

A Legacy of Firsts: The Everson Collects

Steffi Chappell

Introduction

In 1911, the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts (known today as the Everson Museum of Art) made history when director Fernando Carter declared that it would focus on collecting works made by American artists. This pioneering move, made at a time when most American museums prioritized European and ancient art, was the first of many instituted by directors and curators over the last century that have shaped the Everson's collection into what it is today.

This essay examines defining moments from the Everson's journey in order to chart the history and evolving identity of the Museum through the lens of its collecting priorities and exhibition practices. A museum's identity is inseparable from its collection, and collections evolve as an organization changes over time. More than a century after Carter purchased the Museum's first American painting, the Everson's collection now contains more than 10,000 works representing a broad yet distinct group of artists, mediums, movements, and styles. Together, these works tell the unique story of the Everson, its leaders, the city of Syracuse, and the ever-changing world of contemporary art.



Fig. 1. George Knapp, *George Fisk Comfort in the First Museum Quarters*, 1903, oil on canvas, 29¾ x 24¾ inches, Gift of Ms. Natalie Pyndus, 41.335

Early Acquisitions

The Everson Museum of Art's origins extend back to the late nineteenth century, a time when not many American cities outside of major metropolitan areas had public art museums. George Fisk Comfort, who helped establish the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City in 1870 and the College of Fine Arts at Syracuse University in 1873, founded the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts in 1897 and served as its first director. The Museum rented space in the Onondaga County Savings Bank adjacent to Clinton Square in downtown Syracuse and exhibited art and artifacts borrowed from local collectors and artists as well as galleries based in New York City (fig. 1). In 1901, Comfort began inviting schoolteachers and their students to tour the Museum, establishing the first program of its kind in the country.¹



Fig. 2. Carnegie Library on Montgomery Street

In 1906, the Onondaga County Savings Bank gave the Museum one month to vacate their building. The Museum quickly moved a few blocks southeast into a rented room at the Syracuse Public Library's Carnegie building on the corner of Montgomery and Jefferson Streets (fig. 2). Despite a miniscule budget and less than ideal display space, Comfort continued his popular exhibition and education programs, making the Museum a vital part of the Syracuse community.

Comfort died in May 1910, and in July, Museum trustees appointed local painter and art critic



Fig. 3. John C. Johansen, *Sunrise, Grand Canal, Venice*, 1907, oil on canvas, 41¾ x 41¾ inches, Museum purchase with the Friends of American Art Fund, 11.115



Fig. 4. Charles W. Hawthorne, *Mother and Child*, ca. 1908, oil on canvas, 61¼ x 55 inches, Museum purchase with the Friends of American Art Fund, 11.106



Fig. 5. Henry Ward Ranger, *Long Pond*, 1912, oil on canvas, 38 x 45¾ inches, Museum purchase with the Friends of American Art Fund, 12.137.2

Fernando Carter as his replacement. Announcing his hire, the *Syracuse Post-Standard* noted, "American painting is one of the hobbies of the new director of the museum."² This was an early indication of a bold decision Carter would make for the Museum the following year. He likely recognized that the Museum needed its own interesting and significant collection in order to flourish, and so, with the full support of the Board of Trustees, Carter declared that the Museum would focus on collecting paintings by American artists. He also founded the Friends of American Art, a group of local patrons who contributed funds specifically for the purchase of American paintings, thereby establishing a dedicated acquisitions budget for the first time in the Museum's history. This fund was used to purchase artwork into the 1950s, decades after Carter's work at the Museum ended.

