



SHELBURNE  
MUSEUM

SPRING

20  
24



ALL ABOARD  
THE RAILROAD IN AMERICAN ART  
1840–1955





## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR THOMAS DENENBERG

We are full steam ahead on the coming season.

First, I'd like to invite you to Community Day on May 11, which is opening day. We swing open our gates with a warm welcome of free admission for the day along with special programming, live music, and new exhibitions.

In the Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education, *New England Now: Strange States* is one of five special exhibitions that open this season. This is the third in a biennial series that brings into focus the work of regional contemporary artists. This season's theme, masterfully executed by Curator Carolyn Bauer, taps into the rich historical New England fascination with the fantastic for a thought provoking and sensational exhibition.

Meanwhile, Kory Rogers, Francie and John Downing Senior Curator of American Art, has staged a collection intervention, by inviting renowned British ceramicist Paul Scott to offer his take on Shelburne's decorative arts collection. The result is a bespoke outsized jug, similar to the monumental jugs on view in Variety Unit, that references the Museum while imbuing the jug with his own unique mark.

In late June, *All Aboard: The Railroad in American Art, 1840-1955*, will explore the relationship between technology and creative culture and will feature 40 masterworks from across the country. Organized by Dixon Gallery and Gardens, The Joslyn Art Museum, and Shelburne Museum, the project is yet another example of the many ways we leverage our renowned collections to bring world class exhibitions to our audiences here in Vermont. This would not be possible without the generous and stalwart support of Donna and Marvin Schwartz.

Spring means the return of schoolchildren to the grounds, and the Education Department is set to relaunch Passport to Learning, our flagship educational program, with refreshed offerings for the thousands of students who will visit on field trips this season. Gratitude and thanks to the Marie and John Zimmermann Fund for ongoing generous support. I am pleased that Owl Cottage will be back online and ready for young creatives to enjoy this special space. Summer camps are poised to bring even more youthful energy to the grounds. Hats off to Stiller Family Foundation Director of Education Jason Vrooman and the staff at the Education Department for ramping up these and many other programs this coming season.

I look forward to seeing you this season.  
Sincerely yours,

Thomas Denenberg, PhD  
John Wilmerding Director & CEO

# Confected, Borrowed & Blue is a Contemporary Take on Shelburne's Ceramics Collection

Last autumn, British ceramic artist Paul Scott embarked on an extensive exploration of Shelburne Museum, immersing himself in its historical structures, perusing its collections, and delving into its archives. His aim? A fact-finding mission intended to deepen his understanding of the Museum's cultural significance and the visionary ideals of its founder, Electra Havemeyer Webb (1888-1960), informing the creation of a new piece commissioned for the Museum's collection. His "intervention" is to be the first in a series of projects by renowned contemporary artists.

Scott, known for his provocative reinterpretation of historical ceramic design, was particularly drawn to the Variety Unit's jug room, which showcases 13 rare oversized ceramic jugs. Ranging in height from 12 to 24 inches, these mammoth-scaled jugs originally served dual purposes—as trade signs prominently featured in the windows of wholesale pottery warehouses and as cherished wedding and anniversary gifts adorned with the names of the betrothed.



(above) Contemporary ceramicist Paul Scott's bespoke jug is inspired by Shelburne Museum's history and collections. Here is the jug in process.



Inspired by his recent production of 15-inch-tall "Sampler Jugs" as part of his "New American Scenery" transferware series, Scott decided to create a large jug to contribute to Shelburne's display. After months of research and design, he created a jug whose imagery delves into the history of the Museum both acknowledging the source of the wealth that funded Webb's visionary collecting and celebrating prized pieces in the collection.

Scott's jug captures the Museum's story chronologically from its base, starting with the word "sugar" and utilizes historical Staffordshire plate border patterns to frame and celebrate the iconic objects from the collection that mark Webb's visionary legacy.

Scott's Shelburne Museum Sampler Jug is showcased as the centerpiece in his upcoming exhibition *Confected, Borrowed & Blue: Transferware by Paul Scott* on view from May 11 through October 20 in Variety Unit.

Kory Rogers, Francie and John Downing Senior Curator of American Art



(above) Finished jug by British ceramicist Paul Scott. His work was inspired by Shelburne Museum's history and collections.

(left) Outsized jugs in the mammoth jug display in Variety Unit. They were used as trade signs and wedding gifts.



# All Aboard: The Railroad in American Art

Charles Louis Heyde, *Steam Train in North Williston, Vermont*, ca. 1856. Oil on canvas, 20 9/16 x 35 3/16 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, gift of Edith Hopkins Walker. 1959-49.1. Photography by Andy Duback.

