Watsky and Filmic Technologies, the archives will be analyzing its 16mm film using pioneering equipment developed by engineers Josef Marcs and Jim Lindner. This equipment will enable the archives to assess the condition of each film, as well as to produce a working print and still images of each individual frame. The Ringling Archives will be the first archives in the United States to test this exciting new technology.

The Ringling Archives Film Preservation Project

The Tibbals Circus Collection of Buster Bailey Films. This project is supported by a grant from the Council on Library and Information Research (CLIR). The grant program is made possible through the generosity of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

THE CIRCUS IN MOTION

2021–2022 SEASON

LIVE PERFORMANCE. ARTIST TALKS. MASTER CLASSES.

Subscription sales begin in August.

For Sponsorship and Advertising opportunities or to join our mailing list, email us at Sponsorship@ringling.org

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR ART OF PERFORMANCE SPONSORS

Additional programming support is provided through the generosity of the Shank Family Foundation.
Family programs at The Ringling make an indelible impact on the children who participate, inspiring future museum supporters and art lovers. By combining fun, hands-on learning, and age-appropriate interpretation of museum objects, family programs allow participants to connect with The Ringling’s collections and explore their own creativity.

When the pandemic made our in-person family programs unsafe, we wanted to find a solution that could still provide kids with special opportunities to engage and create with us. While we had already created ample online resources (videos, worksheets, live programs, and video tutorials) for families using basic materials they already had at home, kids weren’t getting to use the unique and high-quality supplies we offered at our in-person programs.

Enter Art Kits! Our Art Kits include supplies you won’t find around the house, such as Styrofoam squares for printmaking, patterned washi tape, glitter pens, colorful beads, and specially-themed stickers. Our Family Programs Manager, Kallie Turner, designed each Art Kit around a monthly theme, allowing families to make multiple different projects throughout the month using the same core set of supplies. Once families have their Art Kits, they can watch Kallie demonstrate how to use them in a series of Family Art Making (FAM) videos, each featuring a different project, released each Saturday morning throughout the month and then always available via the Museum’s YouTube page.

What makes this program even better? It’s totally free for the families who participate, thanks to the generous support of the Gulf Coast Community Foundation. Art Kits are reserved online and are available on a first-come, first-served basis, with families able to reserve up to five kits each month. [We know that asking siblings to share cool supplies will lead to squabbling, so we designate one Art Kit per kid, rather than per family.] We launched our pilot program in February, and the initial set of Art Kits sold out within an hour! Lesson learned, we tripled the number of kits available for the next month, being sure to set some aside for families we serve through community partners such as local housing authorities.

Art Kits have allowed us to extend our programming to families throughout our community in a safe way. The resulting art projects, some of which are pictured here, are astounding in their level of thoughtfulness and creativity. Said one participating family, “It was just great to turn the TV off and do something one on one... it’s just wonderful!”

Families are excited to share their creations with us; see more by joining our Family Facebook Group.

Transform, Together.

We envision thriving communities with opportunities for all.
By Christopher Jones
Stanton B. and Nancy W. Kaplan Curator of Photography and Media Arts
Ola Wlusek
Keith D. and Linda L. Monda Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

This summer, The Ringling presents Skyway 20/21: A Contemporary Collaboration, an ambitious exhibition that highlights new artwork from throughout the Tampa Bay region. Following up on the successful first Skyway exhibition in 2017, this second iteration is a multi-institutional project, co-organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg; the Tampa Museum of Art; The Ringling Museum; and new collaborative partner for 2021, the University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum in Tampa. Curators from each of these venues reviewed over 300 submissions, responses to an open call to artists from Sarasota, Manatee, Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Pasco Counties that was released in 2019. Independent curator and scholar, Claire Tancons, who has a history of curating significant biennials around the world, is the invited guest juror and helped to make the final selection of artists; an initial group of 62 who received personal studio visits from local curators. To accompany the exhibition, participating institutions are producing and co-publishing a catalogue with curatorial texts and full-color images of work by each exhibiting artist.

For Skyway 20/21, The Ringling is presenting new and exciting works by eight artists and artistic collectives. Included are muralist and installation artist Ya Levy La’ford; performance and multi-media artist Kalup Linzy; photo-based artist Noelle Mason; Carrie Boucher’s social practice-based arts outreach collective NOMAD Art Bus; media art collective OK! Transmit; painter Eric Ondina; sculptor and installation artist Heather Rosenbach; and painter Jake Troyli. Many of the artists represented in Skyway 20/21 work in familiar fine art media, such as painting, sculpture, or photography, but extend their practices into interdisciplinary approaches to art making. Through site-specific investigations and community engagements, their work expands the artist studio and gallery space into the community at large.

Each of these artists is creating work that has a significant impact in the Tampa Bay area, but resonates far beyond the local. Their practices inhabit the intersections of the personal and the political. These artists mine their unique experiences, the experiences of their communities, and the collective consciousness of the digital era in order to explore the politics of visibility and agency in the 21st century. The exhibition will be presented throughout The Ringling, including inside the Searing Wing and Monda Gallery for Contemporary Art, as well as in the Bayfront Gardens, but projects by Skyway 20/21 artists will also occur away from the museum proper in Sarasota’s neighborhoods.

