

A detailed oil painting of a woman, likely from the late 19th or early 20th century. She is wearing a large, dark, feathered hat and a voluminous brown fur coat over a green dress with a high collar. The background is a soft, textured mix of green and blue. The painting is signed 'RIFIN.' in the top left corner.

American Art Review

AMARTREV.COM
FALL 2020 \$6.95



COVER: Walter Griffin, *Portrait of a Lady*, c. 1897, o/c, 36 x 283/4, Florence Griswold Museum, gift of the Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to: American Art Review, P.O. Box 1090, Stratham, NH 03885-1090. Subscribers should allow 6 weeks for processing. Interim copies must be forwarded at own expense.

American Art Review (ISSN 0092-1327) is published bi-monthly by American Arts Media, Inc. at 12807 Sagamore Road, Leawood, Kansas, 66209. The subscription price is \$27.95 for six issues. Foreign subscriptions are not available. Periodicals postage paid at Shawnee Mission, Kansas and at additional mailing offices.

For subscription questions please call: 603-436-1633. (9am-6pm Eastern time)

E-mail: amartrev@aol.com
www.amartrev.com

All measurements are in inches, height precedes width. This is issue number 191.

Contents copyright ©2020 by American Arts Media, Inc. (except where otherwise noted). Copyrighted contents may not be reproduced in any form without written permission from American Arts Media, Inc.

Communications regarding editorial, and advertising should be sent to: American Art Review, P.O. Box 1090, Stratham, New Hampshire 03885. (603) 436-1633.

Newsstand distribution by Comag Marketing Group.

Indexed in: *Art Index*, *Art Abstract*, and *Bibliography of the History of Art*

Editor and Publisher: Thomas R. Kellaway

Associate Publisher: Jill Redmond

Copy Editor: Ann Harlow

Printed in USA

American Art Review

Volume XXXII, Number 5 Fall 20 (Sept/Oct/Nov)

Contents

- 50** **Woodstock Artists Association**
by Bruce Weber
- 60** **Northwest Public Art of the 1930s**
by Margaret Bullock
- 66** **Merv Corning Retrospective**
by James M. Keny
- 72** **Fern Coppedge: New Discoveries**
- 74** **Celebrating 20 Years of the
Hartford Steam Boiler Collection**
by Jennifer Stettler Parsons
- 86** **African American Art in the 20th Century**
- 90** ***Life* Magazine and the
Power of Photography**
by Katherine A. Bussard
- 94** **Alvin Ross: A Centennial Celebration**
by James R. Bakker
- 100** **Highlights from the
Danforth Art Museum**
by Debra Petke

Highlights from the Danforth Art Museum

by Debra Petke

In the fall of 1973, a small group of people met in a neighborhood living room under the leadership of local businessman Paul Marks. Their ambitious goal was to establish a new art museum in their town of Framingham, Massachusetts, situated outside of Boston. The Boston-Cambridge area was already rich with museums, among them the Museum of Fine Arts, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and several museums of Harvard University. But the dream of an accessible and welcoming art museum in Framingham was compelling.

The Danforth Museum of Art opened its doors in May 1975. In an encouraging tribute, the first exhibition included gener-

ous loans from area museums, including the Worcester Art Museum and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The first three objects entered into the Permanent Collection were prints by Durer, Goya and Daumier, donated by an early supporter. The first two decades of exhibitions spanned the history of art: from early Dutch paintings to Mary Cassatt prints, Hogarth engravings, British pottery, Eadweard Muybridge photographs and German Expressionism.

The collecting and exhibition mission of the Museum evolved more specifically to American art, from the nineteenth century to the present, with special focus on regional New England artists. The 3,500-object collection now includes works by prominent American artists such as Gilbert Stuart, Albert Bierstadt, Jasper Cropsey,

Highlights from the Permanent Collection at the Danforth Art Museum at Framingham State University, 14 Vernon Street, Framingham, Massachusetts, 01701, 508-620-0050, www.danforth.framingham.edu.

Charles Sprague Pearce, Marie Danforth Page, William Paxton, Mabel Woodward, Alfred Stieglitz, and Scott Prior. Mid-twentieth century Boston Expressionism is well represented by its major proponents, including David Aronson, Karl Zerbe, and Hyman Bloom.

The Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller Special Collection holds more than 300 objects and ephemera. Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller (1877-1968) was one of the first prominent African-American female sculptors. Fuller was born and raised in Philadelphia



ABOVE: View of the new Danforth Art Museum in the historic Jonathan Maynard Building, Framingham Centre Common, 2019.

RIGHT: Philip Leslie Hale, *Glitter*, 1908, o/c, 32 1/2 x 21, gift of William and Evelyn Wolfson.

LEFT: Charles Sprague Pearce, *A Village Funeral in Brittany*, 1891, o/c, 64 3/4 x 100 3/4, gift of Charles F. Scott in memory of Alice Daudelain Scott.

and trained at the Philadelphia Museum School of Industrial Art. Upon graduation in 1899, she moved to Paris, where she studied at the Académie Colarossi, and gained the friendship of prominent mentors like intellectual leader W.E.B. DuBois and French sculptor Auguste Rodin. She returned to the United States in 1902. Seven years later, she married Dr. Solomon Fuller, the first psychiatrist of African descent to practice in the United States. The couple settled in Framingham, where Fuller lived and worked until her death in 1968.

Fuller is known for her groundbreaking depictions of the African and African-American experience. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, she created intimate portraits of friends and family, self-portraits, and commissioned works. Anticipating themes of the Harlem Renaissance, Fuller also used the figure as a metaphoric representation as African-American artists sought to formulate and celebrate an African-American cultural identity and express racial experience in America.

The Danforth Art Museum at Framingham State University's collection of materials by Fuller is multi-media, containing the contents of





ABOVE: Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, *Portrait Bust of a Child (Solomon Fuller, Jr.)*, 1914, painted plaster, 18 x 11 1/8 x 7 5/8, gift of the Meta V. W. Fuller Trust.

ABOVE LEFT: Albert Bierstadt, *Near North Conway, New Hampshire*, c. 1860, o/c, 18 3/4 x 26, gift of the Waters Foundation.

LEFT: Marie Danforth Page, *Portrait of Mrs. Frederick L. W. Richardson and Her Son David*, 1920, o/c, 57 7/8 x 47 3/4, gift of David Richardson.



the artist's studio in Framingham.

The works were gifted to the Museum in 2006 by members of Fuller's family. The Museum's collection ranges from personal effects, ephemera, and tools, to sculptural works—including molds, maquettes, and studies for both commissioned and non-commissioned works. The collection spans seventy years of creative output from Fuller's early works in Paris, to her role as a precursor to and in the Harlem Renaissance, to her late works celebrating members of the African-American intelligentsia. Scrapbooks, drawings, letters, and photographs tell the story of her process, thoughts, and evolution as an artist. The collection includes multiple self-portrait busts, as well as busts of family members and acquaintances, and figure studies referencing popular and allegorical subject matter. Studies for ground-breaking works such as *Emancipation* and *Ethiopia Awakening* are



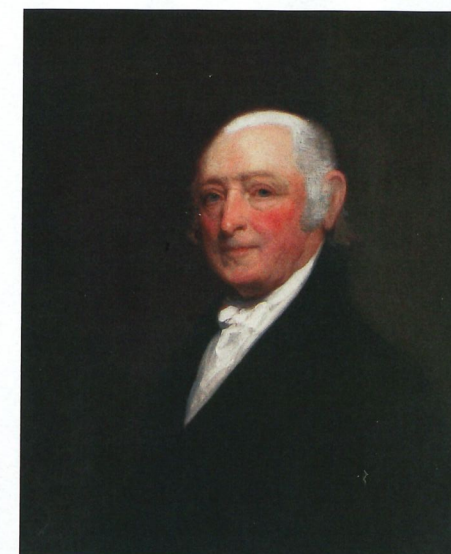
ABOVE: Jasper Francis Cropsey, *Lake George*, 1885, o/c, 12 x 20, Museum Purchase in memory of Roger B. Hadady.

RIGHT: Gilbert Stuart, *Mrs. Nathaniel Coffin*, c. 1820, o/c mounted on panel, 34 1/2 x 29 1/4, gift of Harriot Hopkinson Rive, and Museum purchase with funds provided by The Gilbert Stuart Society.

