2015 Connecticut Art Docent Symposium
Art for All

Monday, May 11, 2015
8:15am–3:30pm
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
600 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Schedule of Events

Check-in and Refreshments
8:15–8:55am

Welcome
9:00–9:15am
Aetna Theater
Susan L. Talbott, Director and CEO, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Keynote Address – Robin Jaffee Frank
9:15–10:25am
Aetna Theater
Step Right Up! Coney Island: Visions of an American Dreamland, 1861–2008
Robin Jaffee Frank says America’s Playground remains a “seductively liberating subject” for artists. Look at their visions of wonder and menace, dreams and nightmares, and discover why this strip of sand in Brooklyn has become a singular place in the American imagination.

Robin Jaffee Frank, curator of the Coney Island exhibition and Chief Curator and Krieble Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
Morning Break-out Sessions
10:30–11:40am

American Art
American Art Galleries, Avery 1 and 2
The Wadsworth’s American Art collection is comprised of 18th century portraiture, Hudson River School landscapes, 19th century trompe l’oeil paintings, American modernist works, and more. The American Decorative Arts collection ranges from 17th century to modern masterpieces.

Alyce Perry Englund, Richard Koopman Associate Curator of American Decorative Arts or Erin Monroe, Robert H. Schutz, Jr. Assistant Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Contemporary Art
Contemporary Art Galleries, Wadsworth 1
The Wadsworth continues its legacy of collecting and displaying contemporary art through the MATRIX program and the museum’s newly renovated Post-War and Contemporary Art galleries. This session will address artworks created from 1945 to the present.

Patricia Hickson, Emily Hall Tremaine Curator of Contemporary Art or Johanna Plummer, Georgette Auerbach Koopman Director of Education, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Controversial Art – What is It?
Hartford Courant Room, Morgan 1
To understand controversial art, you first have to know what it is and how certain museum practices, informed by historical and ideological legacies, may reinforce how you define it. This session will explore controversial works from various museum collections.

Linda Friedlaender, Senior Curator of Education, Yale Center for British Art

European Art
Aetna Theater
This session will focus on highlights from the Wadsworth’s European Art collection, which contains masterpieces from the medieval to the modern period. Many of these works will be on view in newly-renovated galleries beginning in September 2015.

Linda Roth, Senior Curator and Charles C. and Eleanor Lamont Cunningham Curator of European Decorative Arts, and Oliver Tostmann, Susan Morse Hilles Curator of European Art, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Exploring Artism: A Program for Families at the Yale Center for British Art
Darling Room, Administrative Offices
Exploring Artism is a free, monthly program designed for families with children five to twelve years of age on the autism spectrum. Each visit includes a group conversation and multisensory activity in the galleries followed by an art-making project.

Jaime Ursic, Yale Center for British Art Assistant Curator of Education
**Multigenerational Tours**  
Special Exhibition Galleries, Wadsworth 3  
Tours for families and multi-age groups present teaching opportunities and challenges. This breakout session will focus on works from *Coney Island: Visions of an American Dreamland* to model strategies for engaging intergenerational audiences using humor, spontaneity, and interaction.  
*Anne Butler Rice, Public Programs Manager, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art*

**This Is My Story, This Is My Song: Writers, Musicians and the Black Freedom Struggle**  
Amistad Center Galleries, Wadsworth 2  
The exhibition follows the emergence of Black literary and musical traditions across several centuries as they grew from plaintive challenges to the injustice of slavery to become a culture of creativity committed to justice.  
*Frank Mitchell, exhibition curator for The Amistad Center for Art & Culture at the Wadsworth Atheneum*

**Buffet Lunch and “Showcase of Ideas”**  
11:45am–12:55pm  
Lunch: Avery Court and Museum Café  
“Showcase of Ideas”: Gray Court

**Keynote Conversation – Rika Burnham**  
1:00–2:25pm  
Aetna Theater  
**Listening In: Best Practices for Engaging Audiences with Controversial Art**  
Rika Burnham, co-author of *Teaching in the Art Museum: Interpretation as Experience*, leads an on-stage conversation with projected images. Eight docents and three museum educators engage as her audience. The rest of us will listen in as Rika models a dialogical practice applied to controversial art. A 15-minute audience question and answer period will follow.  
*Rika Burnham, Head of Education at The Frick Collection*
Afternoon Break-out Sessions
2:30–3:30pm

A Shower of Stars: The Avery Theater and the Avant-Garde
Aetna Theater
The Wadsworth’s historic Art Deco theater was inaugurated in 1934 with the world premiere of the opera *Four Saints in Three Acts*—the most widely described cultural event in America that year—under the directorship of A. Everett “Chick” Austin. Surprising and dazzling arrays of avant-garde artists in every medium have appeared in this theater.

*Eugene Gaddis, William G. DeLana Archivist and Curator of the Austin House, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art*

Themed Tours by Wadsworth Atheneum Docents
Themed tours of Wadsworth Atheneum collections led by Atheneum docents will focus on art and techniques used to encourage dialogue and engagement.

*Collection Highlights*
Meet in Gray Court, Wadsworth 1
Docent picks throughout the museum.

*Contemporary Art*
Contemporary Art Galleries, Wadsworth 1
The Contemporary Art collection encompasses works created from 1945 to the present with strong examples of Abstract Expressionism, Color Field painting, Pop art, Conceptual art, and recent movements in painting, sculpture, photography and video.

*Austin House virtual tour*
Hartford Courant Room, Morgan 1
The Austin House, a National Historic Landmark, is the largest object in the Wadsworth’s collection. The former residence of A. Everett “Chick” Austin, Jr., the home is furnished with unique examples of 18th and 20th century European furniture and collectibles.

*Hudson River School*
American Art Galleries, Avery 3
The Hudson River School collection includes over 65 landscape paintings by the movement’s best-known artists. The collection was formed by the museum’s founder Daniel Wadsworth and other 19th century art collectors.

*Connecticut People and Places*
American Art Galleries, Avery 2 and 3
Experience Connecticut’s rich history and culture through the events, people, places, and ideas depicted and interpreted in works of art in the collection, many of which were made by Connecticut artists.
Coney Island
Special Exhibition Galleries, Wadsworth 3
Coney Island: Visions of an American Dreamland features more than 140 objects, including paintings, drawings, photographs, posters, films, and even carousel animals. This is the first exhibition in the museum’s newly expanded and renovated special exhibition galleries.

Storybook Hour
Meet in Gray Court, Wadsworth 1
Enjoy the adventure of connecting reading and words to art through the creative window of stories, myths, and tall tales.

European Modern Art
Avery Court, Avery 1
A tour focused on 20th century European masterpieces that may include works by Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró, Max Ernst, René Magritte, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian, Edvard Munch, Alberto Giacometti and more.