As the United States rode the rails into the modern era, painters captured the changes wrought by the new technology. Indeed, few inventions have engendered such a complete reorganization of American culture or galvanized such creative response. Perhaps only the internet vies for the top prize and, even at that, the digital revolution is literally amorphous when compared to the wholesale changes wrought by the railroad to the cultural geography of North America. The Iron Horse brought economic prosperity, fueled the rise of cities, and created unparalleled social mobility, while at the same time displacing Indigenous cultures, provoking labor unrest, and serving as the prime mover for a young nation stepping out on the world stage. Time and time again, railroads provided the setting for painters exploring the drama of modern America, a heterogeneous people and place coalescing into something new.



Samuel Woolf, *The Under World*, ca. 1909–10. Oil on canvas, 22 1/2 x 30 1/2 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; Funds provided by a private Richmond foundation, 95.101. Photography by Travis Fullerton. © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Vermont's own Charles Heyde (1822–1892) is an archetype, one of many 19th century painters who sought to make sense of the conflict between the promise of the railroad and the potential for change, even loss. This moment in American visual culture, aptly described as “The Machine in the Garden,” by literary critic Leo Marx, is on full display in Heyde's *Steam Train in North Williston, Vermont*, ca. 1856, where a small train augurs change, symbolized by the adjacent field of cleared trees. Within years of the arrival of the Vermont Central Railroad in 1850, North Williston would boast grist mills, a poultry warehouse, cheese factory, creameries, and New England's first cold storage plant, enabling the exportation of meat and other perishables throughout the Northeast. Countless other artists such as Asher Durand (1796–1886), John Frederick Kensett (1816–1872), and George Inness (1825–1894) would chronicle the development of the railroad—often depicting the scene as a promised land.

As the United States moved off the farm and into the city in the decades that bracketed the turn of the century, the scene shifted for artists fascinated by the subway. Subterranean mass transportation entered the popular imagination in 1863 with the advent of the London Underground, followed by advancements around the globe, including in New York. Samuel Woolf (1880–1948) captured the excitement of riding the city's new subway system in his 1909–10 painting *The Under World*. Opened in 1904, the Interborough Rapid Transit Company, or IRT, offered an alternative to earlier elevated rail systems and accommodation for all strata of New York society, from the immigrant family at right to the uniformed messenger boy reading the newspaper in the center. The painting's theatrical focus, however, is at left, where a man in evening dress leans over to whisper confidences to a woman dressed as a fashion plate, complete with a fur collar and plumed hat. Employing a brushy realism, Woolf conjures

a place where class, ethnicity, and gender roles slip earlier societal expectations, and gentility is redefined in the new public space of the passenger car.

As the economic and political center of the United States migrated from New England to an idealized “middle America” in the 20th century, visual culture kept pace. Painters such as Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975), an artist trained in New York and Paris, eschewed earlier sentimental traditions or the new European movement toward abstraction in favor of a sinuous, exaggerated realism that rendered the American scene as if in a dream state.

**Engines were the most impressive things that came into my childhood. To go down to the depot and see them come in, belching black smoke, with their big headlights shining and their bells ringing and their pistons clanking, gave me a feeling of stupendous drama, which I have not lost to this day.**

– Thomas Hart Benton, *An Artist in America*, 1937

Benton's *Engineer's Dream* of 1931, despite the cheerful, illustrative palette and comic pose of the railway worker at right, is in fact the stuff of nightmare. An engineer, asleep in his bed, conjures a steam locomotive, canted as if caught by camera or projected on a movie screen, speeding to the precipice of a washed-out bridge while a forlorn figure is caught in the blinding sweep of the headlamp, frantically waving a red signal flag. The diminutive engineer—perhaps the sleeping protagonist—has leapt from the controls to an uncertain fate. The painting is fittingly symbolic of economic conditions in the United States two years into the Great Depression.

*All Aboard: The Railroad in American Art, 1840–1955* features 40 masterworks of American painting, borrowed from museums across the country to explore the relationship between technology and creative culture. Organized by Dixon Gallery and Gardens, in Memphis, Tennessee, The Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska, and Shelburne Museum, the project is yet another example of the many ways we leverage our renowned collections to bring world class exhibitions to our audiences here in Vermont. The exhibition is accompanied by a diverse schedule of programs and amplified by an elegant scholarly catalogue available in the Museum Store. *All Aboard: The Railroad in American Art, 1840–1955*, on view in Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education, Murphy Gallery, June 22 through October 20.

