

WINTER 2021

Anton Art Center CENTERPIECE

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IDEA Council Leads Inclusion and Diversity Efforts

By Nafeesah Symonette and Troy Mitchell

The world has departed 2020, a year of incredible challenge and hopeful change. Enter 2021, and already it finds itself embattled with controversy related to its unaddressed bias and unequal treatment of its inhabitants. Seven days in, and **The Anton Art Center** is poised to set a new course in the arts and cultural sector.

As a staple in the Macomb County community, **Phil Gilchrist**, Executive Director of the Anton Art Center, set out to challenge the structural inequities of the Center's foundation and dared to seek change that would include an admonishment and reckoning with itself as a contributor to the disenfranchisement and silencing of artists of color in the surrounding area. From the summer's collective awakening in our country, Phil's acknowledgement of the Anton Art Center's previous lack of engagement surrounding issues of diversity and inclusion, but being a place committed to working with and adequately representing black artists, opted to put action to his pledge. As such, the Anton Art Center has established a first in the Center's 50-year history: **The Anton Art Center Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) Advisory Council**.

The council consists of arts, cultural and community leaders from the greater Macomb County area. It convened for the first time last November, and shortly thereafter **Terri North**,

President of the Art Center's Board of Trustees, appointed **Nafeesah Symonette** and **Troy Mitchell** as co-chairs.

"It is the responsibility of this council and those who believe in it to ensure that art in Macomb County is freed from past oppressive habits," said Mitchell. "If there are boundaries around the art we present and who we allow to participate, can we even say we are holding space for art?"

The IDEA Council has been charged with ensuring the inclusion of all artists in all that the Art Center does, with special attention to those from underrepresented and marginalized groups. The Council is dedicated to thinking broadly about how to execute its goals and bring the greater Macomb County community of color into the fold. It welcomes the community and Art Center patrons to stay engaged and stay tuned for some courageous conversations and amazing expressions through art.

"The council is encouraged by the administration's willingness to be a voice and leader in removing barriers and working toward giving voice to the voiceless," said Symonette. "I am excited to be a part of this collective group of art and cultural leaders who want to shake the foundation of the fine art and cultural organization world."

The Anton Art Center is now open to the public from 11am - 3pm Tuesdays through Saturdays. Call ahead (586-469-8666) or email (information@theartcenter.org) for more information or to schedule a visit.

Walk-ins welcome, but visitors will need to call the office upon arrival to gain building access. COVID-19 health and safety protocols are in place, including brief health screenings at the door, limited building occupancy, and facemasks are required.

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Kiwanis Club Longtime Supporter of “Jewel of the Community”

By Mary Smith

The Mount Clemens Kiwanis Club Gallery within the Anton Art Center communicates to every patron entering that the Kiwanis is an enduring supporter of not just the Art Center, but the arts in general.

“One of the main missions of Kiwanis clubs everywhere is to assist local organizations like the Anton Art Center financially and with volunteer assistance or sponsorships,” said **John MacArthur**, a past president of the Mount Clemens’ club. “We know local organizations like the Art Center depend upon individual and civic-minded organizations to carry on their mission. Our club decided in the 1970s that a permanent art center was important to the City of Mount Clemens and the surrounding area.”

The list of Kiwanis’ sponsorships is a long one. Of course, it is a major supporter of the annual **ArtParty**, the Art Center’s largest fundraiser, as well as of the ongoing exhibits that have graced not only the club’s own gallery but the entire Art Center. It has also been a sponsor of the **SatARTdays** and its members regularly show up to host and provide refreshments

at exhibit openings. And not only are members volunteers, but patrons as well.

“The ArtParty is my favorite event. The food is great and it is fascinating to hear people discuss the art,” said **Will Potthoff**, current club president. “I bring my four-year-old twins and six-year-old to the SatARTdays. They are so much fun. It’s an open door for the kids, and there is no right or wrong way for them to do anything. At home, if they want to paint, it’s like ‘Let’s get a cloth on the table first.’”

This year, the Mount Clemens Kiwanis Club is celebrating its centennial and both MacArthur and Potthoff expect the Art Center will have a role in the celebration.

“I am confident the club will always support the Anton Art Center and its mission,” said MacArthur. “The Center is a key component in the community, housed in a historic building and needs to be preserved and flourish for many generations to come. A world without art in its many forms is simply too terrible to even contemplate. We salute this jewel of the community.”

2020: The Year in Review or How We Virtually Beat Back Anno Horribilis

By Judi Chambers, Trustee

Let’s begin by saying that The Art Center has the most creative, innovative and dedicated staff and volunteers bar none. When Covid-19 took hold, they put their heads down and got to work, formulating new ways to offer art to the public, learning new online skills and, generally, keeping art alive in Macomb County and beyond. What follows are some highlights of this challenging Art Center year.

First, we moved to create a virtual **ArtParty**, one of our major fundraising events, which included live demos, interviews and a silent auction, giving staff an opportunity to hone their “virtual” skills. We learned a lot and we were surprised that it was both fun and moderately successful.

