



ON
&
OFF
THE
WALL

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020

A MEMBER BENEFIT OF THE
DENVER
art
MUSEUM



On the Cover

Paintings such as Rivera's *Calla Lily Vendor* embody the revolutionary and modernist ideals that flourished in Mexico between 1920 and the 1950s. Two women kneel in front of a basket of robust calla lilies that fills much of the canvas. Their traditional *quexquémil*, a garment similar to a poncho, and braided hair reflect the Indigenous cultures of Mexico. The exuberant blossoms suggest the magical bounty of the earth and the transitory nature of existence, and symbolize the new life of the Mexican people.

TICKET
BLOCK

#2

All visits between
December 1, 2020
and **January 24, 2021**

All membership levels can book their tickets for the above dates starting November 20. These tickets go on sale to the public on November 23.

Diego Rivera, *Calla Lily Vendor*, 1943. Oil on Masonite; 59.1 x 47.2 in. (150 x 120 cm). The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). © 2020 Banco de Mexico Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

HOURS

Every day 10 am–5 pm*

*Please check our website for extended hours for *Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism*.

TICKETS

General admission is free for museum members. Adult member tickets for *Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism* start at \$20.

Timed-entry tickets must be purchased online and in advance.

PARKING

The garage at 12th Avenue and Broadway is the most convenient place to park.

COVID-19 INFORMATION

Visit denverartmuseum.org for COVID-19 policies and visit tips.

CONTACT US

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membership@denverartmuseum.org
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Director's
Column



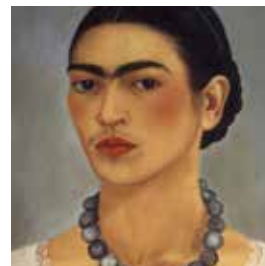
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Meet the 2020
Creative-in-Residence

Gratitude Amidst Uncertainty

Every year has its ups and downs, but it is safe to say that 2020 is in a class by itself. We started the year enjoying the final weeks of *Claude Monet: The Truth of Nature* and its record-breaking attendance. And, just as we were moving on from that monumental show, we entered uncharted territory as we closed the museum in response to COVID-19.

As I look back on the year and how we weathered the unexpected turn of events, I find there is so much to be grateful for. Even with the constant uncertainty and need to rethink how we operate, the entire museum staff stepped up and delivered their work reliably and professionally. There was incredible collegiality between our own staff members and with our cultural peers in the Colorado community as well as between all American museums. It was only with the flexibility and cooperation of our museum partners that worked with us to accommodate the shifting schedules of each exhibition venue that we were able to still open our ambitious summer exhibitions, *Natural Forces: Winslow Homer and Frederic Remington* and *Norman Rockwell: Imagining Freedom* to the public. I am thankful for the imaginative and respectful way the teams thought through and employed the logistic and hygienic measures that enabled us to reopen our doors safely and responsibly after three months of closure. And through it all, our onsite staff offered superior customer service and a can-do attitude that created a welcoming environment for our visitors to fall in love with art and our museum.

Our members and visitors make us the museum we are. I am grateful for those who came back to the museum as soon as they were able, as well as those who continued to support us from home—attending our virtual lectures and enjoying our digital programs—sharing the belief in the power of art to provide respite and connection.

It was also thanks to our exhibition partners that we are able to still have *Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism from the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection* on view right now despite the challenges of the pandemic. It is a pleasure to be able to bring this exhibition, as well as *Senga Nengudi: Topologies* (opening December 13), to our visitors, and further our commitment to being a platform for Black, Indigenous, and Latino artists as we strive to more strongly amplify the stories and voices of those historically underrepresented in art museums.