Thomas Denenberg, *John Wilmerding Director & CEO*



Thomas Hart Benton, *Engineer's Dream*, 1931. Oil on panel, 29 7/8 x 41 3/4 in. Memphis Brooks Museum of Art; Eugenia Buxton Whitnel Funds, 75.1. © T.H. and R.P. Benton Trusts / Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.





THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING SHELBURNE MUSEUM!

A community built on generosity has always been at the heart of Shelburne Museum. This is never more evident than when we present the Annual Report of Gifts. It is inspiring to see the pages of names, each of which represent a commitment to the Museum as well as to our visitors—the thousands of schoolchildren, art lovers, scholars, travelers, artists, and hobbyists who hail from across the country and around the world—all of whom come to be entertained and enlightened by the magic that is Shelburne Museum.

On behalf of the Staff and Board of Shelburne Museum, please except our deepest thanks and gratitude for the outpouring of support this past year. We look forward to continuing this important work as we endeavor to fulfill the vision of our founder and make the Shelburne Museum a world-class center of culture and education for everyone.

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IN MEMORIAM

Samuel Blatchley Webb, Jr.

Sam Webb, long-time Trustee, devoted supporter of Shelburne Museum, and grandson of Museum Founder Electra Havemeyer Webb, died peacefully on his 85th birthday, January 7, 2024.

Sam’s service on the Museum Board of Trustees spanned from 1968 to 2010 for more than four decades devoted to the Museum. He also served as Board President. In that role he would stop at the Museum offices before going to work at the University of Vermont where he was Assistant to the President and return to the Museum after work to finish up.

He was named Trustee Emeritus in 2010.

Webb remained engaged with the Museum his entire life, visiting the beloved Brick House during the summer and regaling visitors with memories of his grandmother,



Sam Webb on the porch of Stagecoach Inn at the Museum's 75th Anniversary Gala in 2022.

Sunday dinners there, and glorious childhood days spent along the shores of Lake Champlain. His fondness for the collections was broad and deep, said his wife Marshall Webb, so much so that he didn’t have any one favorite collection. He loved them all.

He is survived by his wife of 37 years, Marshall, his sons: S. Watson, Edward W. (Catherine), William V. (Sarah), and his daughter, M. Samantha H. (Michael). He is also survived by his eight grandchildren and one great grandchild.





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Shelburne Museum's Annual Report of Gifts reflects donations made between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024, to the Annual Fund or a restricted fund. If your name is not listed in this Report of Gifts, it may be because you asked to remain anonymous.

An asterisk (\*) next to a name indicates that the individual has passed away.

If we have made any errors, please accept our apologies and notify us to ensure that our records are correct.



# Cultural Patrimony and Shelburne's Native American Collection



(above) Pots from Southwestern Pueblos on view in the 2023 focus exhibition *Built from the Earth: Pueblo Pottery from the Anthony and Teresa Perry Collection* in Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education, Murphy Gallery. Photography by Andy Duback.



Maker formerly known [Kotiyit (Cochiti Pueblo)], *Storage Jar*, 1860–80. Clay and pigment, 15 1/2 x 18 1/2 x 18 1/2 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, Anthony and Teresa Perry Collection of Native American Art. 2022-16.2. Photography by Andy Duback.

In January, an update to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) took effect and prompted major museums to pull items from exhibition and even close entire exhibitions to allow for closer evaluation of their collections, drawing national media attention.

NAGPRA was enacted in 1990 to create a process for museums and federal agencies to repatriate Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony. The recent revision to NAGPRA is meant to strengthen the authority and role of Tribes by requiring deference to Indigenous knowledge of lineal descendants, Tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations when considering items for repatriation.

After NAGPRA originally took effect, Shelburne Museum's Native American collection was evaluated. None of the items were claimed for repatriation. Shelburne's collection, however, has not been on exhibition for nearly two decades. It was removed from exhibition to await a more culturally responsive interpretation. Today, more than 80 Tribal Nations are represented in the Museum's collection of nearly 700 items from across North America, including the recently gifted Perry Collection, a sampling of which was featured in last year's exhibition *Built From the Earth: Pueblo Pottery from the Anthony and Teresa Perry Collection*.

The collection is now the focus of the Museum's Native American Initiative, which includes the Perry Center for Native American Art. As part of this project, the Museum has been closely collaborating with Indigenous culture bearers and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers in evaluating items acquired by the Museum to be sure that any considered to be of historical, traditional, or cultural importance are repatriated, and to ensure that items in the collection are handled with the utmost cultural sensitivity and highest standard of stewardship, conservation, and care.

