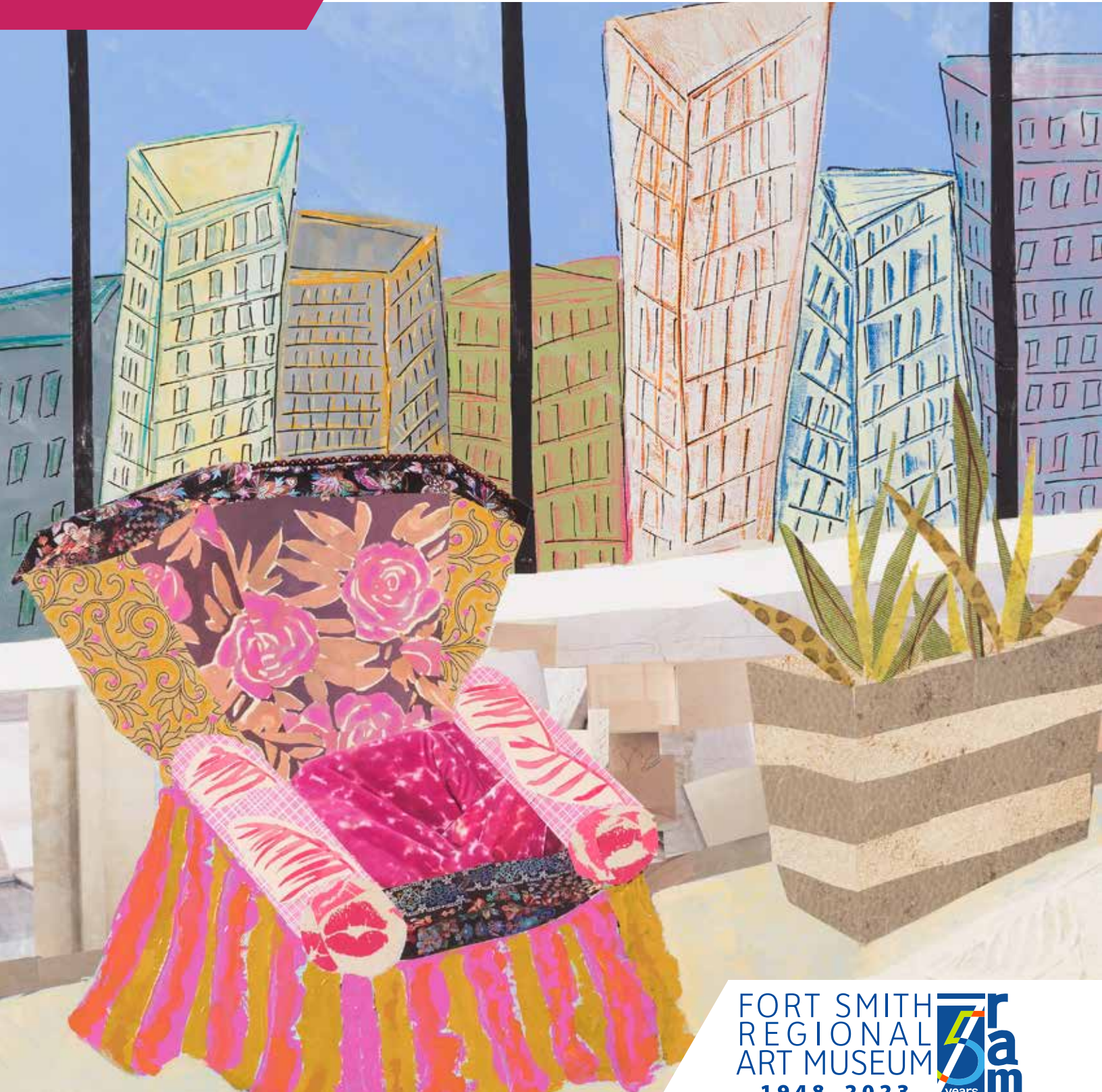


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**ram** Magazine  
Fort Smith Regional Art Museum  
FALL 2023



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ON THE COVER:  
Artwork by Shareen Pruitt (left)  
*City View*, 2023  
Collage on canvas  
Purchase made possible through Windgate Foundation "Acquisition Fund for Art of Living Artists" grant



**Michael Hall**

**D**ear RAM Members:  
I'm very happy to be serving as the new Executive Director of the Fort Smith Regional Art Museum. Since starting work and joining this community in April, I've had the pleasure of meeting many enthusiastic people who are committed to regional art. It's inspiring to see how, like me, they also share a deep sense of pride in their community.

My goals are to first learn from the staff and the community—to understand what it is that makes this such a successful museum, now in its 75th year. Second, the RAM Board is supporting me in taking the Museum toward American Alliance of Museums accreditation. This will allow the organization to be more competitive in fundraising and to provide an established framework that will guide the museum for many years to come. In the course of accreditation, a strategic plan will be drafted that envisions the future. Formulating these core documents and a collections management policy will be the first steps in what will be a long road to accreditation. I look forward to this new adventure.

My family and I have enjoyed our move to Fort Smith very much. We agreed that after so many years of living elbow to elbow with big city crowds, it is refreshing to enjoy greener spaces and locally enthusiastic people.

I have managed five culturally focused museums over the years, and although they have all dealt with the fine arts in one way or another, I have actually been directing a Smithsonian-affiliated science museum for the last eight years. I feel this particular experience gave me an even greater appreciation for the arts, as I would often advocate to our science-focused patrons that while technology provides us with the *means* to live, it is art that gives us the *reason* to live. I liken it to the story of the Greek mythological figure Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods and gave it to humanity in the form of technology. Surprisingly, what few remember is that Prometheus also authored the arts. The sciences allowed humankind to build civilization, but the arts gave that new life true meaning.

**LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

That is how I view art, and how I hope to support it. As you all know, we have in our area a tremendous regional interest in art as well as many gifted local artisans. This is what RAM will support. Going forward we will serve as a resource—not as a traditional gallery, but as a museum that collects and preserves important works of art while educating the public on arts and culture. This mission will not be confined to just fine arts but will serve our great diversity of neighbors and a multigenerational audience. We always have a special eye to educating the young from both private and public school backgrounds, and to featuring their creativity in student art exhibitions. I look forward to being a part of those services as my own experiences expand.

In my career I have continued to learn and adapt and have had to face a great deal of challenges. I have devotedly shepherded museums through three hurricanes, a global financial crisis, and the COVID pandemic, with a solid work ethic. I am now looking toward quieter times and focusing on education and development issues. My wife and son are excited to become members of this regional community with me. In my leisure time I have always enjoyed many hobbies including nature hikes with my son, James, who from his early days has grown up, volunteered, and worked at many of my museum assignments. James studied three years at the Las Vegas Fine Arts Institute and, like his dad, is an avid writer and history buff, deeply steeped in the classics, thanks to his English teacher mother, Teresa. I have been blessed with a productive career and am proud to be of service to RAM and its talented staff and Board including our new President Paul Hankins and Vice President Dr. Georgia Hale. Here, we all stress diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in all programming and exhibitions.

Sincerely,  
Michael Hall, Executive Director

# RAM 75: A YEAR OF CELEBRATION CONTINUES

So now it's September, and the staff, volunteers, and board members of the Fort Smith Regional Art Museum (RAM) have been working (and playing) hard to promote our 75 years in the community.

The Pablo Picasso pottery exhibition that opened in January was an amazing way to launch RAM's year of celebration and to entice the public to visit, learn, and experience the museum. Other exhibitions that have come and gone in the first eight months of 2023 have been the creative woodland installations of Elizabeth Weber, world-renowned photography from *The Museum Project*, student artist Ayree Maner, and RAM's *Annual Invitational: Odyssey*.

In April, the amazing 75th Anniversary Celebration Gala "Evening in Paris" raised spirits and funds for future programs and exhibitions.

But the celebration year is not yet over. New exhibitions are up (*M. Speer: An Artist's Journey*, *Patsy Lane: Cast in Bronze*, and a unique RAM experience with the launch of a John Bell, Jr. traveling exhibition).

See the list in the sidebar for still-to-come events for 2023.

*Elizabeth Weber: Exploring the Woods Within* showcased the 2022 RAM Annual Invitational winner's woodland installations and mesmerizing paintings (photos below and below right).



Great fun, Parisian-style, was had by RAM supporters this April at the 75th Anniversary Celebration Gala, "Evening in Paris" (photos above and above left).

From January through April, the public enjoyed the traveling exhibition *Pablo Picasso: 25 Years of Edition Ceramics from the Rosenbaum Collection*, Organized by the Landau Traveling Exhibitions, Los Angeles, CA (photos above and right).



In honor of RAM's 75th Anniversary, entry fees were waived for this year's *RAM Annual Invitational: Odyssey*, resulting in an incredible exhibition with more entries to share and excite than ever before, featuring 77 amazing artists (photos above and left).

## COMING UP

### CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

**On view through Oct. 15**

- *Patsy Lane: Cast in Bronze* in the Marta Jones Gallery

- *John Bell, Jr: A Painted Legacy* in the Sandi & Sandy Sanders Gallery for the Permanent Collection

**On view Aug. 5 – Nov. 12**

- *M. Speer: An Artist's Journey*

**On view Nov. 18 – Feb. 11**

- *Virmarie DePoyster: Beyond Labels*

**Always on view**

- Dr. W.E. Knight Porcelain Gallery
- Touch Gallery
- Front Stairwell Gallery
- Sparks Sculpture Garden

### UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

**On view Oct. 7 – Feb. 4, 2024**

**Opening reception October 20, 5-7 pm**

- *ArTs at Bost: Creativity, Connection, and Choices* in the Student Gallery Sponsored by Arvest Foundation

**On view Oct. 21 – Jan. 21, 2024**

**Opening reception October 20, 5-7 pm**

- *Martin Peerson* in the Marta Jones Gallery
- *Susan Morrison: River Journeys* in the Sandi & Sandy Sanders Gallery for the Permanent Collection

### EVENTS

- **Fall Family Day & Market**  
Saturday, Oct. 7, 11-3 pm

- **Member Masquerade**  
Saturday, Oct. 28, 5:30-8 pm

- **Holiday Art Party & Time Capsule Internment**  
Saturday, Dec. 9, Noon-4 pm

**CURRENT EXHIBITIONS**



Margaret Speer Carter - Woman with a Jug on her Head

**M. Speer: An Artist's Journey**

Upon graduating with language degrees from Colorado College, Fort Smith native Margaret Speer Carter took her first art course at the Fort Worth Fine Arts School. She created a sculpture of an "old man" and was hooked.

She continued to learn at art schools in Colorado, New Mexico, and New York, but says her first real art teacher was Casimir Rutkowski—the first director of the Fort Smith Art Center. "From him, and later others, I learned the traditional way to paint and draw," says Carter.

We invite you to see the world through Carter's 60 years of painting. From landscapes drawn from her travels, to portraits, still lifes and abstracts, her talent has shown in 26 galleries across the country, including 16 one-woman shows.

*"I try to make my art uplifting in some way – calming, intriguing, or thrilling to you," Carter says. "Art should be strong enough to grab you, and you do not have to know why."*



**An Artist's Journey**  
Lecture by  
Margaret Speer Carter  
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 5 PM

Within the grounds of RAM, one can find a sculpture titled "Mother and Son," generously donated by Carter in 1996 as a tribute to Polly Crews, the former director of the Fort Smith Art Center, and in memory of Crews' son, Stuart.



Patsy Lane (photo at left) at the opening reception of her exhibition. (Below) Visitors marvel at the detail in Lane's bronze sculptures.