Then, following our closure to the public, we quickly launched the **Worldwide Online Juried Art Show**, which created new online programming skills that were well met by the general public and garnered hundreds of entries from around the world, all of which were made available on our website.

Our efforts to provide virtual programming to the public began with our **SatARTday** programs, followed by an online lecture and music from the **Michigan Opera Theatre**, a virtual studio visit with local artist **Karole Sharp**, and an exhibit of local

artists titled **Conversations with Our Mentor** with an accompanying artist talk. These programs are still available to be viewed on the Anton Art Center website and YouTube channel.

Also this year, we launched our **Art Market** (formerly, The Gift Shop), our first venture into online commerce and a great lead-in to our **Holiday Market**, which provided not only online shopping, but some limited in-person shopping, as well. These venues have been well-received by the public and the Art Market continues to be available on our website, thanks to **Nancy Garcia**, our Market Manager, and her wonderful group of volunteers.

Currently being discussed for the coming year are new and, hopefully, more publicly accessible exhibits and the feasibility of some online classes and/or demonstrations. These will be announced on our website: www.theartcenter.org.

Certainly, 2020 has been less than optimal in fulfilling our mission to provide enrichment and inspiration to people of all ages, but our resilient and innovative staff and loyal volunteers have made it through, met new challenges, and continued to plan for an artful new year. Stay tuned!

Holiday Market Shines in 2020

By Peggy DiMercurio

The **Holiday Market at Anton Art Center** was a bright spot this holiday season with both online and in-person shopping.

With so much uncertainty and restrictions in 2020, we feared the annual tradition would have to be cancelled or moved completely online for the first time in decades. In the end, the Holiday Market Committee created a special shopping experience on select Saturdays in November and December. You could feel the excitement in the air on opening day, Nov. 16, which marked the first time since March that the Anton Art Center opened the doors to welcome visitors.

After so many cancellations of art fairs and other events this year, it was important for Anton to do everything we could to provide a Holiday Market.

"Artists rely on gallery and market sales such as these to earn a living, said **Phil Gilchrist**, Anton Art Center Executive Director. "Our Holiday Market sales event is the single largest opportunity we are able to offer local artists each year."

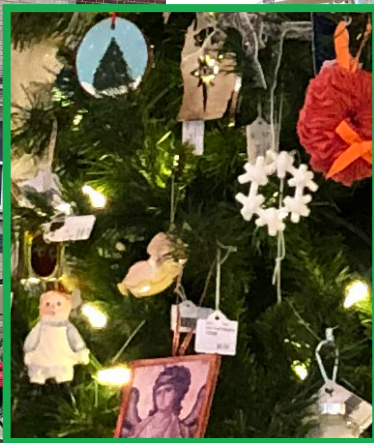
While smaller in footprint, vendors and volunteers, the Holiday Market featured many of the favorite local artists, thousands of handcrafted pieces and the festive décor that has become a welcomed tradition for so many each year. One customer told us, "I am so happy you're open – it isn't Christmas without a visit to the Holiday Market."

Jennifer Ann Wilson of **WXYZ-TV** and **Mark Hackel**, Macomb County Executive, were on hand to kick off the market and spotlight the artists and their work. Over the course of five weeks, we had hundreds of shoppers



visit us in person while many others shopped from the comfort of home in our online market. It was a smaller event than that of past years, but it was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with our community, staff and volunteers and end the year on a festive note.

The Holiday Market has wrapped up, but you can still find handcrafted gifts and décor at the Anton Art Center **Art Market**. Online shopping is available anytime at www.theartcenter.org/online-store or in-person from 11 am to 3 pm on Tuesdays through Saturdays. Safety protocols remain in place (be sure to bring a mask), and for the best experience, we recommend making an appointment with us at **586.469.8666**.



These Volunteers are Birds of a Feather

By Maggi Gawel

Both subjects of this issue's **Volunteer Spotlight** are familiar faces at 125 Macomb Place, and they might seem to have little in common aside from their devotion to the Art Center. One was a teacher for 35 years; the other spent her working life in grocery retail. One is an artist who has entered a number of shows at the Art Center, while the other likes to draw but doesn't really consider herself an artist at all. One enjoys spending her down time fishing on the Cedar River; the other is into heavy-duty DIY. But spending some time in conversation with both reveals that they are "birds of a feather" in many ways!

Patty Woodstock and **Judy Johnston** are lifetime eastsiders, each spending over seven decades enjoying and celebrating their community. Johnston was born in Mt. Carmel Mercy Hospital and still lives in what was her childhood home in Eastpointe. Woodstock has lived in St. Clair Shores and Harrison Township since leaving her family's eastside home. But, although both love to travel, neither has chosen to take up residence far from their roots.

"Macomb County is a great place," said Johnston. "With the rural nature of the northern part of the county, you can go from city to country in a short drive."

Between the two of them, you can get quite a geography lesson! Johnston has taken off several times to Europe. Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and England have been on her itineraries, but with her strong Irish heritage, the green rolling landscape of Ireland was perhaps her favorite. Meanwhile, at the top of Woodstock's list of most memorable adventures were a cruise around the Hawaiian Islands and an unforgettable African safari to Zimbabwe and Kenya with her late husband Fred.