Carter publically announced the establishment of the Friends of American Art group in October 1911 in the Museum's annual *Bulletin*, along with the first four American paintings purchased that year, works by Charles Harold Davis, John C. Johansen (fig. 3), Charles W. Hawthorne (fig. 4), and Charles Loring Elliott (plate 2). In seeking out potential acquisitions, Carter prioritized both nationally- and regionally-known painters, mainly focusing on contemporary artists. The collection continued to grow year after year. In 1912, Carter purchased *Long Pond* by Henry Ward Ranger (fig. 5). In 1913, he acquired several paintings, including Jonas Lie's *The Black Teapot* (plate 9) and J. Alden Weir's *Portrait of the Artist's Daughter* (plate 8). In 1915, Carter purchased *Freight Yards* by Gifford Beal (plate 12). Carter frequently traveled to New York City to visit

galleries and kept up an active correspondence with many artists. His familiarity with artists and galleries based in New York City helped in developing a collection of American paintings in Syracuse. Along with his interest in contemporary artists, when the opportunity arose, Carter also acquired nineteenth-century paintings, working to develop an historical American collection that included works by notable figures. He began with Elliott in 1911, and ultimately added works by other nineteenth-century luminaries including Sanford Thayer and Eastman Johnson (plate 4). By 1922, just eleven years after the first purchase in 1911, the annual *Bulletin* listed sixty-one paintings in the collection, an impressive accomplishment for a regional museum.

Adelaide Alsop Robineau

Adelaide Alsop Robineau, today considered one of America's preeminent art potters, moved to Syracuse in 1901. Robineau corresponded regularly with Carter and was likely a frequent visitor to the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts. She exhibited her porcelains at the Museum as early as 1912. In 1915, Carter informed Robineau of his intent to purchase a sizeable selection of her ceramics for the Museum's collection, an uncommon choice at a time when few art museums collected ceramic works. In a letter dated November 12, 1915, Robineau responded enthusiastically to Carter's interest. She wrote, "It has been a great pleasure to me to hear you express a desire for a permanent collection of my work in the Syracuse Museum and also, a delightful surprise to have your opinion that your committee is so liberal minded as to be likely to

agree with you...All Museum committees are not so unanimous or progressive." In the event that there were trustees opposed to adding her work to the collection, Robineau implored Carter to remember that "Syracuse has *at least* two unique boasts to make. There is the salt which gives its savor. And there are the Robineau Porcelains!"³



Fig. 6. Adelaide Alsop Robineau, *Lantern*, 1908, porcelain, 8½ x 6 inches, Museum purchase, 16.4.5

In her letter, Robineau laid out a plan in which the Museum would ultimately spend \$2,000 for a selection of her porcelains valued at \$3,000, concluding with, "In this way Syracuse will have such a collection as no other museum will ever have the opportunity of purchasing even for double the amount."⁴ This was a significant sum for the Museum at the time; that year, the acquisitions budget totaled \$800, which was used to purchase Beal's painting *Freight Yards*. In 1916, the Museum officially acquired thirty-two of Robineau's porcelains, which became the first ceramics to enter the collection. Among those works were *Crab Vase* (plate 7) and *Lantern* (fig. 6).

Robineau died in 1929, and the next year the Museum purchased an additional fifty-four porcelains from her husband, Samuel. Included in this purchase was *Scarab Vase*, considered to be the artist's masterpiece (fig. 7). Robineau created *Scarab Vase* in 1910 while working at University City Pottery in St. Louis, Missouri. Decorated with an excised design of scarab beetles, the vase is a stunning example of Robineau's skill. The repeating design depicts scarab beetles in the act of pushing their eggs, encased in balls of dung, upwards in a never-ending battle against gravity. This continuous effort of the beetle reflects the theme of the vase, which Robineau named *The Apotheosis of the Toiler* due to the reputed one thousand hours of painstaking work required to carve the design.



Fig. 7. Adelaide Alsop Robineau, *Scarab Vase*, 1910, porcelain, 16½ x 6 inches, Museum purchase, 30.4.78.a-c

Today, there are 116 Robineau porcelains in the Museum's collection, the largest holding anywhere in the world. The collection includes masterpieces, like *Scarab Vase* and *Lantern*, as well as numerous miniature test pots and an example of Robineau's early china painting.

Founding of the Ceramic Nationals

In July 1931, Carter died after a prolonged illness. That October, the trustees appointed Anna Wetherill Olmsted as director. Olmsted had been serving as Carter's assistant director for just over a year and would ultimately hold the directorship for twenty-eight years, the longest term in the Museum's history. Whereas Carter is remembered for setting the Museum on the path to collecting American paintings, Olmsted's legacy lies in her founding of the *Ceramic National* exhibitions.

