



**BRAHM**  
Blowing Rock Art & History Museum

*10th Anniversary* Commemorative Book







Front entrance of the Blowing Rock Art & History Museum, 2020

This short history of the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum (BRAHM) has been compiled to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the Museum’s opening on October 1, 2011.

BRAHM’s Mission Statement: “BRAHM provides cultural enrichment to the High Country communities by promoting the Arts and Southern Appalachian heritage and history through educational programs, exhibitions, activities, and permanent collections.”

From the very beginning, the Museum founders and volunteers realized that the story of art here could not be told without explanation of the rich cultural heritage that fostered it, and that the story of regional history here could not be told without telling the stories of the varied artistic and creative people and collectors who were part of that history. So, from the beginning, it has made sense that this needed to be an art AND history museum.

The pages that follow illustrate that this small jewel of a museum has been miraculous from the very first notion of it. Again and again, despite often adverse circumstances, passionate people with the right talents, skills, and resources showed up at the right time to take this idea of a museum to a reality, and then to the next level.

As we celebrate this Tenth Anniversary, we can’t wait to see what the next ten years will bring...and the next...and the next...

The next chapters of this story are YOURS to make happen! This is YOUR Museum! It is yours to visit, to support, to engage with, to enjoy and to share with others. Thank you for your role, however large or small, in the success that is BRAHM.

—The BRAHM *Tenth Anniversary* History Committee —

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## CHAPTER *one*

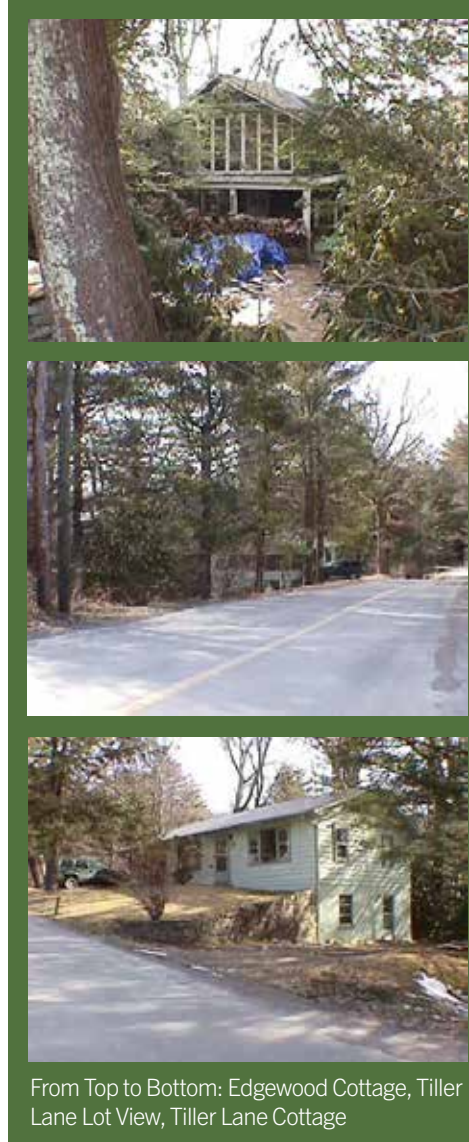
### BRAHM – How It All Began...

#### 1995: Artist Elliott Daingerfield's Work Inspires the Idea of a Museum

It would be appropriate to begin a tour of BRAHM at the corner of Main Street and Ginny Stevens Lane in front of the Brenda Councill statue of artist Elliott Daingerfield at Edgewood Cottage, Daingerfield's first home and studio in Blowing Rock.

Elliott Daingerfield was born in 1859 in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and moved in 1861 with his family to Fayetteville, NC, where his father was in charge of the arsenal. By 1880, Elliott had moved to New York City to begin what would become a celebrated career as an artist. Though he painted skillfully in the styles of his time, Daingerfield's name is perhaps not as famous as other artists of that period, though he was a very successful and prominent member of the National Academy of Design. In the summer of 1886, Daingerfield and his wife came to Blowing Rock hoping he could recover from diphtheria. By 1890, he had bought property and constructed his first home and studio called Edgewood Cottage. He would spend nearly every summer of his life in Blowing Rock until his death in 1932, and would own three homes there, each larger and more elaborate than the last – Edgewood Cottage, Windwood, and Westglow. In the 1890s and early 1900s, he brought female students from Philadelphia to learn painting. They came to be known in Blowing Rock as "The Painting Ladies".

In June 1995, a second *Daingerfield Day* celebration in Blowing Rock showcased Daingerfield's homes and included an exhibition of his paintings. A *Daingerfield Day* had also been held in 1992. At the 1995 exhibition, a major collector of Daingerfield's work, Lamont Hudson, was overheard by community activist Ginny Stevens to say, "It's too bad Blowing Rock doesn't have an art museum, because, if they did, I would donate my Daingerfield collection." That idea was enough to get the indomitable Ginny Stevens started on a quest to make a museum happen!



From Top to Bottom: Edgewood Cottage, Tiller Lane Lot View, Tiller Lane Cottage



Joe Dulaney, 2004



Ginny Stevens, 2004



Welborn & Patty Alexander, 2013

#### 1999: A Group of Passionate, Like-Minded People

Ginny Stevens and Elliott Daingerfield's grandson, Joe Dulaney, who still has a second home in Blowing Rock, began talking up the idea and assembling a group of like-minded people. For several years they ran into one obstacle after another, but Ginny was especially known for her tenacity. The group grew and came to include Welborn and Patty Alexander, who were themselves serious art collectors of American Impressionists and other artwork created between 1880 and 1930. By 1999, the group had begun holding formal meetings. By 2001, the volunteers had organized a non-profit organization and had obtained an official 501c3 designation that allowed them tax status as a charitable organization. This small but passionate group of volunteers would invest thousands of hours to make this project happen.





## 2001: A Museum? Where?

But where could they put a museum in Blowing Rock? They explored several sites. They talked to the Blowing Rock Performing Arts Center founders about partnering with them, but the Arts Center organizers were far along in their planning process and saw little compatibility in the two organizational missions. Museum enthusiasts talked to the Town about collaborating to occupy the old Fire Station building that was being replaced with a new facility on the US Hwy 321 By-Pass. In 2001, they were able to obtain a right-of-first-refusal from the Town for the Fire Station property so that they could explore architectural feasibility. And then, quite serendipitously, the perfect property became available.

The half block that included the old Edgewood Cottage structure had been inherited by two cousins, Lucy Tiller and Kate Lane, from their aunt and uncle, Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Schmucker. The property had been offered for commercial sale for \$1,750,000, then reduced. But in late 2002, Kate Lane was willing to allow her half interest to be donated to a charitable civic purpose. Knowing that the Town at that time was actively seeking more parking space, the museum team put together a proposal to the Town in which the Town would buy the property for half price and enter into a ground lease with the Museum organization for the footprint of the Museum. The agreement would allow the Blowing Rock Historical Society to attempt to rescue Edgewood Cottage and would have the Town build a parking structure to accommodate the new Museum and additional public parking. The Main Street area would be a park-like campus compatible with the lawns of the two churches on opposite corners. It was a major example of public/private collaboration. The Museum group would supply the architectural and engineering plans and Museum volunteer, engineer John Calvin, would oversee both the Museum and the parking structure construction.

This cooperation gave the Museum team an enormous head-start for their project. The land would cost them nothing – a major accomplishment for such a prime downtown commercial location – and they would not have to concern themselves with the cost of building a parking structure.



## CHAPTER *two*

### The Members -The Lifblood of the Museum

#### How to Involve and Excite the Community

In 2001-02, the original Museum Interest Group continued to meet periodically to plan summer programs and explore various ideas. One overarching goal was to excite the community to involve them in this nascent project. It was obvious that success for this project would depend on widespread support.

That spring, Welborn Alexander asked Joann Mitchell to help organize the first community-wide mailing to gauge interest in having a museum in Blowing Rock. Names and addresses gathered from every organization in town comprised the initial mailing list. Before the compelling letter was dropped in the mail, Welborn mused, "Once we send this out, we will be a Real Museum, won't we?" The response to that first letter was astonishing. More than 300 households sent a check to indicate support. Many of those initial members are still involved, nearly twenty years later.

One of the enticing offers was an appeal for Founding Members, highlighting the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build an organization from the ground up, Founders were offered designation on a special plaque to be installed when the new building was completed. These \$1000 members, of which there were many, committed their resources in blind faith and truly launched the museum.

Once the original membership was organized, Joann mailed a quarterly newsletter to all who had joined. News about the museum kept the group abreast of current activity and helped to develop devotion to BRAHM that is still in place today.



Membership Mailing



Top & Middle Images: Texas Trip, 2006  
Bottom Image: LaRose Spooner, 2005

#### BRAHM Trips - Building the Base

To deliberately engage people who were beginning to express interest in the museum idea and to deepen their interest in art and its presentation, the BRAHM organizers decided to appropriate an idea they had encountered in other museums, to offer small-group multi-day trips to art-focused destinations that would visit museums, galleries, and private collections. The BRAHM Art Trips began in January 2004, with a bus trip to Roanoke, Baltimore, Richmond, and Winston Salem and a second trip to Philadelphia in November. The trips were so popular and successful that they were typically scheduled about twice per year thereafter.

The BRAHM Trips were initially offered to the \$1,000 per year Members first, and then, as now, the trips have tended to fill the limited number of available seats (20 to 30) from that group. Since these were multi-day trips, involved travel, and hotel accommodations, they were somewhat expensive for some prospective participants, and later day-trips or other focused activities were created to broaden the audience. From the beginning, however, the multi-day trips attracted Members who were also candidates for greater financial investment in BRAHM and for greater time investment in this fledgling enterprise. Many of the named exhibition halls in the Museum reflect gifts from early participants in these Trips.

For those who have participated in these Trips, the experiences have been truly memorable. LaRose and Bill Spooner, who have traveled on many of these trips, were particularly stunned by their visit to the Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville, Arkansas. When LaRose asked how in the world this amazing museum came to be located in Bentonville, she was told that this location allowed THIS art to be experienced by the people who lived HERE and in this region who might never have this exposure otherwise.

For Sue Glenn, a couple visits to private collections were especially meaningful. By 2005,



Sue had visited the Barnes Foundation in Merion, PA, outside Philadelphia, many times including a BRAHM trip in November 2004. Then in April 2005, the BRAHM Trip to Atlanta included a visit to a private home of people who had both studied at the Barnes Foundation and had chosen to collect and live with the art from the very artists that Albert Barnes had also collected. It was amazing to see people living with this art.

Then in March 2006, the BRAHM trip to San Antonio and Dallas included a visit to the private home of major collectors of American Impressionist work that surrounded them in their home. Then, later in 2006, on another BRAHM trip to Washington, D.C., the BRAHM travelers were able to see much of that same collection on display on loan as a re-opening exhibit for the Smithsonian American Art Museum. They felt like real “insiders”!

As pandemic travel restrictions ease, BRAHM Trips will resume once again and are highly recommended by all who have experienced them.

### Early Membership Organizational Efforts

When the building opened in 2011, Museum membership was a strong component of the organization. By 2005 the Board had established a Vice-President for Membership position, and LaRose Spooner was elected the first officer in that capacity. At that time, there was no Membership Committee.

In 2010 LaRose organized a five-member Membership Committee and the group began in earnest to secure members. The committee concentrated on two goals, using as its inspiration the classic song “Make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver and the other is gold.” The committee employed strategies to increase the number of new members and to retain current members.



Philadelphia Trip, 2004



Atlanta Trip, 2005



Washington Trip, 2006



Boston Trip, 2012



Winston Salem Trip, 2015



Art Reception at Alexander Home, 2015

Even though reaching new and prospective members by mail was challenging, due in part to the seasonality of the community, each year letters were mailed to current and prospective members involving clever and unusual messages. One letter included clip art of a train climbing a hill with the message “I think I can, I think I can.” Another letter lacked one corner with the message “Do you see something missing? We miss you too!” Each of these letters included hand-written notes from Board Members, committee members, the Executive Director and others to render a more personal touch. The Committee received many positive responses about these unusual appeals and the response rate for membership was 80% annually during this time.

In addition, to help meet the two goals of the committee, every new member and every returning member received a personal thank you note from Chairman Spooner indicating the Committee’s appreciation for their membership in BRAHM. Members of the current Membership Committee continue that practice today.

The Committee worked to create membership levels, from “Individual” at \$40 to “Founder” at \$1000. Each of these designations conferred specific benefits on the member. Colorful and informative brochures accompanied each membership mailing.

### New Recruitment Strategies

The committee employed new strategies. BRAHM membership information stations appeared at Art in the Park, the Art and Antiques Summer Programs, and local restaurants’ outdoor postings. The committee collaborated with the Communications Committee and the Exhibitions and Program Committee to



enhance recruitment. To acknowledge the significant financial and volunteer support of members, the Annual Meetings were designated as “Member Appreciation Meetings”. Each year the Committee developed goals and at the end of the year evaluated the progress in meeting these goals. Committee members contributed to the quarterly newsletters mailed to each Museum member, a special way to communicate with these supporters. Today such information is presented via the Internet and BRAHM’s website.