That Johnston has covered a lot of territory is appropriate, her BA from Wayne State University is in geography. Woodstock's education degree from Western Michigan in Art and English led her into her career teaching both subjects to middle schoolers in St. Clair Shores. As she travels, she enjoys exploring the art and culture of each destination, relating these to her own dimensional artwork in stone, clay, wood, fiber and fabric.

Both women find a nice long walk in a park just the thing to break up the day. Even winter weather doesn't slow them down too much. They never fail to find pleasure watching for backyard birds, the first spring blooms and the first color in fall leaves. Johnston has built raised gardens in her backyard in anticipation of the time when age will curb bending and stooping in the yard. She loves the pines, maples and mock fruit

trees that shade her backyard and often wishes she had the space for more. Woodstock takes excess plants from her garden to enliven the woodland landscape around her northern Michigan cottage.

Although Woodstock supports the **Detroit Symphony Orchestra** and **Michigan Opera Theater** and Johnston used to belong to a poetry writing group, both are now content to expend their available volunteer time at the Art Center. Woodstock first came in contact with the Art Center when entering her students' artwork in Center exhibitions. Since 2006, she has taken classes, has been co-chair for the **ArtParty**, is a member of the **Holiday Market Committee**, sponsors student art shows, is a board member, and several years ago served as interim director. After meeting long-time Art Center volunteer and promoter **Bunny Carlson** at her workplace, Johnston visited the Art Center, took a clay class and became a Holiday Market volunteer in 2005. She soon found her niche as a Market cashier and then started helping in the Gift Shop (now **Art Market**), where three to four days each month she's the first person met by visitors – always with a smile and a cheerful greeting.

"I love meeting people – new people and old acquaintances," said Johnston. "And I love to talk."

One of the greatest benefits of volunteering at the Art Center, agree Woodstock and Johnston, is the camaraderie and interaction with other people.

"The Art Center is a great place. It's given me a way to come in contact with so many people – volunteers and artists – and to see great art so close to home," said Johnston. "Everyone in the county should be grateful it exists."

"The Art Center's made it possible for me to become more involved in Mount Clemens and the Macomb County community," said Woodstock, who spent half her life teaching art. "I truly believe in the benefit of having art in your life, whether you are an artist yourself, amateur or professional, or just an appreciator of art that is meaningful to you. The Art Center gives me a chance to feel I am helping make art available to others and give them a chance to express their creativity or just enjoy the creativity of artists in their community."

Make a new friend, find out what you have in common with some of our volunteers, and through your efforts make art available to others in our community! For more information about how you can become an Art Center volunteer, call **586-469-8666** or email **information@theartcenter.org**.

DIA Exhibit Celebrates Simple Pleasures of American Life

By Mary Smith

From Impressionism to Realism to Regionalism, the period between 1850 and 1940 was a constantly evolving one in the history of American art. Beginning March 6, the **Anton Art Center** will display some of its iconic works in the exhibit: **Visions of American Life**.

The exhibit is on loan from the **Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA)** and includes 13 selections from the **Nancy and Sean Cotton Collection of American Arts**. Offering a glimpse into American Life, the paintings share a reverence for places both private and public, as well as the simple pleasures of the everyday.

Visions of American Life: Selections from the Nancy and Sean Cotton Collection of American Art will be on view at the Art Center Saturday March 6 through Tuesday, April 13. The Art Center is opened Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 am to 3 pm, with COVID-19 protocols in place. Face coverings are required for entry.

Visions of American Life: Selections from the **Nancy and Sean Cotton Collection of American Art** is organized by the Detroit Institute of Arts and made possible by the Nancy and Sean Cotton Collection. The presentation at the Anton Art Center is made possible through a community partnership funded by Macomb County millage support.

Works in the exhibit include:

IN A GARDEN, ca. 1917, William James Glackens

WOMAN PICKING FLOWERS, ca. 1917, William James Glackens

BOYS HUNTING FOX, 1852, William Holbrook Beard

SOMETHING NEW, TRY ONE, ca. 1890, De Scott Evans

FREE SAMPLE, TAKE ONE, ca. 1890, De Scott Evans

LADY IN THE PARK, 1897, Childe Hassam

CENTRAL PARK, 1898, Childe Hassam



DETROIT
INSTITUTE
OF ARTS



Vincent Jannelli, American, 1882 - 1962

Cityscape with Airplanes and Dirigibles, 1939, oil on canvas

Unframed: 26 × 40 inches (66 × 101.6 cm)

Framed: 31 × 45 1/8 × 2 1/16 inches (78.7 × 114.6 × 5.2 cm)

Nancy and Sean Cotton Collection

CITYSCAPE, 1936, Vincent Jannelli

CITYSCAPE WITH AIRPLANES AND DIRIGIBLES, 1939, Vincent Jannelli

WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE PARK, 1908, Jane Peterson

SKOKIE PARK AUTO, 1935, Aaron Bohrod

HUSH, DO NOT DISTURB THEM, ca. 1890, Hamilton Hamilton

AT THE BEACH, 1895, Frank Hector Tompkins

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