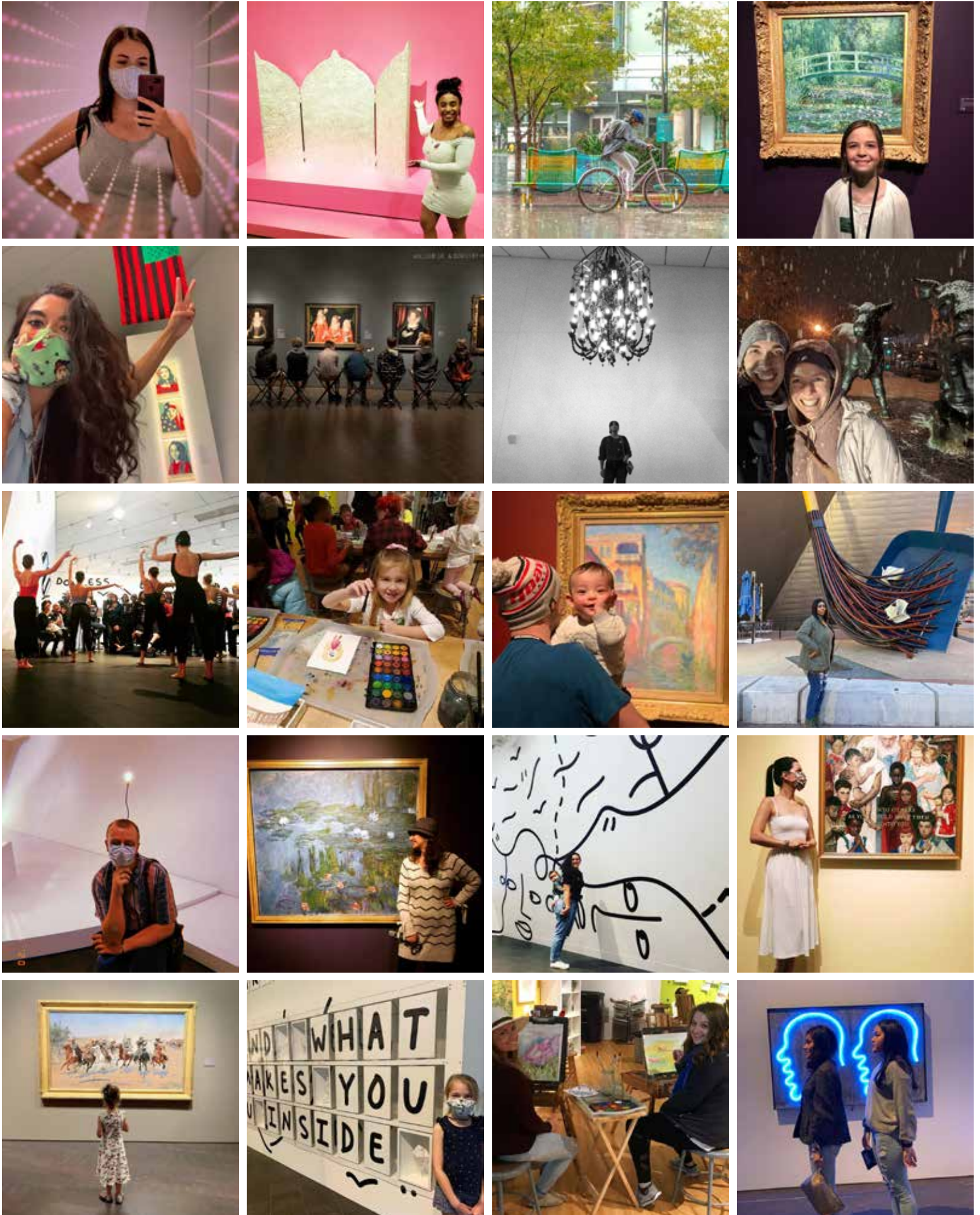
Thank you to the staff, to our sponsors, board of trustees, and members. I am incredibly proud to be part of the Denver Art Museum team that has navigated this year's challenges with flexibility and patience, and that has so much to look forward to in the new year.

Onward!



Christoph Heinrich
Frederick and Jan Mayer Director

Here are a few of our favorite visitor photos from the last year. Please note that some of these photos were taken before COVID-19. We'd love to see your pics! Share on social media using the hashtag #DenverArtMuseum.