"From the outset, collaboration with Indigenous people has been a cornerstone of the Perry Center for Native American Art," said Nancie Ravenel, Director of Collections and Conservation. "More than 46 individuals, including Tribal leaders, Tribal members, scholars, and culture bearers, have consulted with the Museum on this project so far, and we look forward to working with more. Building these important relationships will continue indefinitely."



Maker formerly known [Halona:wa (Zuni Pueblo)], *Polychrome Pictorial Jar*, date unknown. Clay and pigment, 12 1/2 x 13 x 13 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, Anthony and Teresa Perry Collection of Native American Art. 2023-5.20. Photography by Andy Duback.

# New England Now: Strange States

## Studio visits unveil works in progress for upcoming exhibition

When working with contemporary artists, one of the greatest rewards is the ability to visit studios. These informal meetings are a treat that affords the opportunity to see and discuss works with the artists who made them, often in the space the art is created.

Earlier this year, Kat Redniss, Public Programs Educator, and I journeyed to Boston to visit four of the artists fervently creating new work for the exhibition *New England Now: Strange States*. Our focus honed in on the creative realms of Tara Sellios, Nicole Duennebier, and the Safarani sisters Farzaneh and Bahareh.

Our studio visits extended beyond mere observation; they became opportunities for engaging conversations. Interviews with the artists unveiled the inspirations, challenges, and visions behind their evolving creations. Video recordings of our insightful conversations will be made available, providing a glimpse into their studios and a greater understanding of their artistic process and work. We can't wait to share their final works of art with our visitors and those by the other eight participating artists in *New England Now: Strange States*, on view in Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education, Colgate Gallery, May 11 through October 20.

Carolyn Bauer, *Curator*



Tara Sellios walked us through her unique multistep artistic process in her South Boston, Massachusetts, studio, including showing us a sneak peek at the Saint Lucy assemblage sculpture she was building, which will be the subject of her final photograph.



Sisters Farzaneh and Bahareh Safarani in their Norwood, Massachusetts, studio sitting in front of the beginning elements of the large painting they are producing for *New England Now: Strange States*. The work will evolve through the production of choreographed video that will project on top of their finished painting.



(left and above) Nicole Duennebier in her Malden, Massachusetts, studio sharing how the three paintings she is creating, including the one on the table in front of her, are a slight departure from her other work, with a focus on a nearby historic cemetery that "feels like old, scary New England," she said.



# 2024 Event Highlights May-July

Spring and early summer bring festive, fun, and fresh new experiences! Please check [shelburnemuseum.org](http://shelburnemuseum.org) for registration information and ticket prices. Better yet—sign up for our e-newsletter on the website and keep up on all the happenings throughout the season.

## MAY

Friday, May 10, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

### MEMBER EVENT | EXHIBITION OPENING

#### New England Now: Strange States

Curator talk, light refreshments, cash bar. Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education, Colgate Gallery. Please visit website to register.

Saturday, May 11, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

### OPENING DAY: MUSEUM OPENS FOR THE SEASON WITH COMMUNITY DAY

Highlights of the day include a seed swap, musical performances, gallery talks, guided nature walks, drop-in artmaking, and more. Free admission.

Friday, May 17, 8:30–10:00 a.m.

### SENSORY FRIENDLY MORNINGS

This program supports visitors of all ages with varying social and sensory-processing needs. “Know Before You Go” materials, limited numbers of noise-cancelling headphones, fidget toys, and a break room will be available for visitor use. Free; advance registration requested.

Support for Sensory Friendly Mornings is provided by: 

## JUNE

Friday, June 7, 5:00–7:30 p.m.

### FREE FIRST FRIDAY EVE

Art-based activities, live music, food trucks, lawn games, and community! Free admission.

Free First Friday Eves are made possible by: 

And with generous support from Lois H. McClure and an anonymous family foundation.

Sunday, June 9, 2:00–4:00 p.m.

### GARDEN STROLL

Delight in the beautiful seasonal blooms that adorn the iconic Brick House while enjoying garden tours, local libations, and garden-party themed fare. Brick House. Visit website for tickets.

Tuesday, June 11, 5:30–7:00 p.m.

### MINDFUL YOGA

Tour and art-based meditation in a special exhibition, followed by an all-level, outdoor yoga class led by instructor Lynn Alpeter. Pre-registration required. Bring your own yoga mat. Various locations in galleries and on campus. \$10 for Museum Members, \$15 for non-members; advance registration required.

Thursday, June 20, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

### MEMBER EVENT | EXHIBITION OPENING

#### All Aboard: The Railroad in American Art, 1840-1955

Curator talk, light refreshments, cash bar. Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education, Murphy Gallery. Please visit website to register.

Saturday, June 22, 8:30–10:00 a.m.