At the end of each year, Chairman Spooner prepared an Annual Membership Report for the Trustees that included activities sponsored by the Committee and statistics on membership, retention, revenue, number of mailings, number of responses, etc. In 2010 the total number of members was 554. In 2020 the total number of members was 640.

After the Museum had opened, in 2012 Rebecca Laymon Ficklen assumed the membership chairmanship from LaRose and emphasized recruiting new members and recognizing current members. The new Membership Committee was composed of people all eager to be a part of the membership efforts for the Museum.

One of the Committee’s first strategies was an effort called “Each one, get one”. The current members of BRAHM accepted the challenge first, followed by the members of the Board of Trustees, and ending with the challenge to members of the Membership Committee. This coordinated approach gained many new members for BRAHM.

Another successful strategy involved presenting information about BRAHM to the community. Brochures and other materials about BRAHM appeared in

tourist and resort locations such as Grandfather Mountain, and at all the highway rest areas *en route* to Blowing Rock. In addition, at events in the Museum, a prominent table offered membership cards and information about membership.

The Committee realized how valuable it would be to recognize new members whenever possible. To this end, an annual cocktail party at the Museum welcomed all new members and toured them through the Museum and its current exhibits. In addition, at the Annual Meeting all new members were asked to stand and be recognized.



Membership Coffee with Bill Spooner, 2014



Membership Coffee with Noyes Long, 2015



Business after Hours, 2011

## Member Events and Activities

One of the more popular offerings was the monthly Coffee Hour sponsored by the Committee to lure current and perspective members. To assure a good attendance and make the public aware of the Museum, members made phone calls inviting people to enjoy the programs and to join BRAHM. Programs drew enthusiastic crowds in the summer to learn about a myriad of unexpected topics.

Early BRAHM supporter Bill Spooner demonstrated *The Magic of Art*. A Sunbrella Fabrics representative explained *The Art of Fabric Design*. Yesi Casado from Estee Lauder demonstrated *The Art of Makeup* on committee member Ann Vaughn. Jessica Wehrmann from Monkees showed attendees what to wear to look *au courant*. Gary Albert from MESDA in Winston Salem showcased fine old silver and taught how to care for it. Martha Best Lawson secured the majority of the speakers. The series later came to be called Scholars and Scones.

## Strengthening and Maintaining the Membership Base

When Rebecca Laymon Ficklen told BRAHM that a healthy museum needed a dedicated group of significant donors that give every year, that planted the seeds for the Daingerfield Society. Begun in 2012, Daingerfield Society Members represent BRAHM’s highest level of annual giving. Other society levels of membership now include Rhododendron Society and Chestnut Society.

BRAHM Executive Assistant Jasmin McFayden has overseen BRAHM memberships since February of 2018. In this position, she tracks and strategizes membership



engagement with a dedicated five-person committee that meets each month. Growing the Membership Development Committee to further reflect the community as well as BRAHM's membership is an ongoing goal, as is broadening BRAHM's member base.

Through member surveys, in-person feedback, and direct involvement, BRAHM's members influence the content of BRAHM's offerings. BRAHM's long-time members are unwavering and mission-oriented in that they enthusiastically renew their support to further the museum's purpose and its service to the community. Since 2018, member retention has remained well above the national average of 45.5%. When the COVID-19 pandemic pushed BRAHM into a state-mandated closure from March - September of 2020, Jasmin began to see a decline in membership and knew that in-person engagement was key to sustaining BRAHM's connection to its members as well as arousing interest among non-members. Immediately after the closure, BRAHM shifted exhibition content and educational programs to online platforms to continue these important offerings in some form. While membership renewals were not seeing a major shift in retention rates compared to 2019, new members were not promptly replacing those who did not renew.

Herbert Cohen, a Founder Emeritus of BRAHM, reflected on the founding of BRAHM by its early members. "There was a lot of hard work done by a great many people. We worked together and devoted a good deal of time and effort towards realizing a museum."

Today's members continue to support the mission of BRAHM, to experience and discover art and history through exhibits and programs and to promote BRAHM as the cultural heart of the High Country.



Daingerfield Society, 2014

## Membership Benefits

In a typical year, BRAHM engages its members through day and overnight trips, special events and exhibition tours, educational programs and workshops, and facility rentals available to members at the \$150 Friend level and above. Membership offers free attendance to many of BRAHM's ongoing educational programs like Scholars & Scones, Coffee with the Curator, and Movies at the Museum for adults, as well as Doodlebug Club and Afternoon Art for children.

Since 2004, member groups have traveled to cities such as Asheville, Cincinnati, St. Petersburg, and Tampa, all of which offered unique opportunities to member travelers to see local exhibitions as well as private collections. Besides the multi-day trips, 2019 also saw member day trips, one to the Mint Museum in Charlotte and one to the Hickory Museum of Art to view work and learn about contemporary sculptor Michael Sherrill and painter Elliott Daingerfield (1859-1932).

Throughout BRAHM's momentous 2019 exhibition, *Modern Visions, Modern Art: The Cone Sisters in North Carolina*, the museum offered member-only tours that gave a closer look into the collecting of Moses Cone's sisters, Etta and Claribel. Members also tend to be the first to sign up for special events like the Annual Gala.

All of these forms of engagement deepen BRAHM's connection with its members by immersing them in a variety of educational activities related to American art and the culture of Southern Appalachia. In turn, members continue to propel the museum forward through their enthusiasm, volunteer work, financial support, and leadership through BRAHM committees and the Board of Trustees.

When the museum reopened - first to Members - in September of 2020, BRAHM began to see a gradual resurgence in membership, underscoring the idea that virtual outlets will never replace in-person engagement. In the first quarter of 2021, BRAHM regained the number of member households that had been lost in the closure. New member households in particular are also seeing a revival and promising re-engagement opportunities in 2021, which is also BRAHM's 10th Anniversary year.

Members are the Lifeblood. BRAHM's continued existence throughout the past year and throughout its history has been utterly due to the commitment of its steadfast members and supporters, who subsequently introduce BRAHM to their own networks and continue the flow of support and engagement. Active membership participation reaffirms BRAHM's relevance and need in the community. Members truly are the lifeblood of the museum and will continue to direct its course through the next decade and beyond.



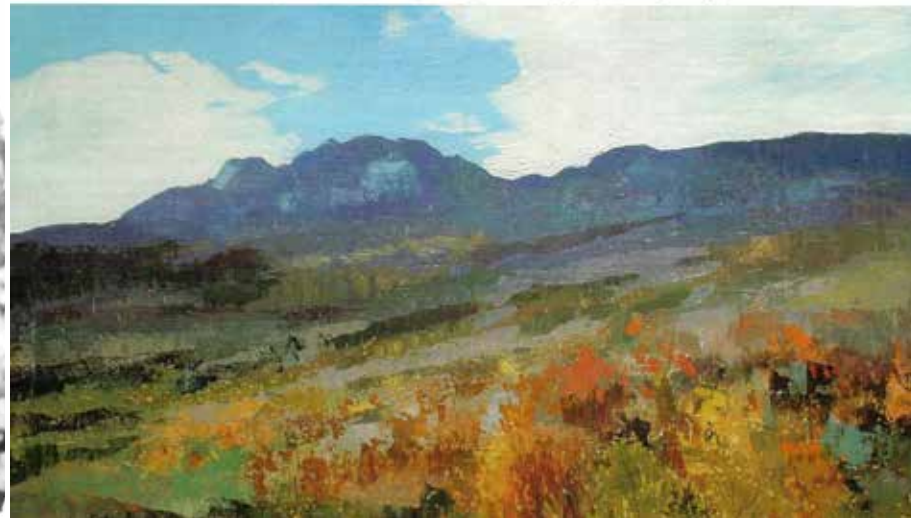
# CHAPTER *three*

Early Days - 2002 to 2010



Philip Moose

A Retrospective Exhibit  
**Philip Moose**  
IN BLOWING ROCK



Philip Moose Exhibit, Brochure, 2002

## 2002- Philip Moose in Blowing Rock Retrospective Exhibition

As the group moved forward to find an appropriate location for the Museum, the organizers recognized that the time had come to begin involving the broader public audience. Popular local artist Philip Moose had died in December 2001, and a retrospective exhibit of his work seemed an appropriate memorial and also an opportunity to publicize the idea of the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum and to share it with the broader community. Various Board members became “Moose Hunters” and spread out in the community to find examples of Moose’s work that could be shared in an exhibit. With the help of Philip’s friend Frank Sherrill, Francie Troy and Sue Glenn combed through an archive of Moose’s private papers at the Catawba County Historical Museum and compiled a biographical catalog with pictures of most of the paintings shown in the exhibit. Tom and Bethy Gruber loaned their shop building for the event. Artists Herb Cohen and José Fumero and gallery owner Tim Miller arranged and hung the paintings. Exhibits of Moose sketchbooks and biographical material accompanied the art. To everyone’s surprise, over 1,500 people attended the exhibition. The word was out.



Sue Glenn, Moose Exhibitor, 2002



Installation View, Philip Moose Exhibit, 2002



Garrison Family, Moose Exhibitors, 2002



Gaither Family, Moose Exhibitors, 2002



Moose Hunters, 2002





Mauney Family, Moose Exhibitors, 2002



Moose Family, 2002



Moose Family, 2002



Moose Family, 2002

### 2003 - A Weekend Celebration of the Art-Collecting Cone Sisters

The success of the Philip Moose exhibition encouraged its organizers to realize that public summer events were needed to sustain public interest and curiosity and to help identify potential donors for the Museum project. Although the Moses Cone National Park is a significant Blowing Rock recreational amenity, few knew much about Moses Cone or his wife Bertha or about his two sisters, Dr. Claribel and Miss Etta Cone, who had been major art collectors in the early Twentieth Century. The sisters had amassed enough artwork to fill the Cone Wing of the Baltimore Museum of Art and provide a major collection at the Weatherspoon Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. This was certainly an art and history story worth telling. The BBC-Scotland had made a documentary film about the Cone sisters, filmed in part in Blowing Rock in 2002. Katy Rothkopf, Curator of Painting at the Baltimore Museum of Art, was persuaded to come to Blowing Rock to lecture. Dan Bailey with the University of Maryland Imaging Department presented the new touch-screen reconstructed tour of the sisters' Baltimore apartments, showing how they had lived with their art. Park Ranger and author, Philip Noblitt hosted the film in which he had been featured, along with BBC and Monty Python star Michael Palin. Edgar and Nan Lawton hosted a special party at their Blowing Rock home, previously owned by members of Moses Cone's family, and where Etta Cone had died after having arranged to purchase her last Picasso drawing. Again, the lavish week-end events were well attended by the public and continued to advance the viability of a museum in this community.

### Membership and Donation Activities

Although an organized Membership Committee was not formed until much later, local people were beginning to respond to invitations for membership and donations. As planning and organizing work continued in the background, deliberate public presence increased engagement by potentially interested local people.

### BRAHM Art Tours

Interest generated by activities involving the Cone Sisters and an invitation by Katy Rothkopf prompted a trip to Baltimore for January 2004. This excursion was similar to trips that the Alexanders and others had taken with special-interest museum groups and was to become the prototype for subsequent BRAHM trips that would generally be scheduled twice a year. While these were fundamentally intensely focused small-group trips that



Claribel Cone, Etta Cone, Jacqueline de Monzie, Michael Stein and Gabrielle de Monzie in Michael Stein's rue de la Tour apartment, Paris, Circa 1922-1926. Claribel Cone and Etta Cone Papers, Archives and Manuscripts Collections, The Baltimore Museum of Art SF.18.A, Photography By: Unknown



Cone Days: Phillip Noblitt, Cathy Tarleton Barrows, and Katy Rothkopf, 2003



Bertha, Etta, Claribel, and Moses Cone, India, 1907



included guided museum and private collection visits, the goal was to build camaraderie with a group of staunch Museum supporters. Because of the small number of participants and the relatively high cost of these excursions, they have been initially offered to the highest membership levels first, and have consistently been filled from this group. These intensely engaged travelers have given substantial donations to the Museum. For many years, Kathy Price of Old World Travel in Charlotte organized the trips, as she had for similar trips for the Mint Museum of Art.

Until the pandemic, these excursions continued to be scheduled once or twice a year and are expected to return to a similar format because they have been so popular. For all who have participated, the shared experiences have been truly memorable and have added to the depth of knowledge of BRAHM's audience.



Baltimore Trip, 2004

### Other Pre-Museum Activities

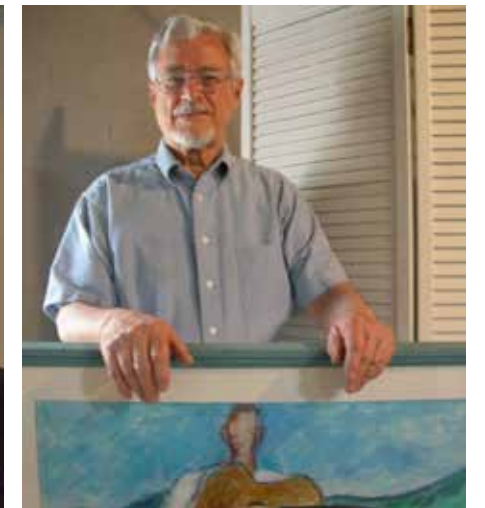
#### 2004 and 2005 Art Celebration Events

As summer events for 2004 and 2005, artists Herb Cohen and José Fumero suggested art exhibitions and auction sales that would demonstrate the talent of local artists. Such shows would allow the growing BRAHM membership and audience increased interaction with the local visual arts community and interaction with BRAHM and the local art gallery organizations. It would be a fundraising activity not unlike the Penland auctions. As with the Philip Moose exhibition, a catalog of the selected work with biographical information about the artists would accompany the shows.