FAR RIGHT: Gilbert Stuart, *Dr. Nathaniel Coffin*, c. 1820, o/c mounted on panel, 35 1/8 x 29 1/2, gift of Harriot Hopkinson Rive, and Museum purchase with funds provided by The Gilbert Stuart Society.

defining pieces in the collection—these are works that established Fuller as a sculptor who excelled in depictions of the African-American figure and embraced contemporary themes that shaped Black identity.

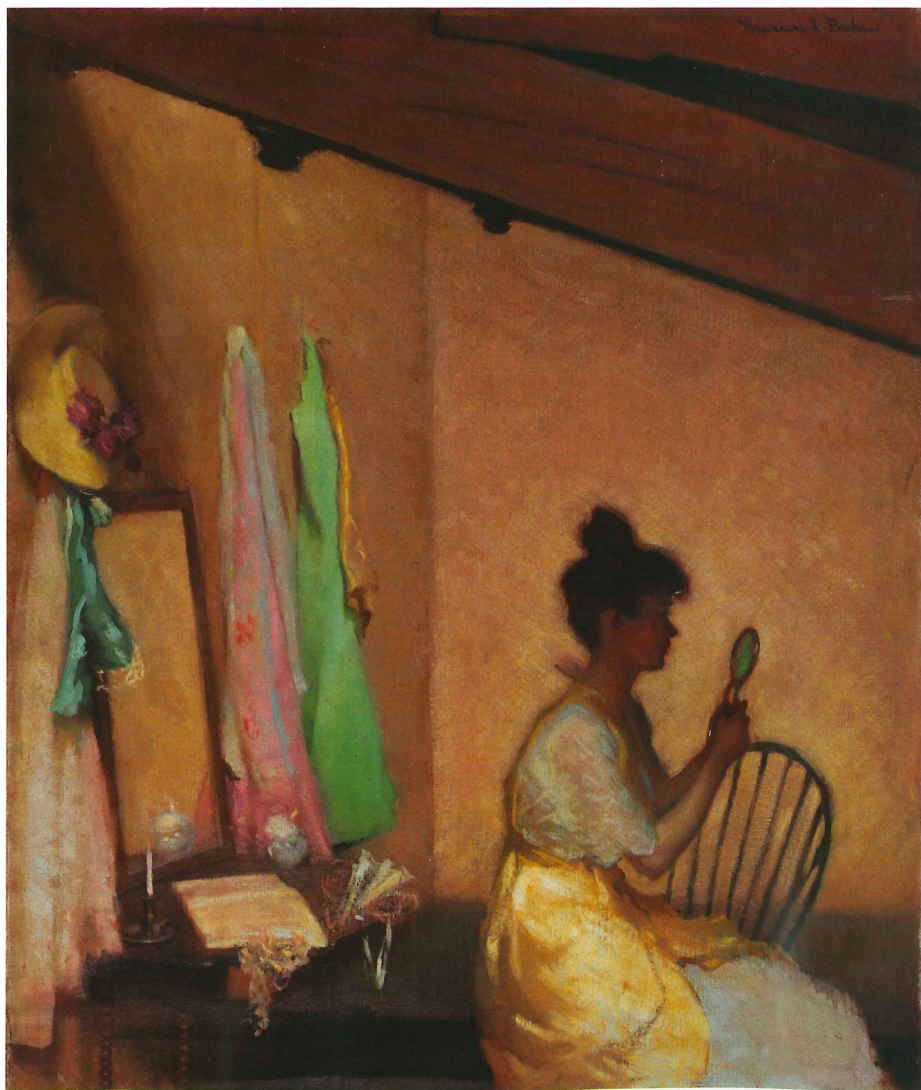
The collection is unique and rich with materials that speak to Fuller's process and evolution as an artist. From an album full of clippings of heads, faces, and hairstyles ranging from reproductions of Old Master works to contemporary magazines, to fully realized plaster studies for some of her most significant works, we are continually expanding our understanding of Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, asking questions about her role within the history of Ameri-



can art in the context of race, class, and gender, and in turn, educating our audience with what we discover.