Images (left to right, top to bottom) courtesy of Instagram users: @xsabribri; @a_lyslove; @photosbyrishi; @karamroberts; @citrine.ink; @yamayogasasha; @fkrueg; @joe_from_denver; @analismorel; @2tiny_tornadoes; @jadenz426; @msnene_704; @dayth0t; @margin_notes_; @bettybuena; @gracefulimprovement; @paulie_and_co; @typebdesigner; @karleeiacinart; @noemimelendezalers.

CLOSES JANUARY 24, 2021

Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism

FROM THE JACQUES AND NATASHA GELMAN COLLECTION



Diego Rivera, *The Healer*, 1943. Gouache on paper; 18.5 x 24 in. (47 x 61 cm). The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). © 2020 Banco de Mexico Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter.

Here in Diego Rivera's *The Healer*, the *curandero*, or a person who is trained in herbal and traditional healing methods, cares for a sick child in a market setting.

BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE EXHIBITION

Each exhibition at the museum brings new possibilities and challenges. Even when a show is organized by another institution, the DAM exhibition team seeks to make sure the experience resonates for local residents. That could mean adding special touches, such as works from our collection, as well as diving deeper into the story the exhibition tells. As we considered *Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism*, with its extraordinary artworks, we knew it was a great fit for Denver, but we also wanted to reimagine it for Colorado audiences. We sought to create a narrative that unites over 150 artworks by Mexican modernists and shows the impact that this vibrant group had in Mexico and beyond. To do that, we chose the organizing concept of exploring how artists connected to one another and the times through circles of influence.

This exhibition highlights the artistic accomplishments of a burgeoning time in Mexico following the Revolution, a civil war waged between 1910 and 1920. Inspired by the ideals of a young republic, its citizens and leaders linked the past of ancient and colonial Mexico to its future potential with optimism. During this period of cultural boom, artists, intellectuals, and patrons moved in concert with each other and shared ideas and styles that echoed throughout the modern world.

Equipped with the beginnings of an exhibition narrative and a checklist of artworks to include, we visited Mexico City to explore art, interview designers, meet colleagues at key museums, and take in the experience of being in one of the most vibrant cities in the world.

LAYERS OF HISTORIES & CULTURES

During the research phase, we came to appreciate how ancient art connected stylistically and conceptually with Mexican Modernism and how it inspires contemporary practices today. We quickly understood that we needed to immerse ourselves in the remains of ancient cultures. On a clear-skied October morning, we climbed 248 steps to ascend

the impressive Pyramid of the Sun, the largest building in Teotihuacán, built around 100 CE. Experiencing the stepped geometry of the volcanic rock pyramid eventually influenced the gallery design.

Visiting greater Mexico City, we were struck by the layers of histories and cultures. The Zócalo or central square lies at the heart of the capital city. This plaza is flanked by the ruins of the Aztec Templo Mayor or grand temple of the ancient city Tenochtitlán, the National Palace built during the colonial era, and the Roman Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral—compounds that represent opposing forces with legacies that shape Mexican culture. Each power left residues or traces that create the blended and sometimes conflicting histories of modern Mexico.

As we met with designers and curators, we heard a singular recommendation—be sure to go to the Anhuacalli Museum. Constructed from native volcanic rock, it expands the building tradition of the ancient Aztecs. Designed by Diego Rivera with his friend and architect Juan O’Gorman, the structure contains Rivera’s collection of ancient Mexican art and unites past, present, and future.

INFLUENCES ON THE EXHIBITION

One of our most powerful experiences in Mexico was visiting many of the public murals created by the Mexican modernists, including Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. Witnessing Rivera’s *History of Mexico* unfold across the walls of the National Palace, Orozco’s *The Trench* at the National Preparatory School, or Siqueiros’ *From Porfirianism to the Revolution* at the Chapultepec Castle, left us astounded by the immense scale, nuanced storytelling, and emotional depth. In homage to the importance of public murals in Mexico, there will be a moment in the exhibition where visitors are able to take in some of the grandeur and scale through a reproduction of a Rivera mural. Nearby, the preparatory drawings for a mural by Orozco help show the process of designing these monumental paintings.



Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Bed*, 1937. Oil on metal; 19.6 x 15.6 x 1.6 in. (40 x 30 cm). The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). © 2020 Banco de Mexico Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Gerardo Suter; Gunther Gerzso, *Portrait of Mr. Jacques Gelman*, 1957. Oil on canvas; 28.3 x 23.6 in. (72 x 60 cm). The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). © 2020 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SOMAAP, Mexico City. Photo by Gerardo Suter.

The intermingling of past with modernist art influenced the way we organized the exhibition. For example, we paired ancient ceramic sculptures from Nayarit with modern paintings. The geometric renderings and abstract forms from 2,000 years ago inform modernist style, the ancient and new fitting comfortably together. The experience of visiting Anahuacalli inspired us to ask designers Esrawe + Cadena to consider ancient mosaic patterns, think about how pre-Hispanic builders understood space, and then incorporate this inspiration into the exhibition design. Conversations with people who have ties to Mexico as their native

land and ties to Colorado taught us that these ancient and modern cultures animate and inspire daily life now.

We have been on an incredible journey, led by the histories and peoples of Mexico. These experiences taught us in so many ways. We repeatedly reflect on what we felt, heard, and learned while in Mexico during the development of the exhibition.

- Rebecca Hart, Vicki and Kent Logan Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
- Ann Lambson, Interpretive Specialist

Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism from the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection is organized by the Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). The Denver Art Museum exhibition is generously supported by John and Sandra Fox, the Birnbaum Social Discourse Project, and Craig Ponzio. Additional funding is provided by the Aegon Transamerica Foundation, Lisè Gander and Andy Main, Lauren and Geoff Smart, Xcel Energy, the Kristin and Charles Lohmiller Exhibitions Fund, the Fine Arts Foundation, the donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign, and the residents who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by *5280 Magazine* and CBS4.

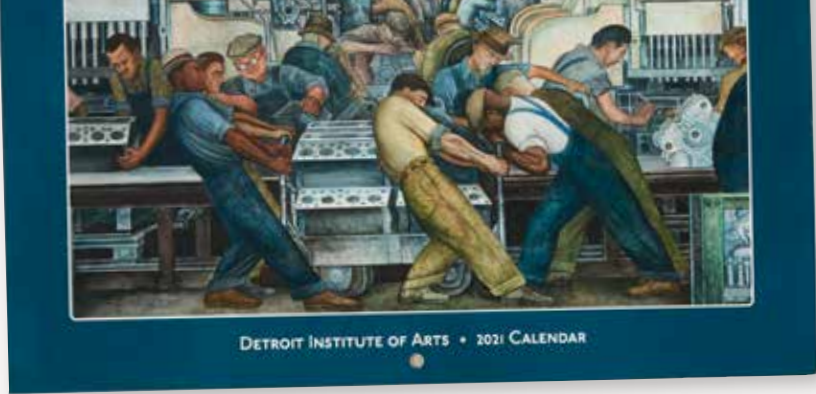
DESIGNING WITH ESRAWE + CADENA

Experiencing the powerful art of the Mexican modernists in Mexico City also helped us share a language with the exhibition designers Esrawe + Cadena. This is our third collaboration with the Mexico City-based design firm. The museum also partnered with them on the musical rocking chairs on our plaza called *La Musidora* and on the Martin Building's Learning and Engagement Center (which will open in 2021).

Esrawe + Cadena referenced Mexico's rich and diverse histories in their design. The walls hearken to the pyramid steps at Teotihuacán, while the color palette takes inspiration from the earthy hues of Mexico's landscape and the vibrant blue of Kahlo's Coyoacán home, La Casa Azul (now known as Museo Frida Kahlo). The compression of gallery spaces that open up and retract again are much like experiencing spaces such as the Anahuacalli Museum, Rivera's temple to art.



Photos courtesy of Carleen Brice.



Mex Mod for Members

MEMBER HOLIDAY SHOPPING

In lieu of our Member Holiday Shopping Event this year, keep an eye out in the mail this November for a mystery discount code, which can be redeemed in person at the museum anytime during the month of December. Scratch off your code at the register to receive anywhere from 20% up to 40% off. Plus, one lucky shopper may get his or her entire purchase for free!