**Patsy Lane: Cast in Bronze**

A painter for many years, Patsy Lane discovered sculpting later in life after attending the *Prix de West* exhibition at the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. What Lane saw at that exhibition, plus her exposure to cattle and horses on a ranch in Oklahoma growing up, planted the seeds. After befriending Mehl Lawson, bronze sculptor and member of Cowboy Artists of America in 1982, and attending a workshop in Texas, Lane's career in bronze sculpture took root and blossomed.

*"My work is a story brought to life in bronze. The story lives forever and is hopefully shared with others. A piece of art, whether a painting or a sculpture, is a joy in the home or workspace, something to instill emotion each time you look at it. I hope this is what my work does."*

Lane's sculptures of bears, horses, elk, and dogs are able to tell stories—a mother bear, fish in her mouth, leading her cubs; a curious bobcat investigating a leaping frog; or a horse chase—frozen in the moment in bronze.

**SPEER EXHIBITION SPONSORS:**



**LANE EXHIBITION SPONSORS:**



Members and the community came to the opening receptions to see the new art (left and below).

John Bell, Jr. (1937–2013), an acclaimed American painter and sculptor, was born in 1937 with cerebral palsy and spent his life in wheelchairs with limited use of his upper extremities. Bell spent his time developing his skills as an artist and also overcoming the perceptual bias that faced people with physical challenges.

**John Bell, Jr.: A Painted Legacy**

RAM is excited to partner with CanvasHQ of Fort Smith to present the highly anticipated exhibition *John Bell, Jr.: A Painted Legacy*. Using state-of-the-art, commercial-grade UV resistant inks, CanvasHQ has been able to recreate Bell's images as beautiful canvas prints with the rich colors and soft lighting effects for which his paintings are renowned. This exhibition features 30 of the most beloved John Bell, Jr. images that are housed in public and private collections. Included in the exhibition is the famous U.S. Marshals Series, as well as Bell's captivating images of beautiful churches and historically accurate buildings set against the Old West.

*"Bell's activism for people with disabilities was part of who he was and what made living in this region better. His art, though, would enhance all our lives and create his lasting legacy," said Bill Kropp, III.*

**Both the John Bell, Jr. and Patsy Lane exhibitions will be on view at RAM through October 15. M. Speer will be on view through November 12.**

After *A Painted Legacy* closes at RAM, it will be made available for exhibition at museums, libraries, and public venues across the country for the years 2024-2026.

If you are interested in hosting *John Bell, Jr.: A Painted Legacy* at your business, museum, or municipal office, please email [info@fsram.org](mailto:info@fsram.org) for rates and availability.



**BELL EXHIBITION SPONSORS:**



**10 YEARS OF RAM: 2013-2023**

**2013**



Dedication of the new RAM building, generously donated by Arvest

**2016**



Dedication of the Marta Jones Gallery

**2017**

Implementation of the eHive Collection Storage database (Fine art photography was taken of each Permanent Collection piece and all acquisition information, along with a high-resolution photo, was uploaded to the database). Since 2017, all new artwork has followed this process.

**2018**

Dedication of the Student Gallery Sponsored by Arvest Foundation.

**UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS**



Susan Morrison - King River Falls, 2

**Susan Morrison: River Journeys**

**Oct. 21, 2023 – Jan. 21, 2024**  
**Opening reception Oct. 20, 5-7 pm**

In memory of artist and friend Susan Morrison (1942-2023) Susan Morrison was an artist, author, observer, educator, and storyteller. Long before the designation came to prominence and wide usage, Morrison became an environmentalist; using a variety of art forms as her methods, she worked to raise awareness of America's wildlife and wildlands.

*River Journeys* is a collection of beautiful prints based on her artwork of four scenic rivers in Arkansas (Buffalo, King, Illinois, and Mulberry), interwoven with Morrison's poetry.

**ArTs at Bost: Creativity, Connection, and Choices**

**Oct. 7, 2023 – Feb. 4, 2014**  
**Opening reception Oct. 20, 5-7 pm**

ArTs at Bost offers free, high-quality classes to increase the overall health and wellness of individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities.

When the program began seven years ago with artist Cathy Mason, she asked the students what their long-term goals from the art class were, and their answer was to have their art hung in a museum. The Fort Smith Regional Art Museum is proud to present *ArTs at Bost: Creativity, Connection, and Choices*. With subjects ranging from portraits to undersea creatures and collages, we invite the community to take a look and enjoy the talents of the diverse artists from ArTs at Bost.



Virmarie DePoyster - *Rebellion*

**Virmarie DePoyster: Beyond Labels**

**Nov. 18, 2023 – Feb. 11, 2024**  
**Opening reception Dec. 1, 2023, 5-7 pm**  
**In-person artist lecture: Jan. 19**

Virmarie DePoyster's art connects her past with her present, giving her a visual voice which allows the viewer to experience courage and vulnerability as she shares her perception of places, people, and her human experience.

"My pastel portraits aim to illustrate the meaningful selectivity we use in deciding which of our layers we peel back to show the world and which we keep concealed. Color is a technique, a tool, and a language I use to emphasize an overall feeling," says DePoyster.



Kristen Tordella-Williams - *Requiem*

**RAM Permanent Collection**

**Jan. 27 – April 21, 2024**  
**Opening reception Jan. 26, 2024, 5-7 pm**

This exhibition will feature art with a diverse array of subject matter and media, showcasing choice pieces from the RAM Permanent Collection.

**Kristen Tordella-Williams**

**Feb. 17 – May 19, 2024**  
**Opening reception Feb. 16, 5-7 pm**

In her research, Tordella-Williams examines the impact of personal and communal labor on our environmental and physical landscape. Her work explores themes related to social justice, identity, gender, and memory, using materials commonly found in historical archives, hardware stores, and recycling bins to create works that visually and conceptually represent layers of memory, materiality, and process.

Kristen Tordella-Williams is an interdisciplinary artist and arts educator based in Alabama.