DISCOVER MORE @ ringling.org
By Rhiannon Paget
Curator of Asian Art

Currently on view, Saitō Kiyoshi: Graphic Awakening, celebrates a recent gift of over 100 prints by Saitō Kiyoshi (Japanese, 1907–1997) to The Ringling from Charles and Robyn Citrin. Visitors to the exhibition will see many of the imaginative designs that made Saitō Kiyoshi one of Japan’s most beloved printmakers, especially in the United States. Saitō’s corpus encompasses a wide range of appealing themes, including urban and natural landscapes, female figures, theater, architecture, and cats. His dozens of prints of cats in various attitudes—wily, languid, quizzical, haughty, affectionate—reveal the artist’s sensitive eye and playful sense of humour.

Saitō’s first major cat design was Steady Gaze (Cat) (1948), depicting an owlish feline regarding the viewer with the disdain characteristic of its species (fig. 1). Theophile-Alexandre Steinlen’s (French, 1859–1923) famous 1896 poster for the Parisian nightclub Le Chat Noir was perhaps the inspiration for its flattened ears and cool stare. For the background of Steady Gaze (Cat), Saitō layered deep red with dark grey mokume-zuri, or woodgrain printing, in which an impression is made from a piece of prominently grained wood. Saitō adopted this technique from the prints of modernist artists that he admired—Paul Gauguin (French, 1848–1903), Edvard Munch (Norwegian, 1863–1944), and Odilon Redon (French, 1840–1916)—who had in turn learned it from 19th century Japanese print makers, such as Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858).

Time magazine reproduced Steady Gaze (Cat) in its September 1951 issue—just a few weeks after Saitō was awarded the Japan Prize at the São Paulo Biennial for his print Steady Gaze (Flower) (1951), which is also on display in the exhibition. Saitō recalled that due to this level of publicity, “my gallery was swamped with orders for Cat from around the world. In no time at all, the print disappeared from Japan.”

Saitō’s affinity for mokume-zuri is given full play in a group of cat designs from the 1970s, inspired by the furry gang that congregated at the home of a friend (fig. 3). For these prints, he selected multiple pieces of wood with contrasting grain patterns and arranged them in different directions to represent the animal’s fur. These collage-like compositions have a sense of rhythm and tactility that makes them among the most visually compelling of Saitō’s later works.

More of Saitō’s fabulous felines are on view in Saitō Kiyoshi: Graphic Awakening through August 15, 2021, and are reproduced in the exhibition’s catalogue, available in the Museum Store.

PURRFECTION IN PRINT
Saitō Kiyoshi’s Feline Designs

Saitō lost no time in coming up with new feline designs to satisfy his expanding audience, and henceforth, cats became a perennial feature in his oeuvre. Editions of up to 200 impressions indicate considerable demand for these prints. However, it was not only their charming subject matter that delighted the crowds — Saitō’s cat prints were cleverly conceived and executed. Fluid lines describe the animals’ lissome and graceful forms, while lively textures animate the compositions. With just a few marks, shapes, and contours, Saitō skilfully captured their distinctive moods and manners (fig. 2). When some of Saitō’s cat prints from the collection of Karl and Madira Bickel were first exhibited at The Ringling in 1957, Lawrence Dame, a reporter for the Herald-Tribune, hailed them as “masterpieces of the suggestive.”
Hudson Smith and his wife, Anne, have been Circle members at The Ringling for 10 years. After a degree in chemical engineering and prominent career that has taken him around the world, Hudson and Anne retired to Venice, Florida in 2006. It is there that he was finally able to put a lot of time into his hobbies of traveling and photography. After every trip that he and Anne take, Hudson curates a photographic book documenting their incredible journey. In 2011, after amassing a considerable collection of photographs of Venice, Florida he completed a book on Venice and even sold around 400 copies to city government, locals, and even travelers. However, his love of photography and appreciation of the arts is not exactly what led him to The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. Like many, his relationship with The Ringling began long ago with the circus.

One of Hudson’s fondest memories of his childhood is when his grandfather used to take him to see The Ringling Brothers Circus in Illinois. “I remember being a little kid and my grandfather would take me to see the circus every summer when they came through his little town. We would get up early in the morning to watch them set up the tent. It was such a spectacle to watch them set-up and see the elephants helping to raise the tent poles. We would come back for the circus show at night, and after the show we’d stay late to watch the tent drop.”

In 2020, while revising his original estate plan, Hudson decided that he wanted to do something in honor of that memory that is so special to him. He decided to leave an incredible legacy gift to The Ringling for $1,000,000 from his IRA. This generous gift will benefit the Circus Museum, Bayfront Gardens, and Ca’ d’Zan. “The Ringling adds so much value to the community. It has wonderful support from FSU and leaving this gift ensures that future generations can enjoy it. The Ringling is a very valuable and distinctive place in the United States. It is important to preserve its legacy. Hopefully my story will inspire someone to give as well.”