Like many fellow women artists, Fuller's first studio space was in the attic of her home. Little documentation remains of this space, but the collection contains a photograph (c. 1919) of Fuller at work in the attic studio—wearing an artist's cloak and standing confidently next to her work table, with a maquette of *Mary Turner* in progress, and relief works on the wall be-

hind her. Light streams in from a tiny window behind and in front of her, and she looks completely occupied, almost unaware that she was being photographed, even as she faces the camera. She later built a studio, a separate building a short walk from her home, and it is anecdotally noted that her husband was unaware that she was building the studio until it was completed. This was a much larger structure, home-like, and designed to look like a fully functional domestic space.



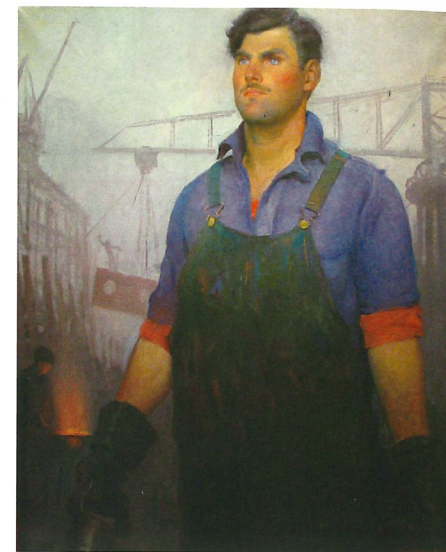
Fuller faced a continual struggle to balance her domestic and family duties—what was considered a woman's traditional role, with the need to create and succeed as a professional artist. Fuller is not alone in this struggle to maintain a balance, and

identify herself both in the role of traditional womanhood and as an artist. The studio space proved vital for her to develop these identities. A corner of her first attic studio was reproduced for the Fuller Gallery, based on the 1919 photograph, for



a permanent exhibition in the new Danforth. Included are a number of the works in the photograph, which have been installed in place to more fully recreate Fuller's working environment at the turn of the twentieth century.

The Danforth Art Museum and School occupied its original site until 2016. That spring, I received an eviction notice from the Town of Framingham, a year after my arrival as Executive Director. The early twentieth-century former high school suffered from delayed maintenance. The original boiler no longer passed State inspection, making the site uninhabitable for the winter. I had been hired to lead the Danforth to its next stage of growth. The Museum had purchased The Jonathan Maynard Building, another early twentieth-century Framingham school, from the Town in 2013, with the intention of renovating it for a permanent home. The evic-



ABOVE: Garrit A. Beneker, *Man at Steelworks*, c. 1920, o/c, 49 x 39, gift of Edward Shein.

RIGHT: Randall Deihl, *Portrait of Greg*, 2000, o/panel, 20 x 16, gift of Nick and Dee Adams.

BELOW RIGHT: Steven Duede, *Evanescence V*, 2013-2015, photographic c-print, 16 x 24, gift of the artist.

LEFT: Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, *Maquette for Ethiopia Awakening*, 1921, painted plaster, 137/8 x 31/4 x 31/2, gift of the Meta V. W. Fuller Trust.

FAR LEFT: View of *Landed: Selections from the Permanent Collection*, an opening exhibition at the newly renovated Danforth, April 2019.

BELOW LEFT: Marion Pooke, *The One Night Stand*, 1915, o/c, 39 3/4 x 34 1/2, gift of David and Myrna Leven.

tion notice invalidated the strategic plan that the staff and I had just completed. The agenda for the Board retreat planned to discuss the plan was scrapped as the institution had no more than six months to determine the where and how of relocation.

One of three floors in the Maynard Building was a maze of old cubicles with wires hanging from the ceiling and the basement a warren of small musty spaces. Nothing appropriate for an art school and certainly not collection storage or exhibition galleries. Staff and trustees considered other spaces for temporary housing in Framingham and nearby communities. Costs, conditions, and time prevented any solution other than some immediate renovation to the Maynard Building.





BELOW: Meta Vaux Warrick, *Danse Macabre*, 1914, painted plaster, 137/8 x 151/4 x 10, gift of the Meta V. W. Fuller Trust.