Kristen Tordella-Williams - *Requiem*



Martin Peerson - *Still Life with Bust*

**Amy Scoggins**

**April 27 – July 21, 2024**  
**Opening reception April 26, 5-7 pm**

Amy Scoggins' art is a product of her insatiable curiosity for all things. Whether she paints in a forest, her studio, a crumbling building, or a construction site, the same relationships between paint, observation, and interpretation are there to instruct.

"It is fascinating to ponder that I will never reach the end of what there is to learn, while also appreciating that there is nothing new under the sun. This dichotomy, though at times maddening, causes me to stand in awe of the beauty and mystery in which the Lord envelops this world. In the times that I can reach a balance of life and these two ideas, everything falls into place," says Scoggins.



Amy Scoggins - *The Respite of Labor*



Martin Peerson - *September Clouds*

**Martin Peerson**

**Oct. 21, 2023 – Jan. 21, 2014**  
**Opening reception Oct. 20, 5-7 pm**

Martin Peerson is an American painter who captures the landscapes of Western Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma. He began painting in 1983, learning from local art classes, community college classes, and artist workshops. When he is not painting, he enjoys remodeling his home, woodworking, volunteering at church and tending to his horses.

This exhibition will consist mostly of his landscape paintings with select still lifes and portraits.



Katrina Norwood - *Self Portrait*

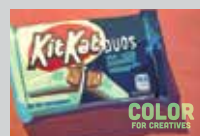
**2019**



Dedication of the Dr. W.E. Knight Porcelain Gallery, in Memory of Dr. Henry Udou, Jr.

Replaced all of the gallery dehumidification lines

**2020**



RAM goes digital with online programs and selling merchandise from the Museum Store

Replaced all humidifiers (galleries and art storage areas)

**2021**



Acquisition of the John Bell, Jr. Legacy Collection



Dedication of the Sandi and Sandy Sanders Gallery for the Permanent Collection

MEET THE STAFF



Michael Hall

Welcome! Since I introduced myself in the Director's Letter at the beginning of this Member Magazine, I'd like to put the focus on my wonderful team—the staff that welcomed me to the Fort Smith Regional Art Museum.

Most of you in the community already know one or more of this group, but if you haven't, please read their bios here, and when you see them at Fall Family Day, next year's Gala, or at art receptions and other events, please introduce yourself and chat with them. They're amazing people who are the heart and soul of this museum.



Julie Moncrief

Hello! I'm so honored to get to communicate RAM's mission with our community members and to strengthen this historic institution "where the spirit of art unites us." RAM is a gift to all, and it is a pleasure to spread the news about this top-notch museum that charges no entry fee. As Development Director, I work to lift up the joy that an asset like this creates for people in all stages of life, and to help people know how valuable their RAM memberships and other donations are to the success and health of our community. I love to report and write, so I've received joy from learning what this museum means to you, through writing grants to help RAM serve you even better, and writing the best fundraising letters I can to entice you to write that check that truly will change lives. Got one in the mail lately? ;)

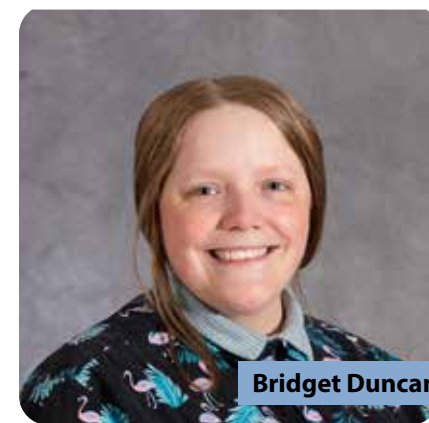
I hope to see you, at our Annual Member Party October 28 from 5:30 to 8 pm, at our next Gala (thanks for making "Evening in Paris" a great success!), and at your civic club, where I'll be glad to bring the latest photos and news. Thank you, Members, Donors, Grantors, Artists, and our Business Community for partnering with RAM to make the River Valley better every day.



Casey Seamans

I'm the Gallery Manager at RAM. I joke that it was a little bit of fate that brought me to the museum in January of 2014. While I've always enjoyed art and art history, I mistakenly thought I was going to interview at the Fort Smith Museum of History. I was thrilled when I arrived at the address to find the newly renovated and recently opened Regional Art Museum! It was a good fit from the very beginning, and now RAM is just part of my DNA. I manage the Museum Store, the Permanent Collection Archive, and work with the Exhibition Committee to bring dynamic exhibitions to the River Valley area. Once the exhibits are selected, I facilitate the transportation and installation of the exhibitions from start to finish.

In the past almost 10 years, I've witnessed a lot of growth within the organization and have had the opportunity to be a part of many different projects: The creation of the Marta Jones Gallery, Student Gallery, Dr. W.E. Knight Porcelain Gallery, and the Sandi and Sandy Sanders Gallery for the Permanent Collection, just to name a few. WOW, we've been busy! This is a very exciting time to be at RAM and I am blessed to be a part of such an amazing team! I look forward to seeing you all soon at the museum!



Bridget Duncan

I'm the Digital Media Coordinator at RAM. I obtained my Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art from the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith. After graduation, I knew that I wanted to work in the arts and culture industry, and I feel incredibly lucky to have found a role that perfectly combines my passion for digital media and the arts.

Here at RAM, I am responsible for executing a wide variety of digital strategies for the museum's exhibitions and events. This includes developing materials such as social media posts, email newsletters, and website pages. Between events, you can catch me in the photography studio documenting our permanent collection or assisting with light IT work.

One of my favorite parts of my job is getting to see the impact I have on my Fort Smith community. It's incredibly rewarding to photograph and engage with a well-attended exhibition or event knowing that I played a role in getting the word out to the public. I am constantly learning and growing in my role, and I am excited to see where my career in the arts takes me in the future.



Petra Radcliffe

I'm a self-taught artist and Education Assistant at RAM. All my life I have studied art on my own or in classes, striving to strengthen my talents. I've had many artist jobs that expanded my range of media. I've been a silversmith, a stained glass artist, a sign painter, and a photographer's assistant. More recently, I spent five years teaching Paint 'n Sip type classes at three different studios in Pennsylvania. I've had five one-woman shows, and have been in 13 group shows all around Pennsylvania. I also competed in the Baum Art School Juried Competition for four years.