In 1932, Olmsted established the first annual *Robineau Memorial Ceramic Exhibition* in honor of the ceramist, who had died three years prior. Olmsted intended the exhibition to provide a venue for American ceramists to present their work as well as establish the Museum as the leading center for American ceramics. Known today as the *Ceramic Nationals*, these annual juried exhibitions ultimately sparked a major national interest in ceramic art and paved the way for museums around the country to exhibit and collect the work. Despite lack of funding and appropriate exhibition space—the Museum's entire exhibition budget in 1932 was \$419 and it still rented space in the city library—Olmsted assembled a successful exhibition featuring works by artists from across New York, all displayed atop sateen-covered folding tables borrowed from the local YMCA (fig. 8).⁵



Fig. 8. First Ceramic National exhibition, 1932, Ceramic National Archive, Everson Museum of Art.

Following the exhibition's positive reception from critics and public alike, ceramists around the country wrote to Olmsted requesting that a follow-up exhibition be national in scope. Olmsted recognized the difficulty of putting on a national exhibition with

insufficient funding, but she also saw an opportunity. In a February 1933 letter to artist Carleton Atherton, she wrote, "Perhaps it is rather mad to consider a *national* exhibition just now... but with no other national exhibition devoted exclusively to ceramics in the country this might truly be the chance of a lifetime, and the museum ought to be put on the art map thereby."⁶ Olmsted ultimately opened the 1933 exhibition to ceramists around the country, and submissions poured in. The show included almost two hundred works from seventy-two artists, including Maria Martinez, who submitted the blackware *Plate* (fig. 9). Olmsted kept costs low by borrowing casket boxes from the Marcellus Casket Company to use as pedestals.⁷



Fig. 9. Maria Martinez, *Plate*, ca. 1932, blackware, 2 x 12¾ inches, Gift of the Pueblo Indian Arts and Crafts Market; 2nd Ceramic National, 1933, 41.374.8

The *Ceramic Nationals* continued annually until 1952 (with a short break during World War II), at which time they became biennials due to the number of participating artists and expense. The last official *National* occurred in 1972, with revivals in 1987, 1990, 1993, and 2000. The Museum purchased prize-winning works from nearly every *National* (each exhibition is represented in the collection except for the first and the third), building an incomparable collection of twentieth-century American ceramics that documents the rise and fall of different styles and subjects over the years.

Museum Moves to James Street

From the Museum's inception, each of its directors lobbied for a permanent home to replace its rented spaces. When the Museum was ordered to vacate the Onondaga County Savings Bank building in 1906, the Board of Trustees embarked on a fundraising campaign to construct a new building. They were unsuccessful, and that year the Museum moved into a room in the public library. Comfort, the Museum's first director, advocated for a new museum building until his death in 1910, primarily through letters to the editors of local newspapers.⁸



Fig. 10. Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts on James Street, ca. 1930s

Carter followed suit when he became director and spent his entire twenty-year tenure advocating for the necessity of a new home for the Museum. In 1915, the Museum expanded into the entire third floor of the public library, which provided much needed additional exhibition space, but still was not an adequate home for an art museum. Carter continued to appeal to the Syracuse public to support the building of a new structure in his annual report in every *Bulletin* from 1918 to 1931, primarily noting the Museum's lack of space and inadequate facilities. Carter died in the summer of 1931, never having achieved his goal. It would be six more years, and under the directorship of Olmsted, before the Museum finally moved into a building of its own. In 1937, Museum trustees learned that the former Lynch Mansion, on the corner of James and State Streets, was for sale. The Museum raised \$62,000 to purchase the mansion from the Knights of Columbus, who had renovated the building to include an additional wing and an auditorium,

making the nineteenth-century structure desirable for a twentieth-century museum (fig. 10).⁹ The Museum opened at its new location on October 28, 1937, and, with more than double the square footage of its former space, was able to greatly expand exhibitions, programs, and collecting activities. Over the next three decades, Museum curators and directors acquired contemporary works made during that period. They also focused on building a solid collection of twentieth-century American art, opportunistically adding works to represent the trajectory of modernism, including paintings by Charles Burchfield, Glenn Coleman (fig. 11), Robert Henri (plate 10), and Ernest Lawson (plate 11).