Not ready to visit in person? During the month of December, all members receive 20% off at our online shop and free shipping on orders over \$75.

Find delightfully creative gifts for everyone on your list this year, whether you're shopping in person or online. Browse one-of-a-kind jewelry, home goods, and art kits. And, don't forget that something special for your favorite Frida fan.

MEXICAN MODERNISM MEMBER-ONLY HOURS

Enjoy the exhibition when it's open exclusively for members. Tickets limited by membership level. Tickets for dates after November 30 go on sale November 20.

Saturday, November 21, 9–9:45 am (SOLD OUT)

Saturday, December 12, 9–9:45 am

Tuesday, December 29, 9–9:45 am

Tuesday, January 12, 9–9:45 am

Friday, January 8, 5–8 pm

*In addition to the exhibition, members receive access to the museum space and a special gift. In this exhibit, we explore the life of Frida Kahlo and her social and political context.



Until we can safely meet in groups, the museum is hosting classes, lectures, and other events online, including our fall course: Mexican Modernism in Context. Please check our website for instructions on how to participate and to see a complete calendar of events.

Drop-In Drawing Online

NOVEMBER 10 & DECEMBER 8 | 1-3 PM

Join artist Anna Kaye on the second Tuesday of the month for our fun and informal creative art sessions using supplies you already have at home. All ranges of drawing experience welcome. Free for members.

Mindful Looking Online

NOVEMBER 17 & DECEMBER 15 | 1-1:45 PM

Slow down and spend time with a single work of art from the Denver Art Museum. Join us online the third Tuesday of each month to discover overlooked details, pose questions, and explore ideas as we linger, look, and connect from home...with art and with each other. Free for members.

Drop-In Writing Online

NOVEMBER 24 & DECEMBER 22 | 1-3 PM

On the fourth Tuesday of the month, explore your creativity through the written word in our informal writing sessions led by Theresa Rozul Knowles, an instructor with Lighthouse Writers Workshop. Open to all levels, from published authors to the occasional journaler. Free for members.

Winter Break

DECEMBER 19-JANUARY 3

Find several fun activities at the museum and many videos, artmaking projects, games, and more on our website.

Logan Lecture Online:

Esrawe + Cadena

NOVEMBER 17 | 6 PM

Join Mexico City designers Héctor Esrawe and Ignacio Cadena to learn more about their artistic practice. Free for Museum Friends, \$5 for members, \$15 for nonmembers.

The Logan Lecture series is sponsored by Vicki and Kent Logan.

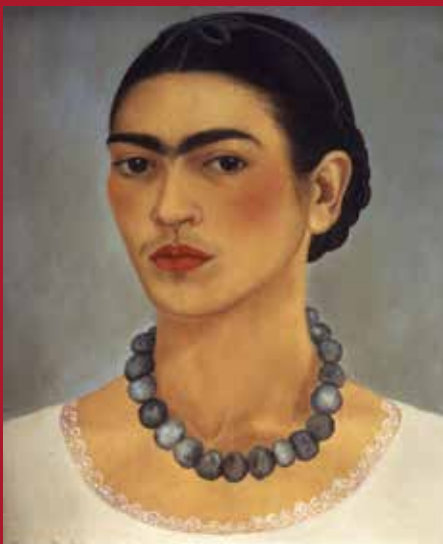
Great Women and the Arts of the West Symposium Online

JANUARY 6, 2021 | 10 AM-3:15 PM

The Petrie Institute of Western American Art's 15th annual symposium is going virtual in 2021, exploring the topic of women and the arts in the American West. We hope to highlight the ways in which critical interventions over the last 50 years have changed the field, while recognizing the work that still needs to be done to acknowledge the important, foundational, and groundbreaking work done by women artists, philanthropists, and workers in the field of the arts. Free for students and discounted for Museum Friends and members.