I've been working at RAM since November 2021 in the Education Department. I develop and execute the RAM Saturday projects, I produce the sample paintings for and lead the Paint 'n Sip classes, and I schedule models for RAM's weekly Drop in and Draw classes. I'm currently setting up the schedule and lesson plans for our next Home School Art Class that has been suspended since COVID.

Art is my passion and I enjoy sharing it with everyone. I like to transport you to a place of imagination.



Michelle DiMascio

I am the Development Coordinator for RAM. I moved from Salem, Massachusetts to Fort Smith one year ago for a change of pace. RAM was one of the first places I visited in Fort Smith, and now I work here! I want to see RAM do amazing things.

At RAM, I help organize and administer fundraising efforts for the museum, manage the Friends of RAM volunteer program, and continue to spread awareness about our mission.

It takes a lot to run a museum of this caliber, and I am proud to be a part of our small, hardworking staff. We love for members to reach out and tell us what you think, so please don't hesitate!

Lifting people up to achieve their highest potential makes the world a better place. Doing that through art appreciation and art creation is simply thrilling and superb.

2022

Installation of the new sliding front doors for easier ADA access

2023

Replaced one of our 3-ton Heating/AC units

Updated camera system and added additional cameras

Celebrating RAM's 75th Anniversary in the community



Pablo Picasso exhibition

Added dehumidification in the Loading Dock

RAM's 75th Anniversary Year will end with a Time Capsule Internment in December



## Summer Art Camps Spark Creativity and Collaboration in Young Minds

As the scorching days of summer rolled in, the Fort Smith Regional Art Museum (RAM) transformed into a hub of artistic exploration and imagination during its July Art Camps. Children and teenagers ages 6 to 18 gathered at the museum to participate in a diverse range of activities—honing their artistic skills and engaging in collaborative projects.

### Dinosaur Art Camp: July 11-14

Kicking off the creative summer journey was the “Dinosaur Diorama” camp. Twenty-one enthusiastic campers, ages 6 to 10, embarked on a journey to the prehistoric era. Guided by a team of volunteers and led by RAM’s Petra Radcliffe, the young artists delved into the world of dinosaurs. Each participant crafted their very own prehistoric scene, complete with lush vegetation and a plastic dinosaur as the centerpiece. The camp not only sparked their creativity but fostered teamwork and camaraderie among the budding artists.

### Sci-Fi Art Camp: July 18-21

The following week saw a shift from the ancient past to the distant future with the “Sci-Fi” camp. Seventeen imaginative minds eagerly delved into the realm of science fiction to craft an array of otherworldly objects. Swords, armor, spaceships, and robots materialized from bits of plastic, cardboard, paint, and metal. The art room buzzed with excitement as many young artists churned out multiple projects, showcasing their unique perspectives on the futuristic theme.

A futuristic robot creation with paint and cardboard from the Sci-Fi Camp Camp.



Kids learned about dinosaurs, fossils, and vegetation in the prehistoric era while building their own dinosaur dioramas at Dinosaur Art Camp (photos above and far right).

### Elevating Art Camp: July 25-29

As the month drew to a close, the “Installation” art camp provided a platform for those aged 14 and older to elevate their artistic endeavors. The participants embraced a collaborative challenge that pushed the boundaries of artistic expression. Under the guidance of instructor Bonnie King, these young artists embarked on a collective endeavor to construct a three-dimensional, interactive photo booth. The project spanned most of the week, as the team meticulously designed and built the installation at RAM, later reassembling it at PEAK Innovation Center. The camp culminated in a reception at PEAK on Saturday, where their booth stood as a testament to their collective creativity and hard work.

RAM’s commitment to nurturing young talents not only ignited passion for art but also instilled values of teamwork and innovation that will undoubtedly extend beyond the realm of the canvas.

## Paint 'n Sip

with Petra Radcliffe

Once a month on Friday or Saturday, 5-7 pm  
Art supplies provided. Ages 16+ to paint, 21+ to sip  
Members \$25 / Non-members \$35

Join us for a fun night of painting while you sip your favorite beverage. Recreate works by the great masters in acrylics on canvas with RAM’s own Petra Radcliffe guiding the way. Beer and wine are welcome before/during the class (no hard alcohol). Come 15-20 minutes early to get settled.

See what’s on the schedule and reserve your spot: [fsram.org/education](https://fsram.org/education)



OCTOBER 27:  
Skull of a Skeleton by  
Vincent Van Gogh



NOVEMBER 17:  
Poppy Field by  
Claude Monet



DECEMBER 15:  
Winter Landscape by  
Wassily Kandinsk



JANUARY 12:  
Starry Night by  
Vincent Van Gogh

## RAM SATURDAYS

Saturdays: 12-3 pm  
Art supplies provided.  
All ages. Free to the public.

RAM is the place for make-and-take art! For our 75th anniversary, we began by focusing on Picasso’s cubism style, and then the remainder of the year we are creating art projects through the decades. Keep an eye on our website for each week’s project.



## DIAD

### Drop In and Draw

Thursdays, 1-3 pm  
Tables, easels, and a live model are provided but bring your own art supplies. Free to the public.

A place and a time to create? A live model for reference? Drop in and commune with other artists and draw (or paint) from a live model most Thursday afternoons.

## VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT



Dakota

I love volunteering at RAM because it’s a great place to learn about art from all around the Northwestern part of Arkansas and from middle Eastern Oklahoma. They have different exhibitions from different people, and you can learn about the history and culture of each piece. They also have classes for kids and adults, so you can learn more about art and how to create it.

I come from a small town in middle eastern Oklahoma named Sallisaw and I go to Sallisaw High School. It’s a close-knit community that I love. The teachers and staff are incredibly supportive, and the students are friendly and welcoming. The small class sizes at my high school allow for more personal attention, and the curriculum is challenging and interesting.