Fig. 11. Glenn Coleman, *Ferry*, ca. 1927-1930, oil on canvas, 29½ x 34¾ inches, Gift of Mrs. Edward W. Root, 60.4

I.M. Pei-designed Everson Opens in 1968

As the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts settled into its new home, an upheaval in the local arts community was on the horizon. Syracuse arts patron and heiress Helen Everson died on March 21, 1941, leaving approximately one million dollars "for the purpose of founding, erecting and maintaining a Museum of Art to be known as 'Everson Museum of Art' to be located in the City of Syracuse, New York." Despite the fact that Everson's last will and testament stipulated her wishes, several groups challenged the will, including the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts, and it was not until May 1949 that the Everson Museum of Art Board of Directors was officially established. Another decade passed before community leaders chose a site for the new museum building and the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts and the Everson



Fig. 12. Dale Byrd, concept drawing for Everson Museum of Art, 1962

Museum of Art reached an agreement to merge their two organizations under the Everson name, which they did in May 1959. The newly consolidated Board of Trustees appointed Max Sullivan as the Everson's director a year later and tasked him with leading the charge for erecting a new museum building. In the summer of 1961, Everson trustees announced they had unanimously chosen I.M. Pei as the Everson's architect. Ground was broken for the building on the corner of Harrison and State Streets on April 27, 1966, and the Everson finally moved into its new home in the late summer of 1968.¹⁰

Swapping a converted nineteenth-century mansion for a brand new purpose-built building enabled the Everson to begin exhibiting and collecting artwork of the modern era. Paired with this opportunity was Pei's belief that architecture and artworks should influence one another. As such, Pei was directly involved in the acquisition of specific works to be displayed in the new building, even deciding where and how they should be installed. For example, Henry Moore's massive bronze *Two Piece Reclining Figure No. 3*, on display outside of the Everson's main entrance, was an integral part of Pei's initial design—the sculpture was included in early concept drawings for the Museum (fig. 12). Pei also helped Sullivan select two paintings by Morris Louis, purchased in advance of the Museum's opening from André Emmerich Gallery.

In keeping with Pei's vision of acquiring works for specific spaces, in 1968 the Museum purchased paintings intended to be hung in the Rosamond Gifford Sculpture Court, including Helen Frankenthaler's *The Human Edge* (plate 24) and Al Held's *B/W XVI*. Several other acquisitions that year, such as works by Gerald DiGiusto (fig. 13), Nicholas Krushenick, and Alexander Liberman (plate 22), were made from the Museum's three inaugural exhibitions, *Selections from the Collection of*

Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, Artists of New York State, and Traditional American Painting.



Fig. 13. Gerald DiGiusto, *Great American Eagle*, 1968, wood, 33½ x 58½ x 9¾ inches, Museum purchase: 68.21

In the years since the Museum opened in 1968, Everson curators have continued to acquire works made by important modern artists of that era, including Dorothy Hood (fig. 14), Lee Krasner, Robert Motherwell (fig. 15), Jackson Pollock, and Jules Olitski.



Fig. 14. Dorothy Hood, *Going Forth*, 1972, oil on canvas, 109 x 89 inches, Gift of the artist, 72.13



Fig. 15. Robert Motherwell, *Untitled (Open No. 90)*, 1969, polymer paint on canvas, 49 x 73 inches, Museum purchase, with support, in part, from the Frances Edwards "Dooie" Hancock Memorial Fund and the John Hancock Family in memory of Dooie Hancock, 2003.9

Establishing a Video Art Department

In 1971, Everson trustees hired Jim Harithas as director. Harithas ushered in a new era for the Museum, transforming the Everson into a center for innovative and groundbreaking exhibitions and programs featuring works by contemporary artists. He embraced the experimental and avant-garde, including video art, which in the early 1970s was a new medium. Harithas' first significant video program featured video artist Nam June Paik and cellist Charlotte Moorman, who performed the works *Concerto for TV Cello and Videotape* and *TV Bed* at the Everson in January 1972 (fig. 16).