Kids and Family programs are supported by the William Randolph Hearst Endowment for Education Programs, Nancy Benson Education Endowment Fund, CenturyLink Endowment, and Jim Kelley and Amie Knox Education Endowment Fund. Funding is also provided by Tuchman Family Foundation, The Virginia W. Hill Foundation, Colorado Creative Industries, Margulf Foundation, Riverfront Park Community Foundation, Sidney E. Frank Foundation - Colorado Fund, Aegon Transamerica Foundation, Lorraine and Harley Higbie, an anonymous donor, and the residents who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD).

Adult and Access programs are supported by the William Randolph Hearst Endowment for Education Programs, Nancy Benson Education Endowment Fund, CenturyLink Endowment, and Jim Kelley and Amie Knox Education Endowment Fund. Funding is also provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, NextFifty Initiative, Colorado Garden Foundation, Colorado Creative Industries, Denver Post Community Foundation, and the residents who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD).



Mexican Modernism in Context

Our online course Mexican Modernism in Context begins in November. Check website for ticket availability. Tickets are free for Museum Friends and \$18 per session/\$65 for the full course for members. Go to the Adult Programs page on our website to learn more.

November 10, 2020 | 6-7 pm

December 1, 2020 | 6-7 pm

December 15, 2020 | 6-7 pm

January 5, 2021 | 6-7 pm

DECEMBER 13, 2020–APRIL 11, 2021

Senga Nengudi: Topologies

Senga Nengudi: Topologies will feature more than 70 abstract and conceptual artworks by the internationally recognized artist, a prominent figure of the 1970s Black American avant-garde and Black Arts Movement.

Senga Nengudi, an artist who has always been fascinated with the concepts of collaboration, movement, and improvisation, will have works on display in *Topologies* that include performance, sculpture, photography, and mixed media that utilize found objects such as pantyhose, rubber, foam, water, sand, and machines. Her practice invites viewers to respond to environment, community, and events by connecting them to their own experiences.

Visitors can expect to see a 40-year span of Nengudi's work that she produced on both U.S. coasts, in Colorado, and abroad.

Topologies was previously presented in Munich, Germany, and São Paulo, Brazil. The exhibition was organized by curator Stephanie Weber at Lenbachhaus in Munich, Germany, and is curated at the DAM by Rebecca Hart, Vicki and Kent Logan Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art.

"When I first came to the Denver Art Museum in 2015, I was urged to meet with Senga," Hart said. "Not only did I follow her practice, but Senga and I became friends. Her art begins with bodily experiences that are transformed into material presence emerging as 'thought experiments,' as Senga calls them. The sculptures, photographs, and performances expand both the limits and possibilities of the body, embracing a wider view of social and political norms. Her works are tangible, yet ephemeral; universal, yet personal and also collaborative."

The DAM recently acquired two Nengudi artworks (including the one on the opposite page) after Hart spent about a year reviewing and searching for works to purchase from Nengudi's oeuvre. They will be on view in *Senga Nengudi: Topologies*. In 2017, Nengudi's A.C.Q. series was on display in the Venice Biennale. A large portion of that installation is now part of the DAM's modern and contemporary art collection.

Nengudi's work was last on view in Denver in 2014 at the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver in *Senga Nengudi: Improvisational Gestures*.



Portrait of Senga Nengudi by Ron Pollard.

**"My art responds to being Black, being a woman, and being of a certain age. Artworks you'll see on display represent someone who has had children, cared for her mother, and experienced many of the things life has to offer."
– Senga Nengudi**



Senga Nengudi, *A.C.Q.I.*, 2016-2017. Dimensions variable. Installation dimensions at Sprüth Magers London: 78 3/4 x 178 x 126 inches © Senga Nengudi. Installation photography by Stephen White. Courtesy of Sprüth Magers, Thomas Erben Gallery, and Lévy Gorvy. Collection of the Denver Art Museum, purchased with funds from the Contemporary Collectors' Circle with additional support from Vicki and Kent Logan, Catherine Dews Edwards and Philip Edwards, Craig Ponzio, and Ellen and Morris Susman.

Senga Nengudi: Topologies is organized by the Lenbachhaus Munich, in cooperation with the DAM. Concept and idea by Stephanie Weber, Lenbachhaus. Funding is provided by the donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign, and the residents who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by *5280 Magazine* and CBS4.