## Homeschool Classes are back at RAM

Starting in January, experience the wonders of art education with the revival of homeschool classes at the Fort Smith Regional Art Museum!

Our curriculum delves into the fundamental principles of art and showcases renowned artists from history. In the first half of the year, students will learn the core principles of art. The latter half of the year will be dedicated to refining the skills of budding artists across various mediums.

Be sure to register!

**Every other Tuesday • Noon to 2 pm • On location at RAM • Free • Ages 8-14**

<b>Jan. 2, 16 &amp; 30</b>	<b>May 7 &amp; 21</b>	<b>Oct 1, 15 &amp; 29</b>
<b>Feb 13 &amp; 27</b>	<b>June &amp; July ON BREAK</b>	<b>Nov 5 &amp; 19</b>
<b>March 12 &amp; 26</b>	<b>Aug. 6 &amp; 20</b>	<b>Dec 3 &amp; 17</b>
<b>April 9 &amp; 23</b>	<b>Sept 3 &amp; 17</b>	



## Guided Tours, Artist Lectures, & More



**Guided Tours**  
with Marti Corff  
**SELECT SUNDAYS, 2 PM**  
(Oct. 1, Nov. 12, Dec. 3)



**Artist Lecture**  
by  
Virmarie DePoyster  
**FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 5 PM**

### LANDMARK LESSONS Through the Art of John Bell, Jr.



**Historic Eureka Springs**  
with presenter **Chuck Girard**  
**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2 PM**

## A John Bell, Jr. Story

By Wayne Thompson, as told to Casey Seamans, RAM Gallery Manager, August 12, 2023

It was 1967 and John (Bell, Jr.) was the President of the Arkansas Chapter of the Cerebral Palsy Association, and they were having their National Convention in New York City. Well, in those days, if you were handicapped, you could not fly alone, so John asked me to accompany him.

Another thing 'in those days,' they did not have jetways/skyways allowing passengers to walk directly onto their planes. Passengers walked across the pavement and up the stairs of the plane to board. When we landed for our layover in Memphis, Tennessee, I carried John off the plane, and once back in his motorized wheelchair, we were able to go mess around. But when we went to get on our flight from Memphis to New York, we were told the batteries that powered John's wheelchair could not be allowed on the plane and had to be left behind in Memphis. Once again I carried John up the stairs and onto the plane, finally headed to New York.

Upon arriving in New York, we knew our first order of business was to get new batteries for John's wheelchair. We hailed a cab and John told the driver they needed to "go to a salvage yard that might have two 1956 Mercury batteries." In no time, we were pulling up to a salvage yard. I went in, and sure enough they had the two batteries, but both of them were going to cost \$47! I asked if we could possibly just rent them, and return the batteries at the end of the trip (2-3 days) but the man said no. We took the batteries anyway and asked the driver to take us to our hotel. As we got out of the cab, the driver gave us his name and phone number and told us to call him if they needed transportation while in town.

Once at the hotel, John was back in his wheelchair and he and I were able to get around pretty well. That is, until we saw the door to the hotel bathroom. John's wheelchair wouldn't fit through the door! Having made a career of overcoming obstacles, it wasn't long until a plan was hatched that saw John and I "borrowing a few tools from hotel maintenance." We then



proceeded to remove the bathroom door and the door facing, allowing John access to the hotel room bathroom with his wheelchair.

We called that cab driver a couple of times over that week and went driving around and sight-seeing when John wasn't in seminars and meetings. We wanted to go see the Broadway musical *Hair*, but it was sold out (that part of the story is not at all relevant, but I found it to be very amusing).

On the day we were to fly home, we called our reliable cab driver, who drove us back to the auto salvage yard before taking us to the airport. The driver and I went in and put the two car batteries back up on the counter, and I asked the guy who sold us the batteries if he would take the batteries back. The guys said he'd give us back half of what we paid. The cab driver, from Brooklyn, and now also our friend, reached across the counter, grabbed and dragged the guy half over the counter and explained he was going to refund the full cost of the salvaged batteries. The salvage yard attendant agreed, and the three of us were on our way to the airport, with their \$47.

Repeating the process of carrying John onto and off the planes in New York and Memphis, we made it back to the original wheelchair batteries we'd had to leave at the Memphis airport. We got our batteries, then again had to repeat the process of carrying John on and off the planes in Memphis and Fort Smith, finally returning safely to the River Valley.



(Above) Wayne Thompson, right, with John Bell, Jr.'s daughter, Lisa. (Above top) *The Old Billboard*.

A couple of weeks later I went by John's house, where he had several paintings stacked against a wall. He told me to pick one for going to New York with him. I chose *The Old Billboard*.

It is worth mentioning, John went on to illustrate a handbook publication for the United Cerebral Palsy of N.Y.C./The Training Workshop entitled "Carriage of the Physically Handicapped on Domestic and International Airlines," which was a report on the policies, rules and regulations affecting travel of the handicapped. Prepared in May 1972 by Jacob S. Schleichkorn, a copy of this handbook resides in RAM's Permanent Collection.





Ayree Maner - *Candlelight* (above) and *Man with Pipe* (right)



Shareen Pruitt - *City View*

## Grant Adds to RAM Permanent Collection

A great way to explore a variety of wonderful artworks is to view the rotating exhibitions in RAM's Sandi and Sandy Sanders Gallery for the Permanent Collection. With this new gallery—built in 2021—RAM shares the artworks this charitable organization has purchased or received as gifts since the 1960s. They number more than 500.

The tremendous collection got a fresh boost in August 2021. RAM received a grant from the Windgate Foundation for the acquisition of art of living artists. To many, the name Windgate has come to equate with rocketship power to the arts of *today*. Founded in 1993, the Windgate Foundation's purpose is to advance contemporary craft and strengthen visual arts education in the United States.

We introduce on this page the acquisitions made so far with this grant. The artists range from an 11th grade art honors student, a successful self-taught artist, to a university arts teacher. Upon completion of the grant period in 2024, RAM will hold an exhibition of these purchased works, as well as other recent donated and acquired works.