Local artists were encouraged to submit work for consideration and selection of a single representative piece. Rather than donating their work, artists set a reserve minimum that was commensurate to what their work would garner in a gallery setting. Gallery owners



José Fumero & Herb Cohen, Art Celebration Auction, 2004



Warren Dennis, Art Celebration Auction, 2004



Egidio Antonaccio, Art Celebration Auction, 2004



Kevin Beck, Art Celebration Auction, 2004



George Snyder, Jr., Art Celebration Auction, 2004



Pat Pilkington, Art Celebration Auction, 2004





Tim Turner, Art Celebration Auction, 2004



Norma Suddreth, Art Celebration Auction, 2004

encouraged participation by their artists and generously waived their commission fees, anticipating museum-level publicity while actively supporting BRAHM. Blowing Rock Frameworks and Gallery owner Tim Miller permitted BRAHM to borrow his gallery space for two weeks in 2004 and 2005. The auction events netted the growing museum tens of thousands of dollars and were the major fundraisers for those years.

### 2006 - Art in the Making

For the summer events, BRAHM invited children to “help” Asheville artist Robert Johnson finish the panoramic mural that is hanging on the building at 1053 Main Street. Antique evaluations similar to Antiques Roadshow filled the American Legion Building with personal treasures. Other events expanded into the week-end. Affiliated with the appraisals, a luncheon at Chetola Resort offered *Using Antiques in Flower Arranging*.

### 2007 to 2018 -Art and Antiques Shows

Celebrated at the Blowing Rock Elementary School Gym from 2007 until 2011, then in the Museum itself from 2012 until 2018, the annual *Art and Antiques Show*



Helping Robert Johnson with the mural, 2006



Robert Johnson working on the mural, 2006



Art & Antiques Show Patrons, 2013



Art & Antiques Show Patrons, 2013



Finished Mural, 2006



Art & Antiques Show, 2016





Art & Antiques Show, 2016



Art & Antiques Show, 2016



Cone Denim King Exhibit, Performing Arts Center, 2007



Daingerfield kids at Art Cellar Exhibit, 2010



Art Cellar Exhibit Reception, 2010

and ancillary events became major annual fundraisers for the Museum. But by 2018, it was becoming apparent that museum exhibitions were more pressing than summer fundraising activities that disrupted the function of the museum spaces. Gala events and other social activities gradually became increasingly important fundraisers each summer.

In 2007, the Blowing Rock Stage Company launched a presentation of *Moses Cone: The Denim King*. BRAHM was invited to stage an exhibit in the lobby called *When Art Meets History*. The show hailed Moses and Bertha Cone and demonstrated how landscapes Moses Cone developed have been interpreted artistically. Timeline storyboards from the theater exhibit appeared for many years after at Flat Top Manor.

### Other Pre-Museum Exhibits

In 2010, The Art Cellar Gallery in Banner Elk lent BRAHM exhibit space for the *2010 Museum Preview Exhibit*, introducing to the Banner Elk and Linville area communities borrowed works and pieces from the already-growing permanent collection. On exhibit were works by Elliott Daingerfield, American Impressionist works from the Alexander Collection, glassworks from the Luski Collection and Penland, paintings, sculpture and ceramics from Artists' Alley artists, and examples of work from Appalachian State University artists.









Welborn & Joann in front of the building sign, 2009

provoking considerable discussion about whether or not a second parking structure at the proposed museum site was necessary. Museum advocates on Town Council resolved this debate. The June 2007 Annual Meeting inaugurated the public phase of the capital campaign with the announcement that half of the needed construction funds had already been raised. After the August Art and Antiques Show and Gala events, the capital campaign had raised \$4.2 million, and membership fees tallied over \$100,000.

### The Design-Build Concept

With the parking structure intended to be funded by the Town, design and cost considerations became an increasingly difficult issue. Engineer and General Contractor John Calvin stepped in and suggested using a “Design-Build” concept, where the Museum, the Town, the Architect, and the Contractor worked as a team during the final design process. Cost-saving changes could be assessed from these different perspectives and incorporated into the planning process in a dynamic way while plans were “on paper.” Costly construction problems could be solved before they came up. After working on the dismantling and reconstruction of Edgewood Cottage, Boone Construction’s President Steve Silver and Vice-President of Construction Ron Funk were willing to commit their time to collaborate with architect Steven Price and Engineer John Calvin to make the Design-Build process work. After a number of meetings, the Design-Build Contract was signed in February 2008.

In August 2008, the public Conditional Use Permit hearing was held. Because of unresolved issues concerning the parking structure, the CUP was not finalized until the following year. The Design-Build Process and this unique collaboration would produce savings of more than \$1 million on the parking structure alone and would allow the project to clear its final technical hurdle.



Founder’s Dinner, 2009



BRAHM Meeting, 2009

### New Financial Challenges

Just a month after the CUP hearing, on September 15, 2008, Lehman Brothers failed and the stock and financial markets plummeted. The Great Recession had begun. At their October Board meeting, BRAHM Directors acknowledged that they had reached a fundraising crossroads. They elected to pause fundraising efforts while everyone reassessed, but they also elected to move forward and hire Calloway, Johnson, Moore and West Architects to handle the construction drawings and interior design. The Board was determined to press on. The Town, responsible for the construction of the parking structure, which needed to be built first, faced a funding freeze in February 2009. BRAHM was able to lend the Town \$1.2 million to continue to move forward. In May 2009, with hundreds of hours already invested in the Design-Build process, the construction contract was signed with Boone Construction. When asked directly if they had actually been paid for their consultation work, Steve Silver said, “We were allowed to build the building.”

After the brief pause, the individual fundraising team tirelessly continued to reach the mark, and did so until the opening. Each of those fundraisers shared a passion with their neighbors that they had achieved a significant and worthy investment. They raised over \$7.9 million in personal donations from approximately 300 donors to build the Museum with the goal of opening the doors debt-free. Donations ranged from \$100 to as much as \$500,000. Although many of the spaces in the Museum would be dedicated to major donors, many substantial donations were also given anonymously or to honor others. In true Blowing Rock style, this community project became *The Blowing Rock Art and History Museum* rather than being named after a single individual.

Groundbreaking took place on June 7, 2009. Following the Annual Meeting held in the Fellowship Hall of the Rumble Presbyterian



Ground Breaking Ceremony, 2009



Ground Breaking Ceremony, 2009



Sign Unveiling, 2009



Church, excited members joined officials and member-children to unveil the sign and put spades to the ground ceremoniously beginning the actual building process. On August 26, the Construction Permit was granted, and on August 27, Boone Construction Company moved equipment onto the site and began work.

### Construction Challenges

The construction process was expected to take two years. Slope and stabilization issues with the site itself had to be resolved. The work had to be contained within the small in-town work site with no additional storage space, so materials had to be delivered as needed. The parking structure of



Construction, 2010



Construction, 2010

massive pre-cast concrete and steel pieces was a special challenge. The crane for the construction of the parking structure required two tractor-trailers, and the other pieces arrived in a parade of six more tractor trailers.

Although the work presented daily challenges, as any complicated construction task would, when asked about special memories of the construction process, Ron Funk remembered how warmly their construction crew had been greeted as regulars at the Blowing Rock Hospital cafeteria, just a couple blocks away. There they had found tasty and affordable warm lunches, especially appreciated on wintry days. Only once did they remember interfering with Sunday church services with their noisy construction activity, and they appreciated how graciously Rumple Presbyterian Church made their parking lot available for worker use.

“Everybody was pleasantly surprised,” Steve Silver chuckled. “We completed the building on time and under budget! The building looks timeless and fits with the Town so well.” Said Engineer John Calvin, “The project was both a pleasure and a challenge and was anything but routine. I do take pleasure in seeing the finished project, and I am proud how the building turned out.”



# CHAPTER *five*

## The Miracle

### October 1, 2011 - The Miracle!

Just before 10 AM on October 1, 2011, hundreds of people gathered on a side street in a pre-season swirling snowstorm in the little village of Blowing Rock to witness a miracle. Concerned for the crowd assembled in the blustery wind, the officials cut the colored ribbon early, opened the big glass doors, and the people rushed inside to experience the miracle.

The miracle was a beautiful new 23,000 square foot state-of-the-art art and history museum that looked “like it grew here,” with beautiful gallery spaces, staff offices and public meeting rooms, space for a museum shop, a versatile downstairs education center, and climate-controlled storage spaces, adjacent to a handsome two-story stone, steel, and concrete parking structure. From the light-filled atrium lobby with its massive timbers, broad stairway, and open spaces, to the generous galleries, one after another, to the more intimate upstairs gallery and display spaces, the building itself was a showstopper! Very appropriately the first exhibits showcased work by Elliott Daingerfield, (1859-1932), a renowned artist of the previous century who owned three homes in Blowing Rock. An interactive exhibit celebrated the Blowing Rock attraction. A themed exhibit asked *What Drew You Here?* Another exhibit explored historic resort hotels of Blowing Rock.



Ribbon Cutting, 2011



Installation view, *Elliot Daingerfield: His Art and Life in North Carolina*, 2011



Mr. & Mrs. Rick Gruber, Opening Day, 2011



Donor Reception, 2011

This amazing facility had been built and opened in the early years of the Great Recession in a little town with a base population of about 1,200 people. “The most remarkable thing about BRAHM is that it exists at all. It was a grounds-up movement,” commented Rebecca Laymon Ficklen, an early BRAHM Board member and former President of the Louise Wells Cameron Art Museum in Wilmington, NC.

As the result of the dedicated commitment of hundreds of community members, this miraculous facility was appropriately named the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum (BRAHM) and was not named for a single wealthy individual. Almost 300 financial donors had contributed what they could – from \$100 to \$500,000. They and others also donated thousands of volunteer hours to create the museum. The sheer tenacity of the organizing participants as well as the community’s ability to commit personal talents, energies, time, money, and other resources to the shared effort, made this happen. Everyone pitched in. The builders, Boone Construction Company, the design team, and the Museum Building Committee could boast that they brought in the project “on time and under budget” under uniquely difficult circumstances.

### The Miracle: What Made It Work?

Why and how could this possibly happen here? The village of Blowing Rock is perched on the escarpment of the Blue Ridge range of the ancient Appalachian Mountains at elevations ranging from about 3,000 to 4,000 feet. The sudden elevation change and cliffs of the escarpment allow breathtakingly beautiful long-range panoramic views for more than 100 miles in many directions. The mountain elevations render the climate ten degrees cooler than in nearby Piedmont communities. The creation of the Blue Ridge Parkway National Park along the northern and western boundaries of the village had preserved thousands of acres of beautiful parklike lands in the past century. For the entire history of its settlement, this community has attracted people who prized its scenic beauty.



The people drawn from outside brought the “outside” to the mountains. From the early days, Blowing Rock attracted many affluent people with sophisticated tastes, but also with an inherent respect for the hard-working people and traditions they found here. Characteristically, the newcomers seldom felt compelled to make a show of their wealth in ostentatious displays. That wasn’t “in-style” here. The seasonal residential community that sprang up included people with varied business and professional skills who were willing to invest in community development to share improvements with those who were already here. In turn, the local people were generally welcoming and were able to respect and appreciate the newcomers and their contributions to the community. Improvements in transportation systems and increased commercial interchange guaranteed that the community was not isolated from the outside. Quite the opposite!

The small population included social, economic and religious groupings that overlapped and reconfigured themselves. Social groupings were more fluid than in some places. The small aggregate who bonded to create a museum were already intertwined on multiple levels and were representative of different segments of the community. Since many of the participants were retired from their original careers, they had time available, and were able to contribute remarkable life and career skills to the project. Miraculously, the right person with the right skills consistently showed up at the right time for what they considered to be the “right” project for the community. The Museum project was blessed with remarkable serendipity and, perhaps, just plain good luck.

### October 1, 2011 - Opening the Doors

The Opening Exhibits and Activities.

What had preceded that opening on that snowy day in October 2011? Former Executive Director Joann Mitchell tells the story best:

“Of course, we had committees and the Board that worked closely with the staff on planning the opening. A museum director told me one time ‘You only have one Grand Opening so do it grandly.’ We



Mr. Gruber & The Dulaneys, Opening Day, 2011



Joann Mitchell & Welborn Alexander, Opening Day, 2011



Robbins Family, Opening Hotels Exhibit, 2011



Blowing Rock, Large Picture Display Opening Exhibit, 2011



Dulaneys, Hudsons, Grubers - Daingerfield Opening Exhibit, 2011



Opening Film, Opening Day, 2011

were determined to present the building to the community in the best light that we possibly could. As in all major projects, we had issues with construction and opening and parking and everything you can think of.