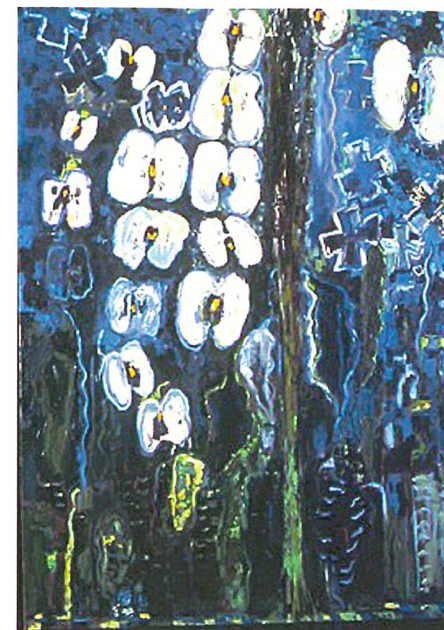
LEFT: Lois Tarlow, *Self-Portrait in a Persian Jacket*, 1954, o/c, 29 x 32, gift of Ellen Wineberg.

RIGHT: Anne Neely, *Night Garden*, 2001, o/c, 84 x 60, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Graham Gund.

FAR RIGHT: Barbara Swan, *Lemons and Limes*, 1972, o/c, 50 x 54, gift of the estate of Barbara Swan.

During the time between the April 2016 eviction notice and evacuation of the original Danforth space that November, simultaneous challenges were addressed. Cancelling art school classes, closing exhibitions, and discontinuing membership terminated earned income. Contributed revenue sharply declined as most donors reacted to the uncertainty of the Danforth's survival. There was no endowment to supplement the rapidly increasing costs of an impending institutional move, temporary collection storage, and renovation. Mounting expenses would reach about \$600,000. I drastically reduced expenses as admission, education programs, and other activities wound down, and most staff were laid off. Trustees formed task forces to consider all problems and options, from relocation to financial management to ensuring ethical oversight of the Museum collection. I consistently provided community updates to alleviate the concerns of Danforth's constituencies, focusing fundraising efforts on major donors who were consistently briefed and asked to advise the Danforth's efforts. Enough monies were raised to cover the move, the temporary offsite storage of the Museum's collection, and initial renovation of the Maynard building to reopen the art school, which helped the cash flow. The second renovation phase was for collection storage and a curatorial workroom to enable ongoing work.

The remaining few staff moved into the Maynard Building's existing office space. While the art school was now operating and the collection was moved to its newly renovated space there, there was no proper space for exhibitions. It would be almost three years before the Museum would reopen to the public. To reinforce community ties and to keep the Danforth's collection visible, exhibitions from the collection were mounted at other Massachusetts venues, such as the Worcester Art Museum and Endicott College. Curator Jessica Roscio also continued to lecture publicly about the collection.