### Ayree Maner

Artist Ayree Maner is a junior at Greenwood High School. Her solo exhibition in RAM's Student Gallery Sponsored by Arvest Foundation kicked off with a reception packed with friends and family members who all shared the pride of having encouraged her in her art since she was a wee child. She works with acrylics, watercolor, oils, ink sketch, and colored pencil. After highschool, she will apply to art schools to pursue a career in 2D animation and storyboarding.

### Shareen Pruitt

Shareen Pruitt is a self-taught artist in Fort Smith. She has shown and sold her work at the Wine and Roses Gala, Art on the Border, and in the Art Collective Gallery. This piece exhibited in the 2023 Art on the Border in Fort Smith, *City View*, caught the eye of RAM Board Member Lois Novicki, who serves on the Collections and Acquisitions Committee.

"Shareen Pruitt's collage painting, *City View*, contrasts a warm, patterned interior with cool, repetitious lines and shapes that depict breezy skyscrapers outside," Novicki notes. "Viewers are invited to take a moment to engage with this charming scene. The work will be a delightful addition to RAM's collection."



Charles Peer - *Skyline*



Susan Chambers - *In the Garden*

### Susan Chambers

Purchased from the 73rd annual RAM Annual Invitational this year is *In the Garden* by Little Rock artist Susan Chambers. Since obtaining her degree in art from Rhodes College and her M.S.A. in Painting from the

University of Georgia at Athens, Chambers has taught at three Arkansas colleges and exhibited nationally and regionally. Her work is in both public and corporate collections.

"The garden is the place that I go to create," Chambers says. "The garden is the subject matter that I have explored for many years and it is also a metaphor that continues to nurture my personal vision. This has resulted in several garden series: Southern, home, folk, environmental and visionary gardens."

### Charles Peer

Charles Peer, resident of Siloam Springs, Arkansas, teaches in the Department of Visual Arts at John Brown University and also serves as the university's Fine Arts Gallery Director. His Arkansas landscapes have become a favorite of many since he received his MFA in Painting and Drawing from the University of Arkansas in 1979. Peer is a signature member of the Pastel Society of America and the Ozark Pastel Society. He has served as a guest artist for many arts organizations, the juror for regional competitions, and as leader of pastel workshops. His work has been included in numerous juried exhibitions sponsored by the Pastel Society of America and the International Association of Pastel Societies.

In addition to *Skyline*, RAM has acquired *Lakeshore Morning*, not shown here.

RECENT  
ACQUISITIONS

More Exceptional Acquisitions and Gifts

A gift of art to RAM's Permanent Collection is a way to ensure the artwork's enjoyment by multitudes, forever. Recent gifts include the following:

*Capitol Avenue* and *Still Life* by **John Bell, Jr.**, are acquisitions made possible by the John Bell, Jr. Legacy Society, founded by Linda Udouj in memory of her husband, Dr. Henry Udouj, Jr. Society Members are those who have donated funds to RAM's John Bell, Jr. Legacy Project, whose mission is to protect, preserve, and educate about the art and life of John Bell, Jr. These are exceptional works that the "forever home" of John Bell, Jr., is most thrilled to protect and share.

*Boy with Wagon and Shed* (not shown) by John Bell, Jr. is a delightful watercolor donated by Linda Udouj in memory of her husband, Dr. Henry Udouj, III.

Artist **Joan Irish**, who exhibited at RAM last spring, donated *Dogwood Leafing*, 2022. A plein air painter of Mena, AR, Irish's chosen medium is chalk pastel. Her work has been included in solo and juried group exhibitions at the Museo Nacional de Costa Rica; Taipinqiri Gallery, La Paz, Bolivia; the Arkansas Arts Center Delta shows; and the Arkansas Arts Council "Small Works on Paper" traveling exhibitions. She holds an MFA degree in painting and drawing from the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville.

Charles and Kay Whitlow donated *Still Life* and *Still Life with Bust* (shown on p. 9) by **Martin Peerson**. Peerson pours his love of horticulture (he holds a degree in it from Oklahoma State University), into the most beautiful paintings of flowers and more for all of us to enjoy. He began painting in 1983 and learned from local art classes, community college classes, and workshops taught by established artists.

*Dorado* was generously donated by artist **Katerina Frantzikinakis**. Dorado is derived from the Spanish word for "golden." The 8 x 10" piece by Frantzikinakis was created with acrylic, and done entirely free-hand.



Joan Irish - *Dogwood Leafing*, 2022, gift of the artist



Katerina Frantzikinakis - *Dorado (Golden)*, 2023  
Gift of the artist

More newly acquired works include a gift by artist **Sandra Dixon**, *American Pride*, and *Porcelain Rose* from **Boehm Studios of Malvern, England, Ltd.**, a gift of the Lucia Leigh Laughlin Family.



John Bell, Jr. - *Capitol Avenue* (top) and *Still Life* (above)  
Donated by John Bell, Jr. Legacy Society



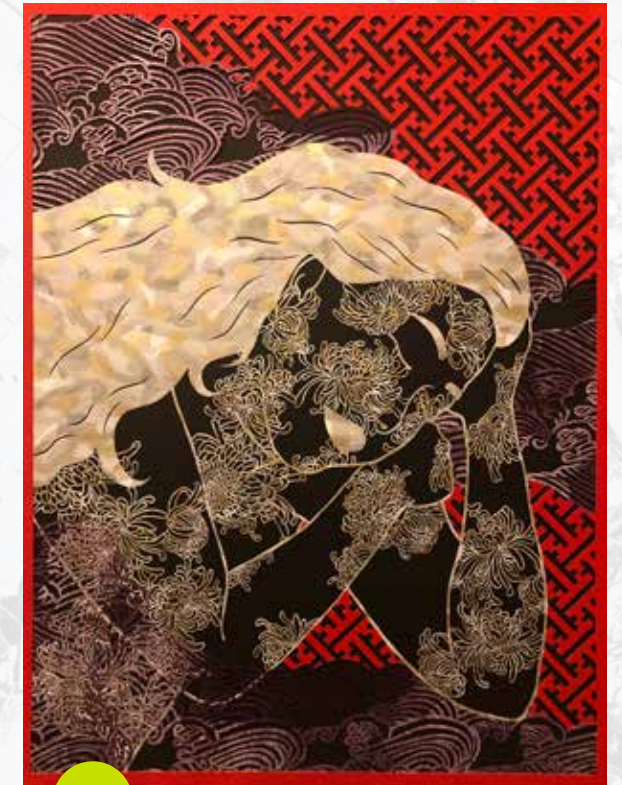
Martin Peerson - *Still Life*  
Gift of Charles and Kay Whitlow