“For many logistical reasons, it was decided we would hold three opening events. The first one was for our donors, a black-tie optional gala. We served delicious food and had a classical guitarist! It was a very lovely evening. The second event, just as much fun but a little less formal, was for our founding membership. It was held on the top level of the parking deck. The committee in charge of that did a wonderful job of decorating the adjacent parking deck, making it very inviting. And we even had a



dedicated member who stayed up all night to roast a pig. So that party featured a delicious feast and an evening of visiting and music and an opportunity for people to see the inside of the Museum for the first time. The third event - and these were held in close proximity - Thursday, Friday, Saturday - was open to the general public. That was so much fun, because families with children came and we had ice cream from Kilwin's, upbeat music and crafts for people who came. The Education Center on the lower level was open, and children created tiles that we still have on the wall to celebrate the opening.

"The total attendance on the first day we were open to the public, the family day, was more than 800 people and we got glowing reviews.

"Now the opening theme for exhibits was decided to be "What Drew You Here?" meaning doubly, what drew you to the Museum and what drew you to Blowing Rock?

"We hired a museum professional from the Cameron Museum in Wilmington as a consultant who moved to Blowing Rock for three months to help us plan and install the opening exhibits. Bob Unchester was an invaluable addition. He worked closely with David Harwood, Ron Funk, and me and helped us lay out the exhibits and make them visually appealing as well as educational. We also hired Rick Gruber, a friend of Joe and Raleigh Dulaney's, to write a book about Elliott Daingerfield to accompany the opening exhibit.

"Rick Gruber authored a comprehensive scholarly book about Elliott Daingerfield (J. Richard Gruber, *Elliott Daingerfield: Art and Life in North Carolina*). He had done some early work on Daingerfield, so, we hired him to author this book to coincide with the opening of the Museum, a wonderful tribute to Mr. Daingerfield.

"We also ordered a mural from California, which was affixed to the wall. It was a photograph of The Blowing Rock and it filled up one whole wall. It gave us the visual we wanted of the whole area!



All images Opening Family Day, 2011



All images Opening Family Day, Painting Tiles, 2011

Another thing that I loved were the five colorful twelve-foot banners hanging from the ceiling that spelled out B-R-A-H-M, with the suggestions of the influences of Beauty, Recreation, Art, Hospitality and Mountains. I remember Ron and David getting up into the rafters to hang those banners right before the building opened! The opening was an enormous success. It was multifaceted. It showed off the effort and energy that had been expended, and we were very happy to open the building to our community.

"What I remember was the enthusiasm from our supporters. I think people believed in us, but there was always some skepticism that a project of this magnitude could succeed in a small town like Blowing Rock. Our supporters who were there with us were just delighted with what they had produced. And I think there was also some surprise from our doubters that we had been able to do it!

"Another component that I'm really proud of is the opening documentary video that we had. Rebecca Jones, an Appalachian graduate who had interned with Ken Burns was hired. While she was a student, she had had a summer internship with him, so she had great experience and was hired to produce an opening video. One feature that our museum has that I'm proud of is a small theatre that can be used to further educate visitors about what they've seen or what they are about to see. So, we hired Rebecca, and we could tell immediately that she saw what we wanted. She is very visionary. She wrote the script after we gave her some talking points, she took the photographs, and she played the background music herself. I remember the first time I saw it, it was hard not to shed tears. So, I remember that documentary as being one of the high points for the weekend.

"I loved the tiles that the children painted that were used as a backsplash in the Education Center, because that will be a permanent reminder of how much fun we had that day. Those are spontaneous and childlike, but that is what I remember, other than the snowflakes and the 800 people tromping through the beautiful new building!"



## CHAPTER *six*

### Early Days - Early Exhibits and Programs - 2012 to 2014

#### 2012 to 2013

*Curious Collections of the Carolinas* followed the Daingerfield exhibit, spotlighting the amazing variety of items that people deem collectible. *Secession to Sesquicentennial* delineated the Civil War in Western North Carolina. *The Watercolor Society of North Carolina Traveling Show* shared outstanding work produced across the state. The annual *Art and Antiques Show* embellished the new museum instead of the Blowing Rock Elementary School Gymnasium.

*North Carolina Treasures* featured paintings by Bob Timberlake, woodworking and chairs by Max Woody, and ceramics by Glenn and Lula Bolick and their daughter Janet Calhoun. The new docent team caravanned to meet Bob Timberlake in his store in Lexington with a personal tour, to visit Max Moody in his workshop in Marion, and to visit the Bolicks and Janet Calhoun in their shops and studios just south of Blowing Rock. Many of the Docents also made a point of attending the Bolicks' Kiln Opening Celebration.

In 2012, 10,061 people had visited BRAHM.

#### More Exhibitions, Transitions, and New Faces 2013 to 2014

In early 2013, the photography exhibits *The Carolina Mountains: Photography of Margaret Morley* and *W.R. Trivette: Imaging the Mountains* opened to great interest. Jonathan Stuhlman, Curator of American Art at the Mint Museum in Charlotte, joined BRAHM as Guest Curator for the major summer exhibition, *Art Among Friends: Four Collections of American Art*. This exhibition showed eighty-one paintings and



Exhibition Opening, *Curious Collections of the Carolinas*, 2012



Installation View, *Curious Collections of the Carolinas*, 2012



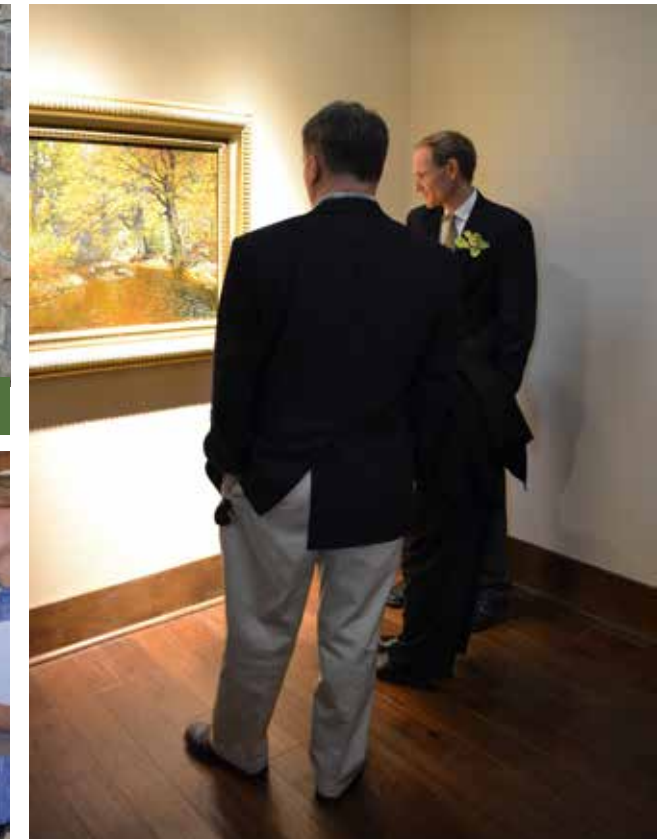
Bob Timberlake Visits, 2012



Glenn Bolick, Janet Calhoun, *Old Time Singing on the Porch*, 2012



Max Woody Visit, 2012



Exhibition Opening, *Art Among Friends*, 2013



Exhibition Opening, *Art Among Friends*, 2013





Alexander Family, 2013

one bronze sculpture from four private collections from the North Carolina High Country. Works from approximately 1880 to 1940 that portrayed “the evolution of American Impressionism to Urban Realism.” The show hinted at the depth of local art appreciation and the quality of private collections in our own neighborhood.

Organizers inaugurated a new fundraising social event, The Art Ball, that was held in conjunction with the Impressionist *Art Among Friends* exhibit. The seventh annual *Art & Antiques Show* drew 700 attendees for the special Preview Party and three-day show. Visitors also attended ten musical concerts through the year.

Late season exhibitions would include the *Watercolor Society of North Carolina Full Show*, *Strings and Things: Old Time Mountain Music*, *The Child Before Us (Grandfather Home for Children)*, and *The Painted Song: Art of Willi Armstrong*, whose “outsider” or “primitive” art prompted local artist Joe Miller to call him “Boone’s Vincent Van Gogh.”

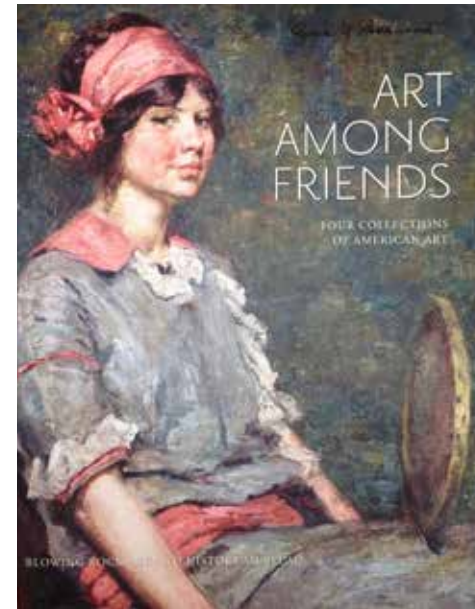
In 2013, 10,415 visitors enjoyed exhibits and activities at BRAHM.



Exhibition Opening, *Art Among Friends*, 2013



Exhibition Opening, *Watercolor Society of North Carolina 2013 Annual Juried Exhibition*, 2013



*Art Among Friends* Cover, 2013, BRAHM



Installation View, *Art Among Friends*, 2013



Exhibition Opening, *Art Among Friends*, 2013



Art Ball Dancers, The Forts, 2013



Art Ball, The Russells, 2013



## 2014 - Transitions

With the continuation of the Willi Armstrong exhibit, the new year saw *There's No Business Like Snow Business: History of Skiing in the High Country* and *Hound Ears Club: Celebrating 50 Years of Contributions to the High Country* enhanced the local theme. The major summer exhibition was actually two complementary exhibitions, *Wolf Kahn: Barns and Quilts: A Rural Tradition*. The Wolf Kahn exhibit was largely a loan from gallery owner and BRAHM collaborator, Jerald Melberg, and from BRAHM Board member Lou Gottlieb. A member of the Docent team was surprised to discover that a visitor in her tour group was a relative of Wolf Kahn, able to share some personal information about the artist. The guest expressed how delighted she was with this exhibition of his work.



Art Ball Closeup, 2013



Art Ball Dancer, The Reighards, 2013



Barn Dance, 2014



Trivette Exhibit, Students Creating Art Exhibit, 2013



Third Thursday, Art Among Friends, 2013



The eighth annual Art & Antiques Show drew 600 attendees for its Preview Party and three-day show. After the annual Art and Antiques Show festivities, exhibits resumed. *Common Threads: Five Influential Women and Their Legacies* celebrated fiber crafts and *Whimmy Diddles 'n' Flipper Dingers: Toys of Appalachia* featured toys made by legendary local toymaker and carver Willard Watson, whose great-grandson Willard Watson III joined the BRAHM staff in 2017 as Programs and Outreach Director.

2014 also brought Dianna Cameron to the staff at BRAHM. Although her initial job title was Exhibitions and Collections Coordinator, the scope of Dianna's work quickly grew to that of a full curator, long before she was assigned the title Curator of Exhibitions and Collections Director. When she came on board, BRAHM did not have an established exhibition schedule for even the immediate future. A stickler for the details, Dianna often put in long hours to make new exhibitions become what she wanted them to be. As the collection grew, she was able to add permanent exhibition spaces within the Museum, and to add more events such as Coffee with the Curator. Under Dianna's leadership, attendance at those events grew, as did BRAHM's relationship with regional and national art institutions. She strengthened and expanded BRAHM's relationship with local collectors and potential donors and enhanced the caliber and breadth of presentations.

While staff was added this year, it was also a year for a good-bye. First as a volunteer, and then as BRAHM's first Executive Director, Joann Mitchell had worked hard to organize and galvanize the fundraising effort that allowed the Museum to be built. She had tackled the difficult task of creating a functioning art and history facility from an ephemeral collection of ideas. As she said herself, "How often in life does one get to build a museum?" Although she had given notice



Installation View, *Whimmy Diddles 'n' Flipper Dingers: Toys of Appalachia*, 2014



Installation View, *Whimmy Diddles 'n' Flipper Dingers: Toys of Appalachia*, 2014



Installation View, *Whimmy Diddles 'n' Flipper Dingers: Toys of Appalachia*, 2014



Installation View, *Hound Ears Club: Celebrating 50 Years of Contributions to the High Country*, 2014



All Images: Installation View, *Selections from Permanent Collection*, 2014





Installation View, *Wolf Kahn: Barns and Quilts: A Rural Tradition, 2014*



Left Image: Installation View, *Wolf Kahn: Barns and Quilts: A Rural Tradition, 2014*



Right Image: Exhibition Opening, *Wolf Kahn: Barns and Quilts: A Rural Tradition, 2014*



Installation View, *Wolf Kahn: Barns and Quilts: A Rural Tradition, 2014*

and a search committee had been formed and was operating, a new Executive Director had not been hired before Ms. Mitchell's departure. Fortuitously, once again the right person showed up at the right time to bridge the gap and serve as BRAHM's Interim Director. Because of a recommendation made at a dinner party, Search Committee Chair LaRose Spooner was directed to Robert Harry ("Bob") McCammon, who had extensive business and museum management experience and was able to fill in as BRAHM's Interim Director.

In 2014, BRAHM had 9,963 visitors.