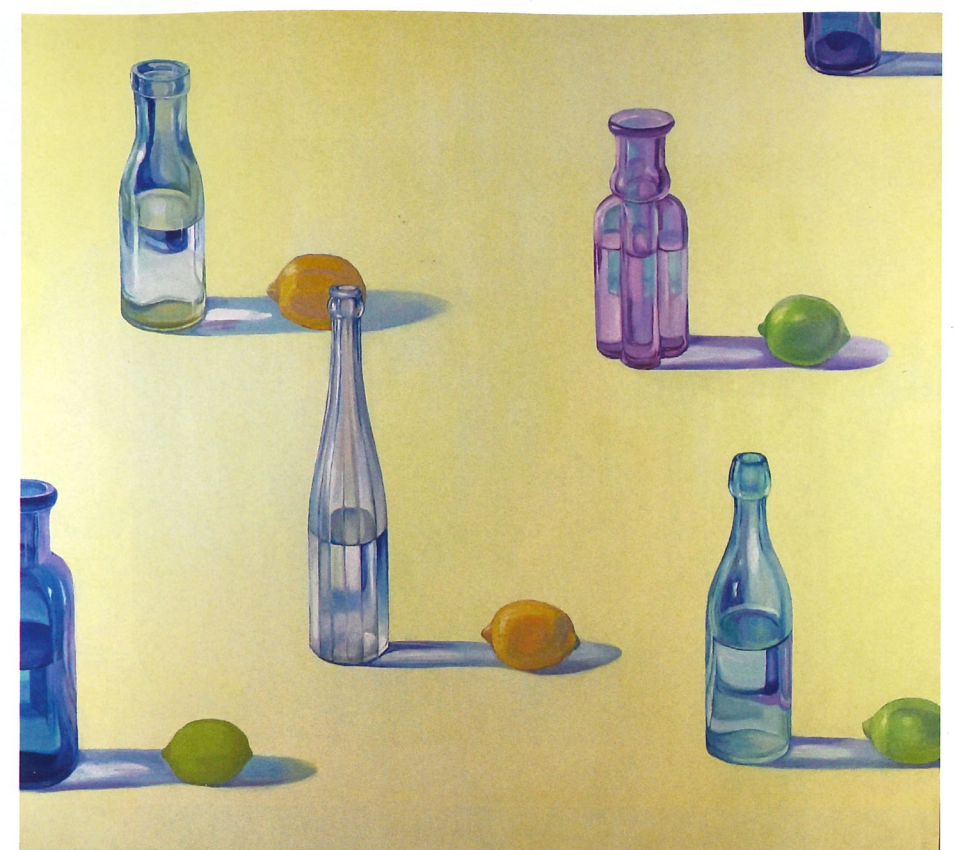


Following the eviction, one of the first long-term solutions discussed was creating a more formal affiliation with Framingham State University. Their former President had been a Danforth founder and the two institutions had continued to work together in various capacities over the years. Current President Javier Cevallos was committed to help the Danforth survive. If the Danforth and FSU merged, they would be the first state university in Massachusetts with a museum.

Subsequent talks ensued between myself and a few Danforth trustees with university representatives, resulting in a draft merger agreement. Of primary concern was protection of the Museum's collection, since FSU is a state institution. It was agreed that the Framingham State University Foundation would be the legal entity overseeing the collection. The myriad details addressing issues such as finances and personnel would pale in comparison to what was the major obstacle to the merger: the role of the Town of Framingham.

The mortgage agreement on the Maynard Building that the Museum had purchased from the Town stated that if the Danforth ever decided to sell it, the Town had first right of refusal for two-thirds of the asking price. They were also entitled to veto the buyer—a provision put in place to ensure that any development of the property that they considered inappropriate for a historic building prominently situated on the Town's Centre Common be prevented.

While a university purchasing the prop-



BELOW: Ben Aronson, *Copley Square*, 2000, oil on panel, 12 x 123/4, Museum Purchase, Members Vote for Art Event.





LEFT: Haley Hasler, *Self-Portrait as a Woman Serving a Meal*, 2003, o/c, 54 x 51 1/2, gift of Nick and Dee Adams.

BELOW LEFT: Scott Prior, *Four Tomatoes*, 1996, gouache on paper, 15 1/2 x 14, gift of Deborah A. Stone.

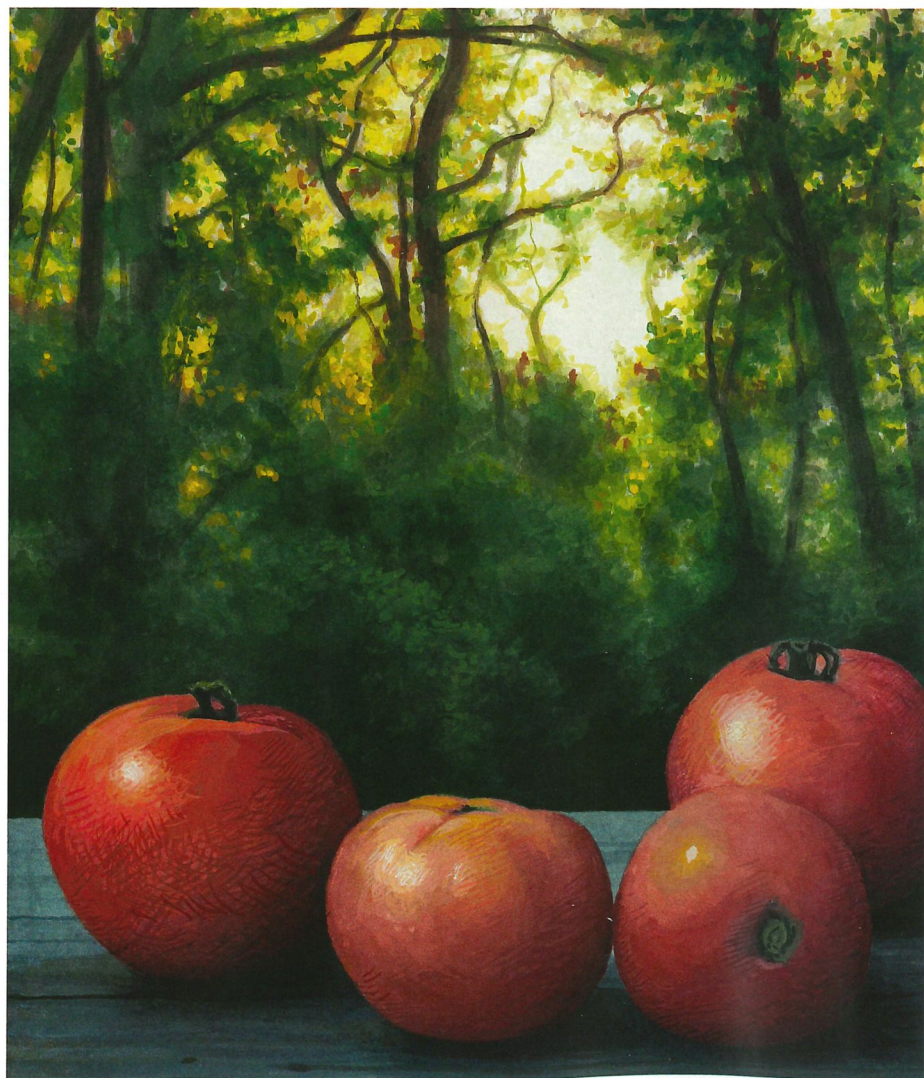
RIGHT: Jason Berger, *Manjean's Garden*, 1967, o/c, 44 x 49, gift of Stephen Bernstein.