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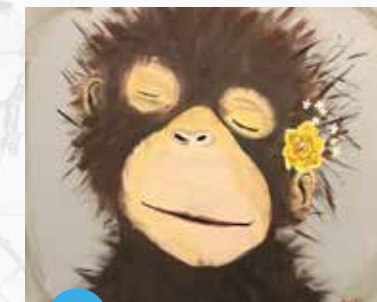
**SECOND PLACE: Amy Scoggins**  
*Motherhood: Death by Homeschool*  
Oil on canvas



**FIRST PLACE: Tammy Harrington**  
*Whisper*  
Intaglio print and cut paper



**PURCHASE AWARD: Susan Chambers**  
*In the Garden*  
Acrylic on canvas



**PEOPLES CHOICE:**  
**Darla Vaughn**  
*Katherine*

**THIRD PLACE:**  
**Cheri Bohn**  
*Bohn Voyage*  
Stained glass  
and metal work



**HONORABLE MENTIONS:**

- Elizabeth Weber** - *Forest Sanctuary*
- Thomas Richard** - *Danger, Danger: From Lifesavers to Chicken*
- Neal Harrington** - *The Fish Lady of Toad Suck Holler*

We'd also like to thank our judges this year, who all stem from the **University of Arkansas - Fort Smith:** Don Lee, Gallery Director/Art Department Head Emeritus; Ernest Cialone, Art Professor; and Bethany Springer, Associate Professor of Art.

**YOUR SUPPORT**

**Julie Moncrief**  
Development Director

Exhibition openings are RAM's favorite times! M. Speer opening featured at right.



**It's time to look forward.**

What do we think about a nonprofit arts organization reaching its 75th year?

One way to find out is to ask the question, "What if the Fort Smith Art Center-turned-RAM had never existed?"

Then one's mind starts reeling backwards at rapid speed with images of all this museum has meant to Fort Smith and the region. Images of hundreds upon hundreds of local artists posing next to their exhibitions, of children happily holding up their creations, of crowds of citizens gathering in the name of art ... freedom ... growth. Then the only question becomes, *what can we do to make sure it keeps going?*

- 1. Trust in the longevity of RAM.**  
We're not going anywhere but up!
- 2. Make sure you are always a member of RAM.** Generations ahead will thank you. The cost isn't that much, but neither were the nickels, quarters, and \$1 bills people donated to a small group going door to door in 1959 until they had \$10,000 to buy RAM's first home – the Vaughan-Schaap House. You make a difference. Embrace that difference with pride!

- 3. Consider increasing your level,** such as to the Contributor Level and above, which provide you member benefits at more than 1,300 museums across North America. RAM is an honored member of the National Association of Reciprocal Museums.

- 4. Why not make or plan a special gift to RAM?** Your gift will affect lives for life, in a most positive way! From a great *Forbes* article entitled "3 Scientific Reasons Why Visiting An Art Museum Can Boost Your Happiness":

**Visiting art museums:**

- stimulates positive emotions, promotes feelings of engagement, resulting in an improved quality of life.
- helps us reduce stress as it immediately reduces the production of cortisol (a hormone related to stress) in our body.
- Both the artworks as well as the visitors at museums can make us feel connected and less isolated. It can even lead to the building of a like-minded community.



**Examples of Special Gifts:**

- **Make a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA's annual Required Minimum Distribution** (you pay no income tax on the transfer)
- **Make a gift of stocks, bonds, mutual funds, or personal property** – arts, automobiles, land.
- **Make a Charitable Bequest:** a planned gift from you that occurs either during your life or upon your death through:
  - **a Charitable Gift Annuity** (a gift of assets in exchange for a lifetime of fixed income)
  - **a Charitable Remainder Trust** (an irrevocable trust that generates a potential income stream for you or other beneficiaries, with the remainder of the donated assets going to your favorite charity or charities)
  - **a Planned Gift Through Your Will**

- **Encourage everyone you know to be a RAM member.**

- **Bring your friends on a regular basis.**

- **Volunteer:** Our Friends of RAM meet monthly with a staff member to stay in-the-know and sign up for jobs.

For more information on any of these, please call RAM Development at 479-784-2787 or email: [development@fsram.org](mailto:development@fsram.org).

We look forward to seeing you October 28 (5:30–8 pm) for the *Member Masquerade!* Halloween fun in the place "where the spirit of art unites us."



(Top photo) Thanks (and congratulations) to all who came to *Landmark Lessons: Through the Art of John Bell, Jr.* featuring Bell's Van Buren paintings and historian Tom Wing. It was fantastic!

(Above photo) RAM's 75th Anniversary Proclamation by Mayor George McGill (Board Member Jackie Krutsch stands with him) hangs in our lobby. It's a great read!



The great crowd and entertainment of "Evening in Paris" provided a splendid kickoff for our new Annual Gala theme: "Art 'Round the World"! Pictured from top, clockwise, are Cancan dancers of Western Arkansas Ballet, the Belingas and Swicegoods all decked out, Argentine Tango dynamos TK Rakowski and Megan Ratliff, Cody Banning portraying Camille Pissarro, a great shot of the attendees, and "Evening in Paris" Co-Chairs Pat Moore and Joan McCoy.

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