



Newsletter – Winter, 2012

Celebrate!

The staff at NMWA have gloriously filled the anniversary year with exciting events to cap twenty-five years of extraordinary growth. Thanks to the vision, generosity, and leadership of Wilhelmina and Wallace Holladay the collection has grown from their original donation of five hundred works of art to four thousand donated by people from all over the world. Mrs. Holladay has inspired the dedicated participation of untold supporters to help create this unique institution to recognize women artists from the past and encourage those just developing their skills.

We urge you to go to the Museum's site, [www. Nmwa.org](http://www.Nmwa.org) to enjoy all the special offerings for those who can visit in person or the opportunities available online.



Studio Visits

The Boston area is blessed with many neighborhoods of artist studios. In October, Mass NMWA organized a trip to the Joy Street studios in Somerville. The diversity and quality of work was stimulating to see, and it is always enlightening to hear the artists talk about their objectives and interpretations.



Women Artists at WAM

On our way to see the featured exhibition “Art Since the Mid 20th Century” at the Worcester Art Museum, the guides pointed out works by Cecilia Beaux and Judith

Leyster and handed us a sheet listing other women artists on display during our visit. The 20th Century exhibit was categorized into Persistence of Abstraction, Revival of Figuration and Portraiture, and Cultural Signs. A wall label advised watching how artists rework the visual languages and genres of their predecessors.

One of the post 1950 works that our group particularly responded to was Alice Neel's *Julie and Aristotle*, 1967. This portrait of a young woman and her dog was remarkable for the indications of anxiety in both figures who are looking in opposite directions.

Nancy Graves' sculpture *Laocoon*, 1988, provided a game of identifying the found objects incorporated into the painted piece. We discussed the reference to the Greek myth and its classical interpretation.

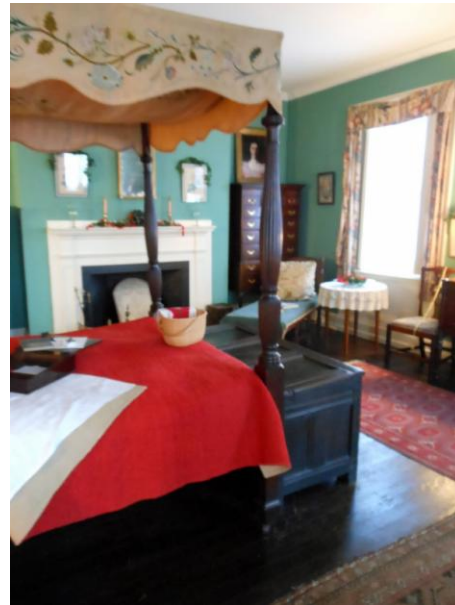
There was a piece by Laylah Ali, *Untitled (Greenheads)*, in an adjoining gallery. Ali is a former Massachusetts resident whose work we saw on a recent DeCordova trip.

In addition to the eighteen women in this show, the guide showed us Ellsworth Kelly's *Orange White*, three vertically stacked orange lozenges. She asked that we keep it in mind and then led us to WAM's Renaissance Court to view Charline von Heyl's site-specific mural on the Wall at WAM. We saw six orange ovals arranged horizontally over the Court's arches extending the length of the wall like a frieze, 17' X 67'. Standing on scaffolding, von Heyl painted freestyle black marks on top of the ovals, linking and enhancing their liveliness. There is a video of the installation at www.worcesterart.org.

Accomplished Women

Members and guests gathered at 55 Mt. Vernon St. in Boston for a tour of the Nichols House Museum decorated for Christmas. The house was built in 1804 from a design attributed to Charles Bulfinch. Dr. Arthur and Elizabeth Nichols moved in with their three daughters in 1885.

This was a family which encouraged their daughters to achievements beyond what was customary in the 19th and early 20th century. The family believed good art helped foster a good (meaning moral) life.



While showing us the well-appointed rooms with treasures from the China trade and trips to Europe, the guides focused on the eldest daughter, Rose Standish, landscape architect, author of books and articles on gardening, preservationist, and world peace activist. She was also active in the Beacon Hill Civic Association, together with her sister Marian, and was a frequent lobbyist for reform bills such as women's suffrage at the nearby State House. She was a life-long resident at #55.

Her sister Marian participated in the Civil Service Reform Association, founded the Beacon Hill Civic Association, worked to improve the status of women and the working class, marched for the Women's Peace Party, and ran for the state legislature in 1920.

Sister Margaret was equally remarkable, finding time to teach carpentry to inner-city children and campaign with the Women's Peace Party while raising six children of her own. She dedicated herself to making working conditions safer and was a founder of the precursor of the American Civil Liberties Union.

After the tour we walked down the hill to a lovely, holiday reception given by June Hutchinson, co-founder and first co-president of the Massachusetts Committee of the National Museum of Women in the

Arts. June signed copies of her handsome, recently published book, *At Home on Beacon Hill: Rose Standish Nichols and Her Family*.



In Memoriam

We would like to pay tribute to Wallace F. Holladay, a remarkable gentleman of many achievements.