Fig. 16. Charlotte Moorman performing *TV Bed*, January 1972, Everson Museum of Art

A few months later, in March 1972, Harithas hired David Ross to lead the Museum's video arts department, the first of its kind in a museum in the country. Ross' appointment coincided with a \$15,000 grant from the Rosamond Gifford Charitable Corporation that enabled the Everson to purchase equipment for an audio-visual media center. From 1972 to 1974, Ross and Harithas curated more than forty video exhibitions and programs with works by pioneering artists such as Linda Benglis, Douglas Davis, Juan Downey, Frank Gillette (fig. 17), and William Wegman.



Fig. 17. Installation view of *Track/Trace* in Frank Gillette, May 19 – June 18, 1973, Everson Museum of Art

Upon Ross' departure from the Everson, Richard Simmons assumed the curatorial responsibilities of stewarding the video collection. Simmons, a tireless and passionate advocate for video programming at the Museum, was responsible for grant writing and executing some of the Everson's most important video exhibitions featuring works by John Baldessari, Howard Fried, Joan Jonas, Kubota Shigeko, and Bill Viola. Harithas, Ross, and Simmons ultimately built an unsurpassed video collection and archive for the Everson, which now contains more than 400 tapes. The Everson's commitment to video art continues today, as the Museum collects and exhibits contemporary video art every year and maintains an active partnership with Light Work's Urban Video Project, a program that projects film, video, and moving image artworks onto the north façade of the Museum.

New Works in Clay

The end of the *Ceramic Nationals* in 1972 opened the door for new ceramic exhibitions at the Everson that could challenge the format, presentation, and limits of clay as a medium for artistic production. In 1974, Margie Hughto, artist and professor of ceramics at Syracuse University, pitched a project to new Everson director Ronald Kuchta that would invite well-known painters and sculptors to Syracuse to create ceramic works. Titled *New Works in*

Clay by Contemporary Painters and Sculptors, the project resulted in three exhibitions between 1976 and 1981. Kuchta recognized that it was time for a new, unconventional ceramics project and noted, "By bringing painters and sculptors to ceramics it was felt that a different kind of talent might contribute imaginative resources and esthetic suggestions to the subject of 'clay.'" ¹¹

Eleven artists were invited to participate in the first exhibition: Billy Al Bengston, Stanley Boxer, Anthony Caro, Friedel Dzubas, Helen Frankenthaler, Michael Hall, Dorothy Hood, Jules Olitski, Larry Poons, Michael Steiner, and David Smith. Syracuse University provided technical assistance and studio space, where a massive group of assistants helped to realize each artist's project.

Ultimately, many of the participating artists gifted works from the exhibition to the Everson's collection (fig. 18). In this manner, despite the end of the *Ceramic Nationals*, the Museum found new avenues and ways to continue to collect ceramics and promote new ceramic projects.



Fig. 18. Friedel Dzubas, *Pink Pile-Up*, and Dorothy Hood, *Tiara Way* (both made for *New Works in Clay*) installed in *A Legacy of Firsts: The Everson Collects*, Everson Museum of Art

Support of Emerging and Underrepresented Artists

The Everson has long been a champion and supporter of emerging and underrepresented artists, beginning with Carter's early interest in American artists in 1911, a time when they had little museum support. Olmsted continued this work with the *Ceramic Nationals*, giving ceramists an art museum venue to exhibit their work. Directors in the second half of the twentieth century followed suit, giving exhibition opportunities to and acquiring work from traditionally underrepresented and emerging artists.

In January 1973, the Museum opened *AfriCOBRA II*, an exhibition organized by the Studio Museum in Harlem featuring work by AfriCOBRA artists. Formed in Chicago's South Side in 1968, AfriCOBRA was established during a time of political and social unrest and in a world that privileged white artists and audiences. In response, AfriCOBRA sought to create a new kind of art that was politically engaged, reflected contemporary Black culture, appealed specifically to a Black audience, and defined a transnational aesthetic. While the Museum did not acquire any work from this exhibition, in 2018, the Everson organized a retrospective of work by Jeff Donaldson, one of AfriCOBRA's founders, and purchased Donaldson's mixed media *Maternal Homage* (plate 25).