### SENSORY FRIENDLY MORNINGS

This program supports visitors of all ages with varying social and sensory-processing needs. “Know Before You Go” materials, limited numbers of noise-cancelling headphones, fidget toys, and a break room will be available for visitor use. Free; advance registration requested.

Support for Sensory Friendly Mornings is provided by: 

## JULY

Tuesday, July 2, 5:30–7:00 p.m.

### MINDFUL YOGA

Tour and art-based meditation in a special exhibition, followed by an all-level, outdoor yoga class led by instructor Lynn Alpeter. Pre-registration required, bring your own yoga mat. \$10 for Museum Members, \$15 for non-members; advance registration required.

Friday, July 5, 5:00–7:30 p.m.

### FREE FIRST FRIDAY EVE

Art-based activities, live music, cookout fare, lawn games, and community! Free admission.

Free First Friday Eves are made possible by: 

And with generous support from Lois H. McClure and an anonymous family foundation.

Saturday, July 20, 8:30–10:00 a.m.

### SENSORY FRIENDLY MORNINGS

This program supports visitors of all ages with varying social and sensory-processing needs. “Know Before You Go” materials, limited numbers of noise-cancelling headphones, fidget toys, and a break room will be available for visitor use. Free; advance registration requested.

Support for Sensory Friendly Mornings is provided by: 



## Owl Cottage Activity Center Returns!

Owl Cottage, an interactive play space beloved by generations of children, reopens to the public this season. Creative souls of all ages are invited to try their hand at simple artmaking, browse the library of children’s books, and engage in self-guided play with a variety of toys, including a Rigamajig from last year’s popular *Object/s of Play* exhibition. Open daily 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Please note: Owl Cottage will be closed to the public from July 22–26, July 29–August 2, and August 5–9 for Owl Cottage Academy, our summer camp for ages 4-6. Please note that these camp weeks are sold out. To place your name on a waiting list, email [education@shelburnemuseum.org](mailto:education@shelburnemuseum.org).

## NEW! Community Day Celebrates Season Opening

Community Day kicks off an exciting new season at the Museum. On opening day, Saturday, May 11, **admission will be free for all**. Come experience inspiring new exhibitions and visit the beloved galleries, buildings, and gardens that make Shelburne Museum a place like no other.

### Highlights include:

Seed Swap with Artist Lorna McMaster: Bring your own seeds to swap or gather some seeds for your garden thanks to a generous donation from High Mowing Organic Seeds. Textile artist Lorna McMaster and Katie Wood Kirchhoff, Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen Curator of American Decorative Arts, will lead tours of special exhibition *Lorna McMaster: Stewarding a Seed Collection*.

Gallery Tours of *New England Now: Strange States*: Curator Carolyn Bauer will share insights and reflections on the special exhibition, which features 12 multidisciplinary artists from the region whose work explores perceptions of the ethereal through the lenses of mythology, environmentalism, ideals of beauty, transformation, gender, and cultural identity.

Tree and Garden Tours: Join staff from our Preservation and Landscape Department for a tour of the Museum’s natural landscape. Learn about what plants populate the grounds and how they are an extension of Museum Founder Electra Havemeyer Webb’s vision for the Museum.

Live Music: Throughout the day, musicians will perform in a variety of genres. Take in an entire set or let this joyous soundtrack harmonize with the sounds of spring as you cross the campus.

Drop-In Art Making: Exploring Nature Through Creative Expression. All ages and abilities are invited to make art inspired by the beautiful plants on the Museum grounds. We’ll bring the supplies; you bring the creativity and curiosity!



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May 11–October 20, 2024  
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**Talk to us**

Need more information?  
Looking to get involved?  
Membership Office:  
(802) 985-0923



# Join us for: Round Barn, Big Dance!

Get ready to kick up your heels and spin your partner to support education programs at Shelburne Museum! Grab your friends and come over to the iconic Round Barn for live music, Texas Two-Stepping, line dancing, fine food and drinks, and more! Hats, jeans, and big belt buckles encouraged. Don't miss out on this unforgettable event. Mark your calendars and we'll see you on the dance floor! Proceeds from Barn Dance will support programs that inspire thousands of Vermont schoolchildren every year.

**Saturday, August 17, 6:00–10:00 p.m.**  
Round Barn at Shelburne Museum

Stay tuned for updates. For information about sponsorships, party packages, and individual tickets, visit [shelburnemuseum.org/calendar](http://shelburnemuseum.org/calendar) or contact us at [events@shelburnemuseum.org](mailto:events@shelburnemuseum.org). More information about our education programs at [shelburnemuseum.org/learn](http://shelburnemuseum.org/learn).