All Images: Installation View, *Wolf Kahn: Barns, 2014*



## CHAPTER *seven*

### Growth and Adaptation - 2015 to 2020

Early in 2015, BRAHM welcomed its second Executive Director, Lee Carol Giduz. BRAHM was not new to Lee Carol when she was hired to direct it forward. In her role as Executive Director of the Caldwell (County) Arts Council (1994-2015) and as a member of the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Arts Council (2002-2011), Lee Carol had a behind-the-scenes, inside-out acquaintance with BRAHM from its formative period. She had decades-long experience with non-profit organizations and particularly with arts-based non-profits. Though she demurs about her museum involvement experience and connections, she was generally regarded by the BRAHM community as the perfect choice to fill the Executive Director position.

Lee Carol frees her staff to find and pursue their goals. She has allowed them extraordinary freedom of expression and trusted their choices. The result continues to blossom.

She explained, "It's important to me that people can be their own best person in their job and in their work environment. . . I have on this staff team a lot of really strong passionate individuals and it would be a detriment to clip those wings and not let them have freedom in their job to be the best that they can be, and it has worked very well."

After she had settled in and listened to the BRAHM community, she focused on longer-range planning than had been possible to that point. Lee Carol has enhanced the financial strength of the Museum and its community engagement. She encouraged the free-admission policy that was transformational.



Installation View, *Ruined Landscapes: Paintings of the Balkan War Zone*, 2015



Installation View, *Jerry Burns: Through the Lens*, 2015



Installation View, *Jerry Burns: Through the Lens*, 2015



Exhibition Opening, *Jerry Burns: Through the Lens*, 2015



Installation View, *1923: The Blowing Rock Fire Exhibit*, 2015



Gallery VIP Patrons, *1923: The Blowing Rock Fire Exhibit*, 2015



She encouraged more use of the museum for gallery space and pushed for more museum visitors and high-caliber exhibitions. She continues to cite “keeping the Museum debt-free” as one of her most celebrated accomplishments.

### 2015 Summer and Late Exhibitions and Activities

With a loan from the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts and a gift from Hugh and Jane Spratt McColl, the 2015 exhibition season began with the emotionally moving *Ruined Landscapes: Paintings of the Balkan War Zone*. In the exhibit *Jerry Burns: Through the Lens*, BRAHM and the Blowing Rock Historical Society collaborated to celebrate Blowing Rock’s former newspaper editor and historian.

The Cameron Art Museum in Wilmington provided the major summer exhibition, *Floating Sculpture: Bruce Barclay Cameron Duck Decoy Collection*, thanks in part to the efforts of Rebecca Laymon Ficklen. *Millhands/ Handmade* concurrently discussed the process of textile making and took a look at the South’s textile industry. This contrasted with unique presentations of creative handmade modern textiles creations. The Blowing Rock Historical Society and the Blowing Rock Fire Department also collaborated to present the story of 1923: *The Blowing Rock Fire*.

In August, sculptor and BRAHM Board Member Bill Brown organized the exhibition *The Sculptor’s Voice* that introduced local audiences



Installation View, *Floating Sculpture: Bruce Barclay Cameron Duck Decoy Collection*, 2015



Installation View, *Floating Sculpture: Bruce Barclay Cameron Duck Decoy Collection*, 2015



Installation View, *Floating Sculpture: Bruce Barclay Cameron Duck Decoy Collection*, 2015



Installation View, *Millhands / Handmade Exhibit*, 2015



Installation View, *Millhands / Handmade Exhibit*, 2015

to sculptors and their work from across the state. Following its exhibition at the Greenville County Museum of Art (SC), *Romantic Spirits: Nineteenth-Century Paintings of the South from the Johnson Collection* came to BRAHM. *The Picture Man: Photographs by Paul Buchanan* chronicled the work of an itinerant photographer who left 4,000 glass plates featuring mountain families and their farms, pictures that he had taken from 1920 to 1951.

For the winter exhibitions, BRAHM’s Daingerfield donors, Lamont and Cora Hudson lent BRAHM work for the exhibit, *A Retrospective of Eliot Clark*. Clark had been a contemporary of Elliott Daingerfield. At the same time we showcased the realistic paintings of North Wilkesboro artist Ward Nichols in *Ward Nichols: Look Again*. A history exhibit, *Truth Beneath These Hills: Uncovering the History and Heritage of Mining in Western NC* brought the landscape to life.

The Alexander Community Gallery space featured ten exhibitions in 2015 - *Recent Works by Students at Watauga High School*, *Young at Art Student Spectacular*, *Perceptions & Reflections* that featured recent works by members of Studio 12 in Lenoir, *Cheap Joe’s Art Stuff Employee Art*, *All Things Great & Small* with recent works by members of the Brush & Palette Club of Lenoir, *Unity with Diversity* with works from the newly formed Blue Ridge Women Painters cooperative, *Black & White & Art All Over* featuring works in black and white by local artists, Provenance with photographs and object installations by two Appalachian State University students, and *Origins* featuring work by four Appalachian State University students.

In 2015, 10,370 visitors enjoyed BRAHM’s exhibits, programs, and events.



2016

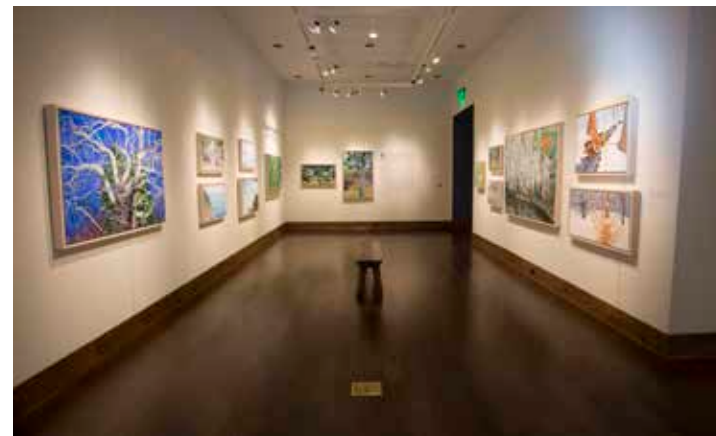
Major spring exhibitions included powerful documentary photography in *Ralph Burns: A Persistence of Vision*, an exhibition that was borrowed from the Asheville Art Museum. *Elliott Daingerfield: Collected* introduced much previously unseen work by Elliott Daingerfield assembled and borrowed from local collectors.

Other exhibits included *The Art of Native Plants* extolling local flora through paintings and sculpture. *The History of the Horse Show* was exhibited during much of the time that the actual Blowing Rock Horse Show events were taking place. Again, the annual *Art and Antiques Show* and its events claimed the Museum for early August.

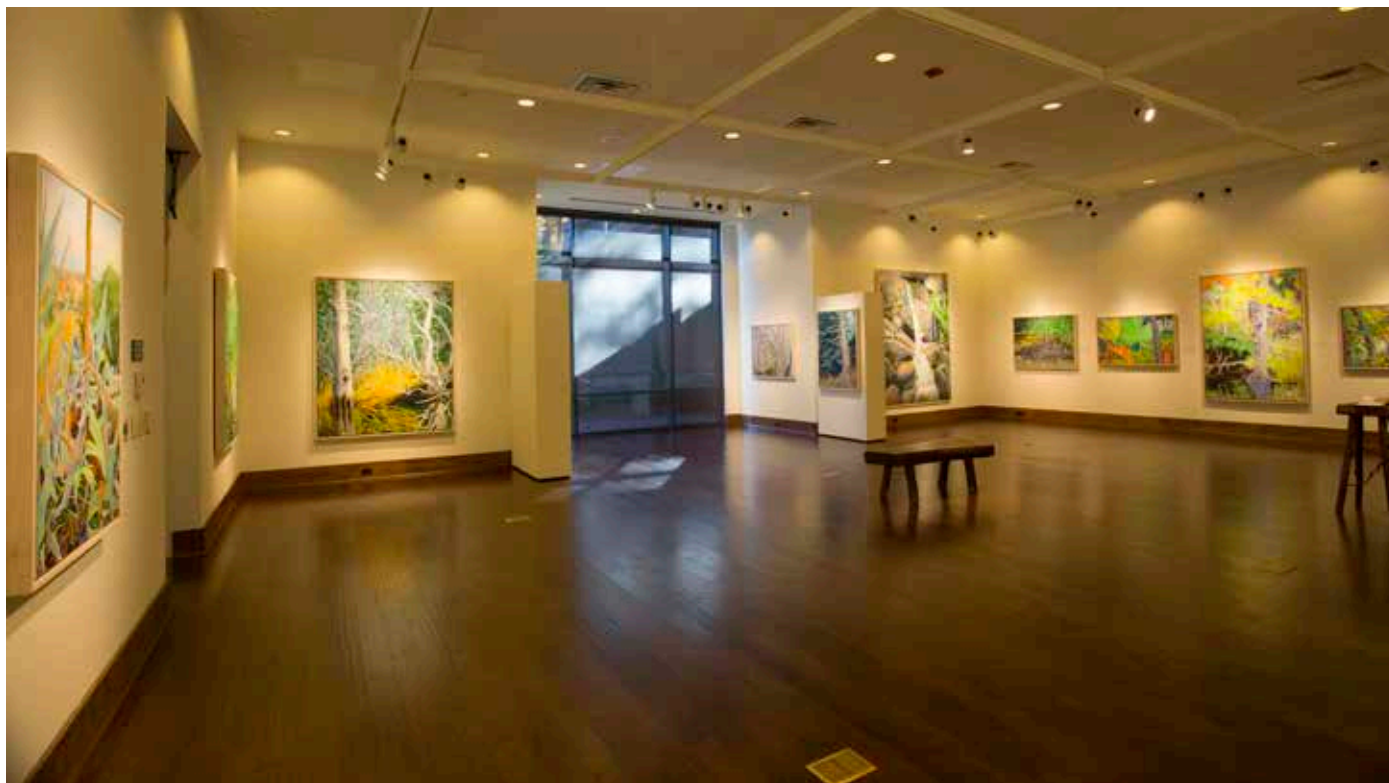
After the Art and Antiques Show, with the sponsorship of Wells Fargo Private Bank, *Elizabeth Bradford: Time + Terrain* brought hundreds of visitors to the Museum, many for the first time.



Coffee with the Curator, Bill Brown, 2015



Installation View, Elizabeth Bradford: Time + Terrain, 2016



Installation View, Elizabeth Bradford: Time + Terrain, 2016



Detail of Sycamore Blue Sky, Elizabeth Bradford, 2014



Installation View, Elizabeth Bradford: Time + Terrain, 2016

*A Town Within A Town: History of the Junaluska Community* documented the seldom recognized Black community in Boone, further illuminated by enlightening lectures and presentations.

Borrowed from the Asheville Art Museum, *Ancient Forms, Modern Minds: Contemporary Cherokee Ceramics* explored another regional culture.

As the Elizabeth Bradford exhibit came down, *Andy Warhol: Six Silkscreen Prints* went up, thanks to a loan from the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts. Then *Everyman Jack: Stories & Illustrations* by Gail E. Haley presented work by the local Caldecott and Kate Greenaway award-winning children's book author and illustrator.

Monthly changing exhibits in the Alexander Community Gallery included the *Watauga High School Art Show*, *Artifacts* a photography exhibit by Lou Murray, *Portraits, Figures, Conversations: Paintings* by Josiah Mark Cameron, *the Young at Art Student Spectacular*, *The Space Between: Paintings* by Elizabeth Shanahan, *Inside 28605* featuring recent works by local artists Theresa Early, Kat Leahey, Ellie Lyne, Priscilla Popper, Linda Dease Smith, and Annie Stone, *Abstracted*



Installation View, A Town Within A Town: History of the Junaluska Community, 2016



*Fibers: Recent Work by Ineke Thomas, Brush & Palette* featuring recent works by 26 regional artists, *Reflections: From Havana to DC* offering a photographic series by Garner G. Dewey, *Unfolding: Holding a Course*, and *Plays with Glass: Re-imagining with the Help of the Sun* with stained glass works by local artist Beth Shuford.

In 2016, BRAHM counted 12,801 visitors, up from 10,370 in 2015 and 9,963 in 2014.

### 2017

Two major exhibitions dominated the spring and early summer exhibition season – *Inside Looking Out/Outside Looking In: Paintings by Ronna S. Harris* and *Fire & Form: North Carolina Glass*. Harris, who lives part of the year in the High Country and part of the year near New Orleans, presented stunning figural imagery. As with the 2015 sculpture exhibit, the glass show provided a comprehensive introduction to the amazing variety and complexity of art glass now being produced in North Carolina. Also on exhibit was the *History of Tweetsie Railroad* with interactive space for children’s engagement in the exhibit and *In the Evening West: Boone’s Revolutionary Drama* about the Horn in the West presentation. The annual *Art and Antiques Show* events again commanded the Museum spaces for early August.