Fig. 19. Marilyn Minter, *David's TV*, 1970, oil and acrylic on canvas, 73 x 66 inches, Purchase Prize given by the Hancock Foundation Fund from the Everson Regional, 1970, 70.23

The Everson embraced many significant modern artists early in their careers. The Museum purchased Marilyn Minter's painting *David's TV* after it won a prize in the 1970 *Everson Regional* exhibition, while the artist was still a student at Syracuse University (fig. 19). Three years later, in 1973, the Everson organized Minter's first solo museum exhibition. In 1976, the Museum organized its first three-woman group exhibition, which included the work of May Stevens. From this exhibition, they acquired *Hat's*

Go By for the collection (plate 26). In 1981, the Everson hosted a retrospective exhibition featuring nearly three decades of Miriam Schapiro's paintings, collages, and mixed media works, organized by the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio. At the close of the exhibition, one of Schapiro's collages, *Explode*, entered the Museum's collection (plate 27).

The Museum's dedication to expand the collection by acquiring works made by artists of diverse backgrounds and cultures that address feminism, racial inequalities, politics, and social justice persisted through the latter half of the twentieth century and continues today.

Collecting Today

The Everson is an active collecting institution, continuing to pursue acquisitions that engage diverse communities, inspire curiosity and lifelong learning, and encourage community-wide conversations that promote a more vital and inclusive society. Whether generous gifts from collectors and artists or purchases using the Museum's dedicated acquisition funds, new acquisitions represent the Everson's long-standing commitment to collecting, exhibiting, and interpreting the best of modern and contemporary American art.

Ceramics remain a particular focus for the Museum. Since the Everson's acquisition of thirty-two Robineau porcelains in 1916, the Museum has committed to chronicling a ceramics history, represented by the best and brightest ceramists in the world. Building on the legacies of Robineau and the *Ceramic Nationals*, which are the foundation of the Everson's ceramics collection, the Museum has rededicated itself in recent years to collecting and exhibiting the medium. In 2016, the Everson renovated and opened a new ceramics gallery, replacing a three decades-old static open storage display with a newly designed space featuring temporary exhibitions. In 2018, the Everson added the Paul Phillips and Sharon Sullivan Curator of Ceramics, an endowed position that ensures ceramics will be integral to the Museum for decades to come.

Today, the Museum is focused on diversifying the ceramics collection, as well as filling important historical gaps. For example, recent acquisitions include works by artists such as Susan Frackelton, a pioneer of art pottery who began throwing her own pots in the 1890s, and Ruth Rippon, a prolific



Fig. 20. Angela Fraleigh, *All the stories i have ever heard stand silent in the space beside me*, 2016, oil, acrylic, and synthetic resin on canvas, 90 x 198 inches, Museum purchase, 2017.4

ceramist who played a major role in creating a ceramics tradition in Northern California (plate 29). The Everson also continues the legacy of the *Ceramic Nationals* by collecting works by emerging artists who are expanding the boundaries of the field.

Apart from ceramics, the Everson continues to collect with a particular focus on contemporary artists working across mediums who have exhibited at the Museum. The Everson has acquired much of its work through exhibitions, a process begun by Carter in 1911. Acquiring works from exhibitions is a practical way to build a collection—the work is already on the museum premises and bears a curatorial endorsement—but it is also a way to physically document the history of a museum. Many works have entered the Museum’s collection this way in recent years. Abstract painter Carrie Moyer’s participation in the exhibition *Three Graces* in 2015 led to the acquisition of her painting *Jelly Roll Tweets* (plate 31). In 2016, the Everson organized *Angela Fraleigh: Between Tongue and Teeth*, Fraleigh’s first major museum exhibition. The artist created many works for the exhibition, and the Everson ultimately purchased *All the stories i have ever heard stand silent in the space beside me* (fig. 20). Vanessa German’s *The Boxer*, purchased in 2017, was included in her solo exhibition *Vanessa German: de.structive dis.tillation* (plate 33).