It is easy to understand why the Circus Museum at The Ringling is so special to Hudson, and why leaving a planned gift to the Museum has brought him joy. For additional information on how to give a gift from your IRA or to learn more about giving to The Ringling through your will or estate plan, please contact Michelle A. Young at michelle.young@ringling.fsu.edu or 941.374.0214.

PHOTO, ABOVE, RIGHT: Tibbals Circus Collection of Allen J. Lester Papers, HST000599. On a sandy lot, a working elephant is assisting with the ‘set-up’ of the big top. Spectators are standing at the stake line watching, 1952.
Thank you, Members, for your continued dedication and support. You have seen us through several challenges over the past year and we are honored that you chose to stick with us!

We are pleased to have resumed some in-person programs for our Members this year, like our new Member Mornings every Thursday from 9:00–10:00 AM. This program was in response to member requests to provide a time to visit The Ringling safely with less of a crowd due to current circumstances. If you haven’t already, we hope you will take advantage of the opportunity to enjoy the featured venue before it opens to the public!

In addition, we launched a new program this year, Members & Music at Ca’ d’Zan, featuring live, acoustic music by the bay and self-touring the first floor of Ca’ d’Zan after regular hours of admission.

We were thrilled to be able to host a few additional onsite programs this year. Our Circle members enjoyed a presentation by Dr. Sarah Cartwright on Frans Hals: Detecting a Decade. It was a beautiful night on the Museum of Art loggia. In March, we hosted a limited exhibition dinner at The Ringling Grillroom in which Dr. Rhiannon Paget presented facts and highlights from Saitō Kiyoshi: Graphic Awakening. We are planning, and look forward to, a Members reception in June for Skyway 20/21: A Contemporary Collaboration.

As we continue to rebuild membership programs and events as circumstances evolve, we look forward to bringing our Members back to The Ringling Bayfront Gardens and galleries, while maintaining the necessary safety precautions. We will share upcoming events with you via Member e-blasts, so stay tuned! In the meantime, we hope you will take advantage of your membership benefit of free access to our virtual educational public programs. A full listing of exhibitions, programs, and events is available at ringling.org.

Your contributions to The Ringling provide ongoing support to our exhibitions and programs and are essential to the continued success of The Ringling. Thank you!

VISIT OUR OTHER DINING CONCEPTS IN BETWEEN GALLERY VISITS

**Mable’s Coffee & Tea**
OPEN DAILY
10 A.M. - 4 P.M.
2ND FLOOR MCKAY VISITORS PAVILION

**The Wanderer Chef**
OPEN DAILY
10 A.M. - 5 P.M.
PARKED OUTSIDE THE BANYAN CAFE

**Grillroom at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art**
OPEN DAILY • 11 A.M. - 7 P.M.
Featuring modern American fare in a beautiful setting overlooking the grounds of The Ringling. Dine in or dine outdoors with us, or enjoy at home with curbside pickup.
Kiln-forming glass is an ancient technique that has witnessed a revival in the contemporary studio glass movement. Australian artist Judi Elliott is one such artist who has gained an international reputation for her experimentation and innovations in this technique. The kiln-forming process involves cutting pieces from sheet glass to create the design layout for the composition. These pieces are meticulously assembled to fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. Then two to three firings in the kiln fuse the multiple layers together, and the form is further manipulated by slumping the fused glass into a mold to create its three-dimensional shape.

Throughout her artistic career in glass spanning over thirty years, Elliott has become best-known for abstract, geometric compositions that are inspired by architecture. *Enrico’s Walls* (fig. 1) is from her latest series responding to the built environment of her home and studio in Canberra, Australia, where she has lived since 1998. The residence was designed by the prominent Italian-born architect Enrico Taglietti (1926-2019) in 1979 and completed in 1983. The vibrant composition of *Enrico’s Walls* evokes the home’s asymmetrical and sculptured walls. Elliott has said, “I find that each building or wall that one encounters in life is embedded with the lives of the people who had inhabited them.” As such, the artist’s visual vocabulary conveys her emotional response to her home and studio in kiln-formed glass. Elliott further elaborates on the subject matter she returns to time and again, saying, “The house is very important to me. It is embedded deep in my psyche. In my house, I am most deeply myself. The house is the anchor in my life. It is the seat of my life’s dramas. It is where I think and dream. It contains my studio where I make my art. So my life has always been entrenched in my home.”

Additionally, Jungian psychology has deeply impacted the artist’s work. Elliott creatively imbues layers of meaning related to the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung’s (1875-1961) musings on the psyche, dreams, and the subconscious. In viewing the bright and colorful front of *Enrico’s Walls*, consider the artist’s intent with this depiction symbolizing the home’s persona, like an individual’s social character presented to the outside world. As the viewer encounters the distinct back (fig. 2), the contrasting composition of the building’s silhouette against a blue sky is meant to represent the Jungian concept of the shadow, one’s hidden side that may appear unconsciously in dreams.

*Enrico’s Walls* is currently on view in The Kotler-Coville Glass Pavilion.
SAVINGS ARE IN BLOOM

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10% Off jewelry, scarves, and bags*
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