### 2017 Summer and Late Exhibitions and Activities

BRAHM friend, gallery owner and collector Jerald Melberg, again generously shared an exhibition of original book illustrations, *Romare Bearden Li’l Dan, the Drummer Boy: A Civil War Story*. The photographic exhibition *The Photography of Lewis Hine: Exposing Child Labor in North Carolina, 1908-1918* made mill town life and conditions real. In collaboration with the Blowing Rock Historical Society, the on-going exhibit *The Village of Blowing Rock: Exploring Our History* first appeared and is expected to be a dynamic and changing presentation that will encourage return visits. With selected works again from BRAHM’s growing permanent collection, the exhibit *Impressions of the Land* presented landscapes from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In contrast, *Comic Stripped: A Revealing Look at Southern Stereotypes in Cartoons* challenged perhaps a different audience. The comics exhibit had been created by the Levine Museum of the New South with a grant from the RLJ Companies, with our exhibit sponsored by the Mast General Store.



Installation View, *Fire & Form: North Carolina Glass*, 2017



Exhibition Opening, *Fire & Form: North Carolina Glass*, 2017



Exhibition Opening, *Fire & Form: North Carolina Glass*, 2017



Lee Carol Giduz on *Black Mountain Geodesic Dome*, 2017

Exhibits in the Alexander Community Gallery included *Art in Flux* featuring a group of local artists, the 2017 *Watauga High School Art Show*, *BRAHM’s Annual Young at Art Student Spectacular*, *Locality and Aesthetic Forms in Watercolor* with work by Dwight Rose, *From the Mountains to the Sea* with artists Linda Elksnin and Lillian Trettin, *Away: Art Department Study Abroad Program* from Appalachian State University, and *Healers: Photographs by Shauna Caldwell*. In November, *Arts at the Center: A History of Black Mountain College* included exhibitions and programs in conjunction with Appalachian State University.

In late 2017, Willard Watson III joined the BRAHM staff as Programs and Outreach Director. In November 2017, multi-talented Sharon Caldwell joined BRAHM as Business Manager – and much more. As she explains, “I look at my job from a holistic perspective, in that it ties in to all areas of the organization. Therefore, facility management is organically relevant to my position.” Her versatile, sunny, team-oriented outlook benefits the Museum with capacities far beyond a typical job description.

In 2017, 13,931 visitors came to BRAHM for its exhibits, programs, fundraisers, and private events.



Installation View, *Comic Stripped* Exhibition, 2017





Installation View, *Arts at the Center: A History of Black Mountain College, 2017*



BRAHM staff at Geodesic Dome building Workshop at Appalachian State University, 2017



Installation View, *Arts at the Center: A History of Black Mountain College, 2017*



Installation View, *Arts at the Center: A History of Black Mountain College, 2017*



In the early part of 2018, Charlie and Susan Murray shared a portion of their collection *Etchings & Lithographs of American Life, 1905-1943*, that included artists Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood, and “Ashcan” artist John Sloan. The Smithsonian Museum's Museum on Main Street Program brought the traveling exhibit, *The Way We Worked* to BRAHM, grant funding from the Smithsonian sparked creation of the multidisciplinary, bilingual presentation *The Way Watauga Works*, featuring portrait photographs by independent photographer and former BRAHM staffer Ashley Warren, oral history interviews by Willard Watson III, and four documentary films made by the 8th grade class of Bethel School. The major spring exhibition *Handcrafted: North Carolina Clay*, curated by renowned North Carolina potter and BRAHM Founder Emeritus, Herb Cohen, continued the theme of previous exhibitions of top North Carolina artists in sculpture and glass, but this time with remarkable examples of clay art.



Installation View, *The Way We Worked*, Smithsonian Museum on Main Street, 2018



Installation View, *The Way Watauga Works*, 2018



Installation View, *The Way Watauga Works*, 2018



All Images: Installation View, *HandCrafted, North Carolina Clay*, 2018



In February 2018, after gaining invaluable experience working for seven years at Penland School of Craft in fundraising and administration, Jasmin McFayden joined the BRAHM staff as Executive Assistant. In addition to clerical tasks and supporting BRAHM's Director and Board of Trustees, she oversees membership development and BRAHM's special fundraising events, like the Annual Gala. She works alongside volunteer committees whose members lend support, ideas, leadership in event planning, and membership engagement.

For *The BRAHM Gala: An Evening in Venice* on June 23rd, 21 hosts provided memorable meals at various homes and venues, "A Movable Feast" for 135 guests, with 153 attendees at the dessert and afterparty. In early August, BRAHM held its 12th *Art & Antiques Show*, with 870 visitors for the 22 antique vendors.

### The Inaugural BRAHM Plein Air Painting Festival

In late 2017, with encouragement by Tweetsie Railroad owner Cathy Robbins and lodging entrepreneur Jim McDowell, the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce had approached BRAHM about putting together a Plein Air Painting Festival event. A subcommittee of the Membership Committee took on the task under the guidance of BRAHM Education Director Jennifer Garonzik. The events were structured with four days of workshops, then two days of outdoor (*en plein air*) painting, and a Saturday afternoon exhibition and "wet paint" sale. Artists would be encouraged by BRAHM to make art. The public would be able to see and participate in the art creation process and purchase the art they had seen being created. The first event, held during Community Week July 8-14, 2018, drew 51 artists from 4 states, with 63 paintings shown, and 29 paintings sold.

### 2018 Late Summer Exhibitions and Activities

In August, BRAHM opened a bold exhibit organized by Raleigh's CAM (Contemporary Art Museum), *Thomas Sayre: White Gold* and a complimentary exhibit about the culture of cotton farming by a local photographer, *Houck Medford: Coming Home to Cotton*. In another gallery, BRAHM Curator Dianna Cameron shared the exhibit *Painting Ladies: The Remarkable Students of Elliott Daingerfield* and produced a biographical catalog of the artists. Later, *Outsiders: The Inside Story of Folk Art* opened with generously loaned works from Barry and Allen Huffman and the Hickory Museum



Installation View, *Farm, Forage, Feast: High Country Foodways*, 2018

of Art. *Farm, Forage, Feast: High Country Foodways* explored local food production and distribution. Children especially delighted to *Gail Haley's Jack Tales: New Acquisitions to the Collection*, thanks to a gift of the collection to BRAHM by Alice Naylor.

When BRAHM completed its tally, 23,616 people visited BRAHM in 2018, up from 13,931 in 2017. International visitors came from 20 different countries.

### 2019 Was a Very Exciting Year for BRAHM!

In May, BRAHM hosted the American Watercolor Society's traveling exhibition, *The 152nd Annual International Exhibition of the American Watercolor Society*, one of only six museums in the country to be granted this privilege by one of the oldest and most prestigious art societies in the world. Also in May, the exhibition *Southern Strands: North Carolina Fiber Art* opened to showcase some of North Carolina's finest fiber artists, as BRAHM had previously showcased artists in sculpture, glass, and clay.

The Second Annual BRAHM Plein Air Festival, held from May 16 to May 18, had 71 registered artists.

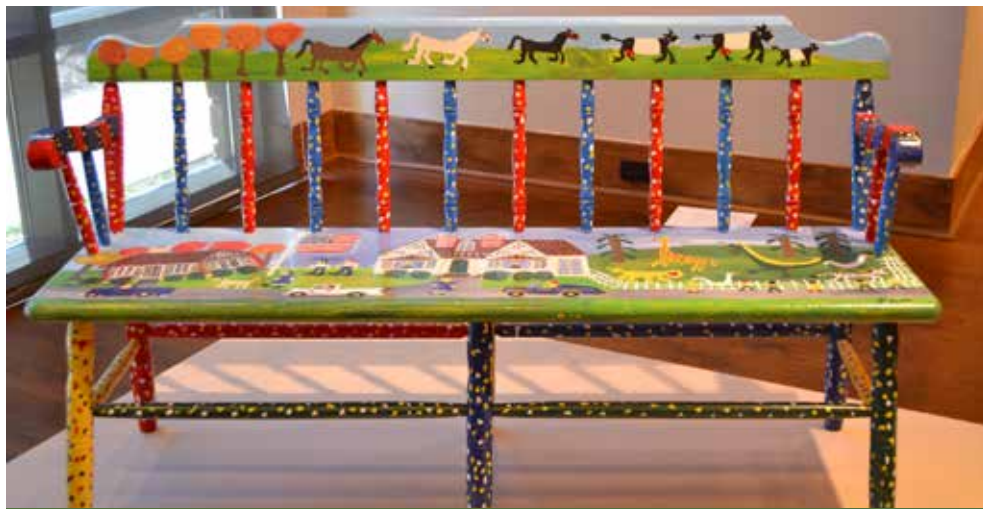


Plein Air "Wet Paint" Sale, 2018



Plein Air Painter, 2018





Installation View, *Outsiders: The Inside Story of Folk Art*, 2018



Middle Image & Bottom Image: Installation View, *Southern Strands: North Carolina Fiber Art*, 2018



Installation View, *Modern Visions, Modern Art: The Cone Sisters in North Carolina Exhibit*, 2019

### The Cone Exhibits

For this region, however, where 3,600 acres of the Moses and Bertha Cone Estate, Flat Top Manor, have become a significant National Park and a portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway, the blockbuster shows were the summertime events that chronicled the Cone family and particularly the stories of Moses Cone's two art collecting sisters, Dr. Claribel and Miss Etta Cone. The sisters, with initial encouragement from their friends Gertrude and Leo Stein, amassed the largest collection of works by Matisse in existence, as well as significant works by Picasso, Gauguin, Van Gogh, and many others. With groundwork laid by an earlier 2003 celebration of the sisters by BRAHM in its organizational stages, co-curators Dianna Cameron and Carrie Streeter were granted exceptional access for their research and were allowed to borrow works from the Baltimore Museum of Art, from the Weatherspoon Art Museum at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, and from Cone and Lindau family members. Their research produced fascinating new material on the Cone family. The concurrent exhibits, *Modern Visions, Mountain Views: The Cones of Flat Top Manor*, in collaboration with the National Park Service and the Blue Ridge Parkway, and *Modern Visions, Modern Art: The Cone Sisters in North Carolina* told the stories with greater depth and appreciation than had been seen before. Related programs included lectures by Baltimore Museum of Art Curator of American Painting Katy Rothkopf and great-niece of Claribel and Etta Cone, Nancy Hirschland Ramage. Over 17,000 visitors came to see the Cone Sisters' collection and stories of the Cone family.

In 2019, the Alexander Community Gallery offered several special exhibitions: *Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow*, *the Annual Young at Art Student Spectacular*, the special photographic exhibit from Western Youth Network, *Breaking Barriers for Children in Rural Appalachia: Overcoming Adversity and Realizing Childhood Dreams*, and *Kat Leahey: Contemporary Folk Art*.



## 2019 Winter Exhibitions

*Photography by Hugh Morton: An Uncommon Retrospective* followed the Cone Exhibits. It featured journalistic subjects different from the landscape photography of Grandfather Mountain than Morton's fans were accustomed to see. An upstairs exhibit *Mentors and Heroes: Photographs by David Holt*, the renowned North Carolina musician, accompanied the exhibit downstairs about the art of crafting musical instruments, *Sound Machines: Stringed Instruments by the Capozzoli Guitar Company*. One of the beautifully crafted guitars that was displayed is owned by the show's curator, Willard Watson III. Two other compatible exhibitions hung over the winter – *Sallie Middleton: A Life in the Forest* and *Shared Spaces: Wildlife Wood Sculptures by Pete Lupo*.

A total of 30,349 visitors came to BRAHM in 2019, up from 23,616 in 2018.

## 2020 and The Pandemic

The Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions closed the museum for 6½ months. Limited public attendance forced the resilient BRAHM staff to create exhibitions and lessons to share online. *Branching Out: Works in Wood from North Carolina* introduced many of North Carolina's remarkable wood artists, as had BRAHM's previous exhibitions of sculpture, glass, ceramics, and fiber art. Online presentations included interviews with artists. *Terra Ludis: Play Ground* featured the many, many activities that High Country people enjoy outdoors and showcased



Above Images: Installation View, *Modern Visions, Modern Art: The Cone Sisters in North Carolina Exhibit, 2019*



Installation View, *Modern Visions, Modern Views, The Cones of Flat Top Manor, 2019*



Installation View, *Modern Visions, Modern Art: The Cone Sisters in North Carolina Exhibit, 2019*

accomplished people engaged in those activities. The interviews, available online, provided an opportunity to learn surprising information about neighbors viewers may have thought they knew and talents they had never recognized. The summer exhibit *Marjorie & Louis* shared the story of Elliott Daingerfield's daughter Marjorie, who gained renown as a talented sculptress, and her husband, artist Louis Lundean, known for his western images and colorful personal history. Their remarkable love story endures when people can experience it in the BRAHM setting.

Though many in-person events such as the annual Gala had to be cancelled, BRAHM's members and sponsors rallied to show their support in difficult times. Thanks to the expert planning and hard work of Jennifer Garonzik, the BRAHM staff, and volunteers, BRAHM's Third Annual Plein Air Festival was held successfully with participation from 72 artists. The staff handled artist registration with commendable efficiency, masks, and social distancing. Orderly timed pre-registrations for the Wet Paint Sale allowed limited access and gave the 250 potential buyers limited time to make their selections. Of the 108 paintings and works offered, 60 sold. Visiting organizers from other such events applauded the BRAHM team for showing others how to manage such an event in a pandemic.