Conclusion

The Everson’s collection is a unique, and at times eclectic, grouping. Examining acquisitions from any given year indicates the interests and priorities of the curators and directors throughout the Museum’s history. It also brings to light happy occasions of providence, as in the case of the Museum’s Albert Bierstadt painting (plate 5), whose acquisition began in 1975 with a short letter from the owner of the painting simply asking if the Everson might want it.

Each moment in the Museum’s history has defined the collection, and as such, the Museum itself. From Fernando Carter’s foresight to purchase American paintings and porcelains by Adelaide Alsop Robineau to Anna Olmsted’s drive and determination to transform Syracuse into a center for ceramic arts; from Max Sullivan’s work with I.M. Pei to design a new museum building to Jim Harithas’s belief in the importance of video art as a new medium; from the community wide campaigns led by Ronald Kuchta to purchase popular paintings by Gilbert Stuart and Edward Hicks (detailed in catalogue entries, plates 1 and 3) to current director Elizabeth Dunbar’s enduring support of emerging and mid-career contemporary artists; these decisions, along with countless others, have shaped the Everson’s legacy and make the Museum the vibrant institution it is today.



Installation view of *A Legacy of Firsts: The Everson Collects*

¹Anna Wetherill Olmsted, "The Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts: A Historical Sketch," *Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts Quarterly Bulletin* 5, no. 1 (October-November-December 1943): 9.

²"F.A. Carter is named Director of Museum," *The Post-Standard*, July 9, 1910.

³Peg Weiss, *Adelaide Alsop Robineau: Glory in Porcelain*, ed. Peg Weiss (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press and Everson Museum of Art, 1981), 1 and 35 details this exchange. See page 203, endnote 1 for the full text of the letter.

⁴Weiss, *Adelaide Alsop Robineau*, 35.

⁵Anna Wetherill Olmsted, "The Ceramic National," scrapbook, ca. 1960s, Ceramic National Exhibition Archive, Everson Museum of Art.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Margie Hughto and Garth Clark, *A Century of Ceramics in the United States: 1878-1978* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Everson Museum of Art, 1979), 96.

⁸Olmsted, "A Historical Sketch," 14.

⁹Ibid., 21.

¹⁰For a detailed account of the merger between the Syracuse Museum of Art and the Everson Museum of Art, the selection of I.M. Pei to design the new Everson building, and the building's construction, see *The Everson at 50* (Syracuse, NY: Everson Museum of Art, 2019).

¹¹Margie Hughto and Ronald Kuchta, *New Works in Clay by Contemporary Painters and Sculptors* (Syracuse, NY: Everson Museum of Art, 1976), 7.



Plate 7
Adelaide Alsop Robineau, American (1865-1929)
Crab Vase, 1908
Porcelain, 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
Museum purchase, 16.4.2.a-b



Plate 16
Arthur Eugene Baggs, American (1886-1947)
Cookie Jar, 1938
Stoneware, 13 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 10 inches
Purchase Prize given by Onondaga Pottery Company,
7th Ceramic National, 1938, 39.342.a-b



Plate 17
Waylande Gregory, American (1905-1971)
Europa and the Bull, 1938
Earthenware, 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 27 inches
Museum purchase, 7th Ceramic National, 1938, 41.364





Plate 20
Karen Karnes, American (1925-2016)
Double Vase, 1951
Earthenware, 9½ x 13¾ inches
Purchase Prize given by Lord and Taylor, 16th Ceramic National, 1951,
52.624.2



Plate 21
Betty Feves, American (1918-1985)
Three Figures, 1954
Stoneware, 17¼ x 7 x 9 inches
Purchase Prize given by Harshaw Chemical Company,
18th Ceramic National, 1954, 55.698



Plate 28

Viola Frey, American (1933-2004)

Untitled, 1976

Stoneware, 5¼ x 34¼ inches

Museum purchase with the Robert and Dorothy Riester Ceramic Fund,
86.63



Plate 29

Ruth Rippon, American (b. 1927)

The U.S. Presidents, 1977

Slab-built and carved stoneware with luster overglazes, seven cubes
at 10 x 10 x 10 inches, two cubes at 5½ x 5½ x 5½ inches

Gift of the artist, 2019.3.a-i