BELOW RIGHT: Steven Duede, *Evanesence XLIX*, 2013-2015, photographic c-print, 16 x 24, gift of the artist.

erty to save the Danforth seems beyond reproach, a maelstrom resulted. Some Town officials and residents believed that the University might eventually turn it into a dorm—ignoring any consideration that Danforth officials would hardly endorse a merger that did not protect the Museum and art school long-term. Not to mention that without the University's support, the Danforth would likely close.

At the time, Framingham had a town meeting form of government. Over 100 town meeting members, representing various districts, would vote on whether to allow the University to purchase the Maynard Building. A "no" vote would be the final defeat for the Danforth. It was scheduled for an early 2017 meeting. The Board of Selectmen had approved the deal but the Town meeting could derail it. Our main concern was an ongoing grievance in the community that the Town should never have sold the building to the Museum. There was nostalgia for its history as a school and its prominent location in the historic district. There were many misconceptions about the original sale to the Danforth Museum, including being given the building for free. It was also thought that the Town should find a new use for the Maynard, including a reincarnation as a school. The issue never reached an official vote at the Town meeting, after many of the members dissented on the matter in their opportunity to comment. They did offer that the Town could accept the Museum's collection. The collection was the primary concern and responsibility of Danforth staff and trustees. I spoke with several museums about the possibility of gifting parts of the collection if the museum closed. No object would remain in Framingham.

We were disappointed by this major setback but it was not a final defeat. There would be one more opportunity for a vote



that fall. Framingham would become a city as of January 1, 2018. There was one more Town Meeting. The Museum was running out of time. Finances were increasingly strained and circumstances acute. The highly publicized Berkshire Museum conflict regarding the sale of some of their collection was concurrent. Every press interview asked if we would raise operating funds by "selling a painting." Ours was a very different situation and Danforth's Board and staff were well aware of collection ethics and the subject was never broached. Although I will admit that following the eviction, I sent AAM policies and relevant newspaper articles about the

(continued on 112)



the "natural beauty and dignity in that characteristic lip, that characteristic hair, bearing and manner." With *Mask*, Johnson situated the image of the black face within a dialogue about race taking place among the poets and intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance: Alain Locke, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Langston Hughes.

For the forty-five artists featured in *African American Art of the 20th Century*, art was a vehicle for understanding the complex, conflicting, and sustaining facets of the American experience. As artist Hughie Lee-Smith wrote: "If art is to survive, it must express the needs and aspirations of the people and solidify them in the struggle for the achievement of their poetical, social, and economic goals."

Danforth (continued from page 110)

inappropriate action of past museums to trustees just to underscore the point.