## 2020 Winter Exhibitions

In November, a major exhibition of Cherokee art, history, and craft opened with *Qualla Arts & Craft Mutual: Tradition and Innovation*. Though artist Ben Long is well known locally for his fresco murals in Ashe County and elsewhere and artist Tony Griffin is particularly recognized for his landscapes, *Drawing from Life: Ben Long & Tony Griffin* showcased their expertise at figure drawing. In the Atwell Gallery, *Blue Ridge Conservancy: Place Matters* explained some of the important work that is being accomplished by the local conservation organization.

Despite the disruptions of the pandemic, with tight financial management, strong continued Member and Board support, and a talented and flexible staff in place, Director Lee Carol Giduz shepherded BRAHM to remarkably successful outcomes for 2020. Nevertheless, the museum welcomed 10,284 visitors for its exhibits and in-museum programs. With creative new programs and features, BRAHM also expanded its online presence to include tens of thousands of participants.



## CHAPTER *eight*

### 2021 - The Tenth Anniversary Year

2021 is the Tenth Anniversary Year of the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum! As we enter this landmark Tenth Anniversary year, the major contemporary photography exhibition *TRANSFORMATION* truly transformed the Museum into late summer. With loans from significant North Carolina photography collectors and the North Carolina Museum of Art, this exhibit offers a rare international insight into exemplary works of contemporary photography.

Commemoratively, *The Alexander Collection*, curated by the BRAHM Docent Team, shares selections from these important local collectors, Welborn and Patty Alexander, who were so important in building our Museum. Patty Alexander passed away in 2020, and the exhibit is dedicated to her memory. Many of these works have been gifted to the BRAHM Permanent Collection.

Another of BRAHM's very important Founders, Janet H. Wilson, also passed away in 2020. Mrs. Wilson left an extraordinary legacy gift to BRAHM, her collection of works by "The Painting Ladies," pioneering women art students of Elliott Daingerfield, nearly all of whom became members of the vanguard women's painting group known as "The Philadelphia Ten." *The Janet H. Wilson Collection* shares many of the paintings in Mrs. Wilson's legacy gift to BRAHM.

*Drawn to Detail: Metalsmiths of North Carolina*, guest curated by Penland exhibiting Metalsmith Adam



Installing *TRANSFORMATION*, 2021



Installation View, *TRANSFORMATION*, 2021

Whitney, continues BRAHM's exploration of artistic media, this time with a wide range of metal art and design, from jewelry to functional housewares and sculpture.

Early in 2021, respected and well-loved Curator Dianna Cameron announced that she would be leaving BRAHM after almost seven years. All who came to know her and witnessed her growth in her role at BRAHM and her contributions to the museum wish her the very best in her new life chapter.

To succeed her in this critically important position as Curator and Director of Collections, BRAHM hired Ian Gabriel Wilson in April. Gabe had the distinction of working at the Cranbrook Art Museum as the Jeanne and Ralph Graham Collections Fellow. He is a graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and brings the skills needed to lead BRAHM to its next chapter.



Janet Wilson, 2014



Alexander Family visiting Alexander Collection Exhibit, 2021

### The 2021 BRAHM Gala will celebrate BRAHM's Tenth Anniversary

BRAHM's Fourth Annual Plein Air Festival is scheduled to occur in August 2021 with more than 50 artists pre-registered as of April.

In the Fall, an expanded exhibition of The Gorelick Collection will present more of the remarkable array of work from many of North Carolina's most prominent ceramicists including Mark Hewitt, Charlie Lisk, Michael Bayne, Matt Jones, Josh Copus, Burlong Craig, A.V. Smith, Donna Craven, Steve Abee, Cristina Cordova, Kim Ellington, Daniel Johnston, Herb Cohen, Stacy Lambert, the Owens family, and others.

*Abie Harris – Abstract Landscapes* will feature many landscapes created of Blowing Rock views. A highly interactive children's exhibit, *Storyland*, is based on three much loved children's books: Tale of Peter Rabbit, The Snowy Day, and Where's Spot. There will also be a new installation of works from the BRAHM Permanent Collection.

October 1, 2021 will mark the Tenth Anniversary of the opening of the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum. Plans are now being made for an exciting anniversary celebration.



# CHAPTER *nine*

## A BRAHM Education

“Education is our purpose.”

- Welborn Alexander, BRAHM President 2001 to 2012

### Early Days

Before BRAHM was a museum, while it was still a dream, it educated adults and children. Stirred by the prospect of a museum in Blowing Rock, citizens and visitors imagined its purpose and its contents. They asked questions.

What might a local art and history museum contain? What artists, especially local artists, would hang in the new building? What crafts would appear there? How would the museum reflect local history and habits? To answer those questions was to build enthusiasm for BRAHM and draw people there. From 2002 early supporters organized lectures and shows featuring Philip Moose, Elliot Daingerfield, Claribel and Etta Cone, and other artists, all with strong ties to Blowing Rock and the High Country.

Rebecca Laymon Ficklen had advised in 2002 that BRAHM must establish a presence so that people would believe in it. Though BRAHM would not have an office or physical presence until 2006, the early BRAHM organizers began to offer art-related annual programs and events that would stimulate public curiosity and involvement and would educate the public and arouse the mind.

### Children Included

In 2003, during the BRAHM weekend celebration, The Cone Sisters Who Loved Matisse, BRAHM offered children’s workshops at Rumble Presbyterian Church Fellowship hall, led by Sylvia Tarleton. The children loved the workshops, and that sparked the BRAHM effort to attempt to include Children’s Events whenever possible.



Cone Days Kids’ Workshop with José Fumero, 2003



Summer Camp, 2012



Young at Art, 2014

### Young at Art Begins

In 2006 Gina Harwood, a volunteer for the incipient BRAHM, where her husband David was on the Board, began the program she called Young at Art at Blowing Rock School. Her children had joined others in signing the leaf border on the BRAHM-sponsored mural at the Capel Building on Main Street. Their excitement stirred Gina to create a collaborative art program with BRAHM and Blowing Rock School. Funding had been cut for K-3 art programs at the school and BRAHM became the solution. K-2 classes offered no art instruction at all, so Gina founded Young at Art in Action, a six-month outreach initiative. Patrick Sukow, Principal, offered the elementary school art room to Young at Art one day a month. Early projects involved masks and painted wooden animals. Each month’s art day saluted a holiday or a time of year. The children celebrated the real art materials, as most had worked only with crayons before. Gina had persuaded Joann Mitchell at BRAHM to fund the program. Gina and her team sent fliers home with the children to announce the programs and publicize BRAHM.

“Now that my girls are grown, I have seen how art has played a role in the people they have become. I read a scholarship article where my youngest described how being around art as a young child opened her eyes and her mind to the world around her. It helped her to look at things in different ways and appreciate the small, beautiful things in life.”

- Gina Harwood, Young at Art Program Founder



Young at Art, 2013





Young at Art, 2014

### A Field Trip and Camps for Students

On June 5, 2009, after an hour of classroom instruction, BRAHM, supported by The Blowing Rock Community Foundation, led students to study sculpture. After having explored the Rosen Sculpture Exhibition at Appalachian State University, students, alone or in pairs or groups, created their own sculptures. One foreboding artwork was titled Pandemic. Students then joined muralist Brenda Council, who explained how she conceived and executed her mural on the dome of the Belk Library.

From that first successful outing, BRAHM continued to organize field trips that would expand young students' horizons and would involve their families in the idea of an art and history museum.

### New Education Center Opens to Children

BRAHM opened and Leila Weinstein entered the picture as Education and Outreach Director in charge of children's programs. She brought Young at Art into the new museum, and she developed the Doodlebug Club and other arts programs, drawing students and their parents into the museum.

When the Museum opened, 2011 brought the first School's Out Mini Camp in October. 2012 Spring Break Camp offered two seven-hour days of gallery tours, history, creation and snacks. BRAHM offered Summer Youth Camps in 2012. Ages 9-12 enjoyed 20 hours in a week of creative learning and fun. Papier Maché artist Sergio Bustamante led Fly High in Imagination. Other sessions offered Illustrate Your World and History Hipsters Camp led by Carrie Streeter.

### Her Children Led Her to BRAHM

The Garonzik children attended Young at Art, Doodlebug, Afternoon Art, and summer workshops. Their mother Jennifer, who had a strong art education background, volunteered at BRAHM Open House events.



Summer Camp, 2013



Bethel Elementary Field Trip, 2014



Young at Art, 2014



Kids' Camp, 2014



Camp Art, 2014

With a degree in Art from UNCG, Jennifer Garonzik had taught art in public schools and private art classes, and she had worked several years as editor and illustrator for a company doing brain-based research on how people learn. In the spring of 2016, Jennifer became a BRAHM employee as Education Center Director.

Jennifer taught Afternoon Art and Doodlebug Club and arranged instructors for adult workshops. Her responsibilities came to include field trips and teaching Young at Art. By then, 90 Blowing Rock students were attending Young at Art. Jennifer expanded it to serve 230 students. She added field trips from local summer camps and preschools and expanded the free school field trip program.

In 2020, she pivoted to virtual programs for children with free weekly art lessons posted on the BRAHM website and YouTube channel. Her outreach program gave 2800 free art kits filled with art supplies and lessons to elementary school-aged children in Watauga County. All of her teaching focuses on process over product, on artists and techniques through history and current culture.

Jennifer has featured many instructors for adults and formed a partnership with the Southern Highland Craft Guild. Her students range from eighteen months to over eighty years old.



BRAHM Staff: Jennifer Garonzik and Leila Weinstein





All Images: Doodlebug with Jennifer Garonzik, 2014



All Images: Doodlebug Projects over the years

### Adult Lectures and Educational Programs

In the fall of 2009, BRAHM moved its offices from the cramped space in the lower level of the Tourism Development Office on Valley Boulevard to more spacious and highly visible quarters on Main Street, Blowing Rock, on the second floor of The Martin House. As Rebecca Laymon Ficklen had encouraged in the earliest days, BRAHM would now have a much more visible presence in the community.

2010 offered the first scheduled year of adult lectures. The Third Thursday Series, held at The Martin House, was sponsored by First Citizens Bank. It offered a broad range of programs and topics and came to be highly attended. The word was out. BRAHM was coming. Initial programs included Woody Durham, "The Voice of The Tar Heels," who entertained with his colorful personality and his forty-years' experience. Wayne Martin, Executive Director of the NC Arts Council, presented Peace Behind the Bridge, a study of old-time music. Sculptor Bob Trotman explained his eccentric figures carved from wood. Collector Lee Rocamora joined Penland potters Cynthia Bringle, Kent McLaughlin, and Suze Lindsay to describe art pottery. Blowing Rock Frameworks and Gallery sponsored Art and the Parkway: A Love Affair. Sixth-generation potter Janet Bolick Calhoun outlined Pottery Traditions in the Mountains. Dr. Carl Campbell delineated famous North Carolinian Senator and Character Sam Ervin. Joe Miller portrayed Vincent Van Gogh's brother Theo, in With a Warm Handshake. And George Washington Really Did Sleep Here, resurrected the President's tour of 1791.





Third Thursday in The Martin House, 2010

### Adult Lecture Programs Continued

In 2012, Sharyn McCrumb, bestselling author of *Secession & Sequestration: Commemorating the Civil War in Western North Carolina*, explained the varied actions and reactions in the remote mountains. Lillian Goudas of the ASU Art Department explained *What's so Great About the Parthenon?* ASU biologist Gary Walker outlined *The History of Botanical Exploration of the Southern Highlands*. Todd Wright, ASU Professor of Music and well-known local saxophonist talked about Jazz.

### The BRAHM Docent Program

Visitors to BRAHM can explore exhibits on their own, but Director Joann Mitchell saw the need for tours led by well-trained docents. In 2012, she nominated and elected Virginia Vanstory, a former teacher, to organize and lead the group. Sue Glenn, who had been involved with BRAHM from its conception, and Sherri Lind and Sandra Perry, who answered a newspaper recruitment article, joined Virginia and set about learning and teaching the exhibits.

Regular tours were scheduled and advertised for Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. At first, attendance was light and docents lobbied for sidewalk signs recruiting people from Main Street. Soon Group Tours to Blowing Rock often included BRAHM Tours in their schedules. Docents delighted in how much they had to learn in order to teach. They swapped any new tidbit they had discovered. When museum admission fees were ended in May 2018, docent group tours increased in popularity.

To prepare their material, the Docent team planned day trips to learn about art and crafts at Penland and elsewhere and enjoyed meeting artists who were to exhibit at



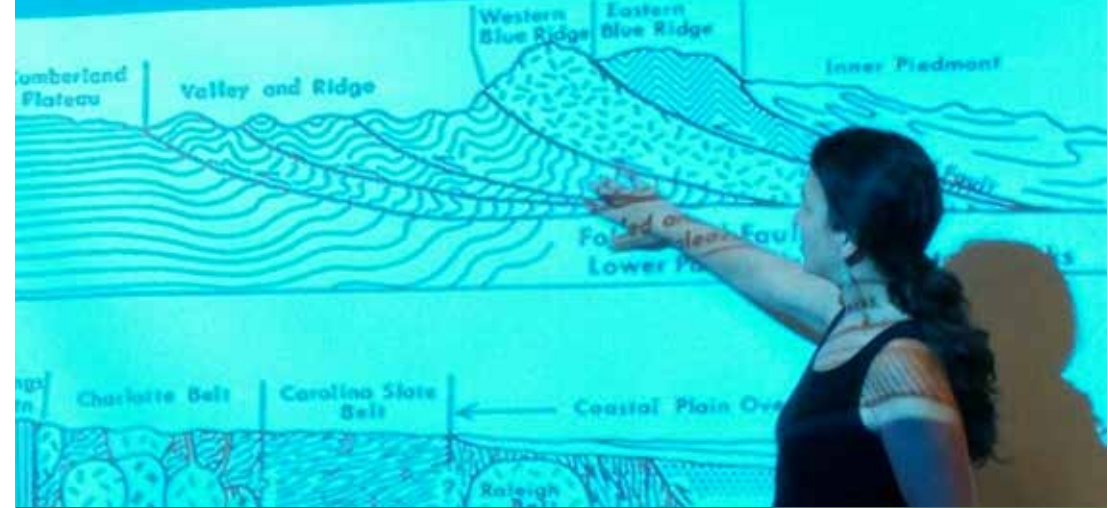
Art of Flowers, Third Thursday, 2010



Third Thursdays, 2014



Alexander Lecture by Sarah Cash, 2014



High Country Geology Lecture by Professor Crystal G. Wilson, 2015

BRAHM. Many artists, such as Bob Timberlake, potters Glenn and Lula Bolick and Janet Calhoun, rocking chair craftsman Max Woody, glass artists Rick and Valerie Beck and Alex Bernstein, and potters Cynthia Bringle and Jane Peiser welcomed the docents to their studios.

The 2019 celebration of The Cone Sisters drew unheard of crowds to BRAHM and saw docents leading a tour a minute, it seemed. The Docents prepared presentations for special small-group tours to highlight specific topics.

By the time they were sidelined by the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, BRAHM docents, then led by Kadie Dean, began studying great tomes about American Impressionism and gave one another lecture tours via Zoom. Under Dianna Cameron's tutelage, Docents advanced to writing text panels for current exhibits. As one of the Docents said, "It is a thrill to see behind the exhibits, to study and learn about things you will be teaching. The more you involve yourself, the more you get out of it." The volunteer Docent Team continues to add new members.



## Learning by Doing

In 2011, Cork & Canvas, the Paint-Like-an-Expert series came to life—or still life. Students in Thaiji and Yoga Classes relaxed to the view of St. Mary of the Hills through the large upstairs window.

In 2012, Adult Workshops gathered hands-on adult learners. Lonnie Webster taught Photography. Tom Badger instructed students in Oil Painting. Wes Waugh introduced Watercolors. Susan Bower led students outside to En Plein Air instruction.

The first BRAHM Book Club discussed *The Killing of Lincoln* before it disbanded two books later. In 2021 it enjoyed a resurrection.

## Lectures Honor BRAHM Founders Welborn and Patty Alexander

2012 saw the beginning of the annual Alexander Lecture Series. Every seat filled as members vied to hear national art experts, usually from renowned East Coast museums. Dr. Sylvia Yount from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts inaugurated the series with *Landscapes of Southern Identity*.

In 2013 Suzanne Smeaton, framer of fine art and frame historian, explained why and how a fine work of art must show effectively in the frame it deserves.

In 2014 Sarah Cash, Consulting Curator, Department of American and British Paintings at the National Gallery of Art, presented *Encouraging American Genius: American Art at the Corcoran Gallery of Art*.

In 2015 Jack Huber, a friend of the Alexanders who initiated their collecting, detailed the process of collecting art.

In 2016 Jonathan Stuhlman from The Mint Museum extolled John Leslie Beck and the Birth of Impressionism. No lecture was held in 2017.

In 2018 Erin Corrales Diaz from the Worcester Art Museum, formerly with The Johnson Collection, presented *Lady Rebels: Southern Women Artists and Art Education During America's Gilded Age*.

2019 saw the final lecture in the series. Katy Rothkopf, Senior Curator and Department Head of European Painting and Sculpture at the Baltimore Museum of Art, offered *Collecting Matisse and Modern Masters: The Cone Sisters of Baltimore*.



Cork and Canvas, 2013



Cork and Canvas, 2013





Docent Tours with Sandra Perry, 2014



Docents taking notes, 2015



Katy Rothkopf, 2019

### Membership Coffees - Lectures as Lures

In 2013, Membership Chair Rebecca Laymon Ficklin conceived a morning lecture series that drew individuals who did not yet feel allegiance to BRAHM and were likely not yet members. Rebecca explained, "You have to be a physical presence. Nobody will give to an idea." The Coffees introduced a number of people to membership.

### Lectures at Lunch

2013 introduced a book luncheon in the upstairs conference room featuring UNCG professor Dr. Hepsie Roskelly, who interpreted Barbara Kingsolver's recent *Flight Behavior*. Possibly because BRAHM does not house food prep spaces, the luncheons did not long continue.

### BRAHM Evening Lectures

2013 BRAHM Evening Lectures included Peter White from the NC Botanical Gardens. Elliott Ingle became Winston Churchill in a lively talk.

The Picture Man featured the itinerant photographer Paul Buchanan, who left 4000 glass slides featuring mountain families and farms. The photographs dated from 1920 to 1951. His work would become the subject of a 2015 BRAHM exhibition. These talks are now known as TAC Talks (Thursday Art & Culture).

In 2014 BRAHM introduced the Appalachian Documentary Film Series. Peter White, Director of the NC Botanical Garden, explained fall colors. Elizabeth Hudson, Editor in Chief of *Our State Magazine*, addressed the joys and frustrations of chronicling a busy, diverse North Carolina. The Appalachian State University Department of Human Development and Psychological Counseling explained Expressive Arts Therapy in conjunction with the Willi Armstrong exhibit. Joseph Bathanti, North Carolina Poet Laureate, brought the art of poetry.





Bill Brown Lecture, 2012

Coffee with the Curator began in 2014 with sculptor Bill Brown, whose work appears in BRAHM's Schaefer Gallery. Other monthly Curator-led programs featured special-focus lectures about details of current exhibits and became increasingly heavily attended.

2015 Lectures at Lunch brought Early Theaters in Blowing Rock with Dr. Gary Boye. Paul Brown described Musical Crossroads in the Piedmont and the Mountain South. Truth Beneath these Hills-Uncovering the History & Heritage of Mining in Western North Carolina included work by ASU graduate students, nearby companies and The Park Service.

### More Children's Camps

In 2015, children enjoyed Snow Day and Summer Camps, where they made felting art books, can dulcimers, weavings and mineral explorations. 2015 saw a new student camp, Sunshine Grief Day Camp where participants learned creative means for handling grief.

2016 offered Children more exciting camps. Art Around the World Camp expanded their vision. Early Release Day Art Workshops entertained students in September and October. Children from Blowing Rock Parks and Recreation camps visited BRAHM many times.



Wes Waugh, Adult Workshop, 2012

Adults learned too. 2016 brought The State of the Arts in NC by The State of Things host Frank Stasio. An Appalachian Ballad Singing Workshop followed later this year, as did a talk by photographer Ralph Burns. A ten-film series, Movies at BRAHM, explored visual arts showing Appalachian culture.

During 2017, BRAHM hosted 3,323 children for classes, field trips and summer programs. Adult hands-on opportunities drew clientele for figure drawing, oil painting, watercolor, face jug sculpting, tablet weaving and small landscape painting. 1016 children participated in Art and Craft programs. A nine-film series, Movies at BRAHM, explored visual arts and Appalachian culture. Public talks included The History of the Railroad in Western North Carolina, Jewish Life in Western NC: Who Knew!, The Lasting Impact of 1920's-Era Appalachian Recording Sessions, The Civil War in Western North Carolina, and Romare Bearden, My Friend by Jerald Melberg, completed the offerings.

### 2018 Lectures

BRAHM Lectures in 2018 continued to emphasize history, reinforcing the History in the museum's name. Saro Lynch Thomason explained Work Songs and Labor Movement Songs of the South. Bob Plott celebrated the NC State dog, the Plotthound. Dr. Dan Caton celebrated the mystery of the famous Brown Mountain Lights. Emma Parish reviewed the history of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Andrew Finn Magill celebrated The Irish Fiddle in Western North Carolina.



Oil Painting, Adult Workshop 2013



## Expanded Educational Offerings

Willard Watson III joined BRAHM as Programs and Outreach Director in late 2017 and immediately expanded educational offerings. BRAHM reached out to students beyond Blowing Rock, teaching the eighth grade at Bethel School how to make a documentary film. Willard created the celebrated exhibit *The Way Watauga Works*, involving photographs and oral histories of varied residents of Watauga County. It was the first bilingual exhibit at BRAHM.

In 2019, more people were visiting and learning. 2,966 children were served with 154 hands-on workshops for children and with 21 elementary classrooms brought to the Museum. The Education Center also held 14 hands-on workshops for adults.

In 2019, 65 different cultural, educational, historically-based programs attracted 1,307 visitors and members. Lectures included Phoebe Pollitt's African American Nurses of Western North Carolina. Wes Waugh delighted with his personal history, Development of an Artist. Dr. Gary Boye told of Doc Watson Before the Folk Festival. Nikki Robinson spoke about Saving the Endangered Bats of Grandfather Mountain. Curator Dianna Cameron and Guest Curator Carrie Streeter thrilled the audience with their talk Travelling the World with The Cones.

## 2020 - Covid Inaugurates A Show All Its Own

Willard Watson III explained:

2020 began with record-setting attendance to museum programs in January and February. What looked to be a year of growth from BRAHM became a year of development. We were forced to transition our robust in person program offerings to videos; something we had discussed for years was now a necessity.



Patron enjoys Cork and Canvas during COVID, 2020



Volunteer, John Greene, builds free art kits for K-4 students, 2020



Child enjoys free art kit from BRAHM for K-4 students, 2020



Installation View, *Branching Out: Works in Wood from North Carolina, 2020*

One of the most successful innovations we made was the development of BRAHM at Home, a blog on our website. BRAHM at Home follows a weekly schedule with daily posts related to our exhibits, community events, museum behind the scenes, art lessons, oral history features, and more. BRAHM at Home has streamlined our social media content and will remain a feature of BRAHM's virtual presence moving forward.

Our team was able to make these big changes thanks to a CARES Act grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council. This grant gave us the funds to purchase a video camera, computer, and video editing software to produce educational programs for our patrons.

From March 16, 2020 - March 1, 2021, BRAHM produced 87 videos for our YouTube page, which have been viewed over 16,000 times and led to 218 subscribers. These videos are art lessons, gallery tours, and artist interviews. One of the benefits of the shift to virtual was the ability to interview all 14 exhibiting artists that were featured in our exhibit, *Branching Out: Works in Wood from North Carolina*, this is something we always wanted to do in a group show but were not able to pull off due to travel and time constraints. YouTube allows us to track the locations of our views and we have seen our audience expand to as far away as California and even India.

Nothing beats the experience of attending a lecture in person or enjoying a tour of an exhibit with the artist, but thanks to 2020 BRAHM was able to bring the quality content of the museum to the safety and comfort of your home. It is our goal to present high quality educational programming to our patrons, we will continue to offer virtual programs moving forward even as we are able to resume in person programs.

**"I am so impressed with the scope of the programs and exhibitions that are taking place there. And I think, 'Just keep going!'"**

**-Herb Cohen, Founder Emeritus**



## CHAPTER *ten*

### The Idea of a Museum - Moving Forward

From the simple idea of creating a community museum that could celebrate the life and work of a single famous local artist, the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum idea expanded to excite the imaginations of all who have allowed themselves to be caught up in it. The original passionate founders and museum builders quickly discovered that a far greater dream could be accomplished if they were willing to think BIGGER and work just a bit HARDER. Once the museum was a reality, what it COULD BE built on every new effort and continued to grow as new minds seized the ideas and invested new energy in those concepts and opportunities.

Executive Director Lee Carol Giduz says, “BRAHM has everything it needs to continue to excel and just keep getting better. The museum becomes more central to the community with each passing year, and a strong, talented staff and dedicated, passionate Board give it the resources needed to thrive in this next decade and beyond. It is a lithe institution that has been able to weather challenges, and the institutional vision for the future prepares for continued evolution and successes.”

The next chapters of this story are YOURS to make happen! This is YOUR Museum! Jump in!



Front View, Blowing Rock Art & History Museum





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Katie Wireman  
Donna W Wise  
Rita Wiseman  
Paula & Ronald Withrow  
Bindy & Jack Woerner  
Jane Wolfe  
Betty & Marshall Womack  
Sandy & Dick Womble  
Debbi & Dick Wood  
James L Wood  
Carol Woodall  
Susan Woodburn  
Elizabeth Woodman  
Sylvia Woodrow  
Ann & Alfred Woodworth  
Dana & Joe Woody  
James Woolery  
Barbara & Clark Woolley  
Frank Wooten  
Bob & Bobbie Worley  
Vicki & Billy Worsham  
Judith Worsley  
Susan Griffin Worth  
Jill Wright  
Gayle & Frank Wright  
Samantha & Shamba Wright  
Elyn Wright  
Mary Louise Wright  
Barbara Wright  
Elaine & Tom Wright  
Frank & Becky Wyatt  
Jerry H Wyatt  
Ala Sue Wyke

Melissa Yount  
Dunja & Nick Younts  
Steven Yow

Joan Zimmerman  
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