With one remaining chance to enable the merger and save the institution, Danforth and university officials who worked on the merger crafted a plan for success. The primary goal was to continuously ply Town meeting members with facts: the Museum had paid for the building; the university was investing \$4.5 million dollars in the renova-

tion of the Maynard Building to reopen Danforth as part of the university and some university studio art classes would also be taught in the building; the state could not sell the museum's collection; the Town had reviewed in detail possible uses for the Maynard Building and it did not fit any of its current needs. They could buy it, have to maintain it and not use it. I wrote letters to newspapers stating the facts. Select members of the merger team attended at least one meeting of every Town member committee to answer questions. I mailed a fact sheet to every Town meeting member's home. By the last Town Meeting in October 2017, we had exhausted every effort. And it passed with a large majority. That obstacle overcome, we still had a long legal to-do list. The final step would be approval by the Massachusetts Attorney General, who was still dealing with the Berkshire Museum issue. Our merger would be viewed through that lens, which extended the process. In June of 2018 everything was finalized.

Subsequent months were spent on the full Maynard renovation. The collection again moved—from offsite storage to a university facility which also contained my office and that of the curator and the collection manager. We were now the only

POSTMASTER: send address changes to: American Art Review, P.O. Box 1090, Stratham, NH 03885-1090. Printed in USA.

American Art Review (ISSN 0092-1327) is published quarterly by American Arts Media, Inc. at 12807 Sagamore Road, Leawood, Kansas, 66209. The subscription price is \$27.95 for six issues. Foreign subscriptions are no longer available. Periodicals postage paid at Shawnee Mission, Kansas and at additional mailing offices.

employees. But we could look forward and work on the installation of the new museum, which opened April 13, 2019. For the fourth time in three years we moved the collection, this time to its final destination. One gallery is a permanent installation of the Fuller collection, with a recreation of her Framingham attic studio.

Every museum director manages crisis at some point. It was not the first time in my career that I did so. But I did not expect that three of my four and a half years thus far at Danforth would be spent that way. The dedication and countless hours spent by trustees, the unparalleled work ethic and commitment of staff, the trust and generosity of donors, and the vision and extraordinary partnership offered by Framingham State University enabled positive resolution.

INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

Adelaide Fine Arts.....6	Freeman's..... 14, 15	Keny Galleries.....20	Poitevin, Susan.....42
Anderson, Daven..... 38	Garzoli Fine Art, Joel B.....23	Klingelhofer, Carroll..... 42	Questroyal Fine Art..... 2, 3
Argosy Gallery.....31, 35	Godel & Co..... Cover II, 1	Knowles, Ken..... 36	Sharp, John T.....48
Artisans Way.....46	Gratz Gallery.....7	Land Sea and Sky Gallery..... 32	Santa Fe Art Auction..... 18, 19
Avery Galleries.....Cover IV	Green River Gallery..... 12	Lussier Gallery, Barbara.....44	Silverman Gallery..... 46
Bonhams..... 16, 17	Guild of Boston Artists..... 26, 27	MacDonald, John.....41	Soülis Auctions..... 24
Brown Rabbit Studio..... 42	Hagberg, Robert.....35	Madron.....20	Steiner, Robert.....32
Clean Oil Paintings.....12	Harrington, Glenn..... 46	McCaughan & Burr Fine Arts... 38	Spring Street Studio..... 44
Cooley Gallery..... Cover III	Heritage Auctions.....21	McCue, Harry..... 40	Stone Gallery, Don.....8
Cortez Studio, Jenness.....47	Hitt, Karen..... 34	McDonough, Kathleen.....46	Traynor, John C.....28, 29
Curtis, David P.....48	Hughes, Neal.....45	McRory, Desmond.....46	Wilcock Gallery..... 30
Davis Fine Arts, Rachel.....25	Hughes Gallery..... 34	Moeller, Stan.....33	Wiscasset Bay Gallery..... 12
Dempwolf, Karl..... 43	Jung, Michelle.....37	Moran Auctioneers.....9-11, 13	Zullo Gallery..... 46
Dike Fine Art, David.....22	Jurney, Donald..... 27	Nilsson, Leif..... 44	
Eisele Gallery.....35	Kearns, Stapleton.....49	North Star Gallery.....40	
Force Fine Art, Debra.....4	Keeler, Brian..... 40	Pagliarini, Vail..... 39	