What's on View

Please note timed-entry tickets are now required for admission to the museum, including for exhibitions that are free for members. Learn more and purchase your ticket in advance at denverartmuseum.org.

You also can engage with these exhibitions online through videos, articles, and activities on our website.

OPEN NOW

Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism
from the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection
THROUGH JANUARY 24, 2021

The Light Show
THROUGH MARCH 7, 2021

Shantell Martin: Words and Lines
THROUGH MAY 31, 2021

CLOSING SOON

Eyes On: Anthony McCall
THROUGH NOVEMBER 29

Treasures of British Art: The Berger Collection
THROUGH DECEMBER 6

OPENS SOON

Ana Mendieta: Suspended Fire
OPENS DECEMBER 6

Senga Nengudi: Topologies
OPENS DECEMBER 13

19th Century European and American Art
OPENS IN FEBRUARY 2021

Paris to Hollywood: The Fashion and Influence
of Véronique and Gregory Peck
OPENS MARCH 14, 2021



María Izquierdo, *Bride from Papantla*, 1944. Oil on canvas; 49.2 x 38.4 in. (125 x 100 cm). The Vergel Foundation and MondoMostre in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL). © Estate of María Izquierdo. Photo by Gerardo Suter; Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788), *A Coastal Landscape* (detail), about 1782–84. Oil paint on canvas; 25 1/8 x 30 1/8 in. Gift of the Berger Collection Educational Trust, 2019.13; Yves Saint Laurent, Paris, *Ensemble: Tunic and Pants* (detail), Haute Couture Fall-Winter 1969, Look 34. Synthetic lamé by Abraham (textile house), Paris, with beading by Pierre Mesrine (embroidery house), Paris. Prototype (original runway piece).



Our Eco Impact

We have two partnerships that are important to us and to the environment. With our September-October 2020 issue, we started using PrintReleaf. They are a Denver-based company that calculates how many trees are used to create the paper for this magazine. They then plant that many trees. It is more than just planting trees; this supports the local economies around their project sites. You can use the QR code on the back cover to see our efforts to reforest.

We also print *On & Off the Wall* on 10% post-consumer waste paper, so when they replant trees, it actually is a carbon net-positive, not just back to even.

Our printer, D&K, also has a large eco resume. They make a conscientious effort to consider our environment in everything they do, from their sustainable practices to their environmental certifications.

- Printing plates are recycled to keep metals out of landfills.
- All paper waste from print jobs and cardboard from shipping cartons are recycled.
- 90% of waste (500,000+ pounds per year) is diverted from landfills by composting and recycling.
- Forest Stewardship Council and Rainforest Alliance certified.
- Certified by the City of Boulder's PACE Program for Waste Diversion. They are the only printer with this certification.
- For more than two decades, D&K has used low-VOC (chemicals known as volatile organic compounds), vegetable-based inks and in 2019, they were the first offset printer in the world to use algae-based ink.

In every issue, we highlight recent acquisitions or gifts to the Denver Art Museum. These artworks are not currently on view.

DAM Uncrated

Ever since the Denver Art Museum started to collect and present Chinese arts in 1915, the growth of the museum's Chinese collections have benefited from hundreds of patrons' generous donations from all over the world. This tradition of generous giving continues today. Recently, despite all the difficulties and craziness caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the DAM was blessed to receive a significant number of Chinese artworks from the Dennis Law Foundation.

These gifts include many important objects of jade, bronze, porcelain, pottery, glass, and textile, ranging from the Neolithic period (5,000–6,000 years ago) to

the early 1900s. Some of them are exceptional in both rarity and quality. This short article focuses on introducing two important jade objects: a jade coiled dragon of the Hongshan culture and a Qing Dynasty carved jade mountainous sculpture.

These two jade objects exemplify the importance of the gifts from the Dennis Law Foundation, which have significantly enhanced the quality and diversity of the museum's Chinese holdings. We look forward to presenting these treasures to our visitors in future exhibitions and programs.

JADE DRAGON

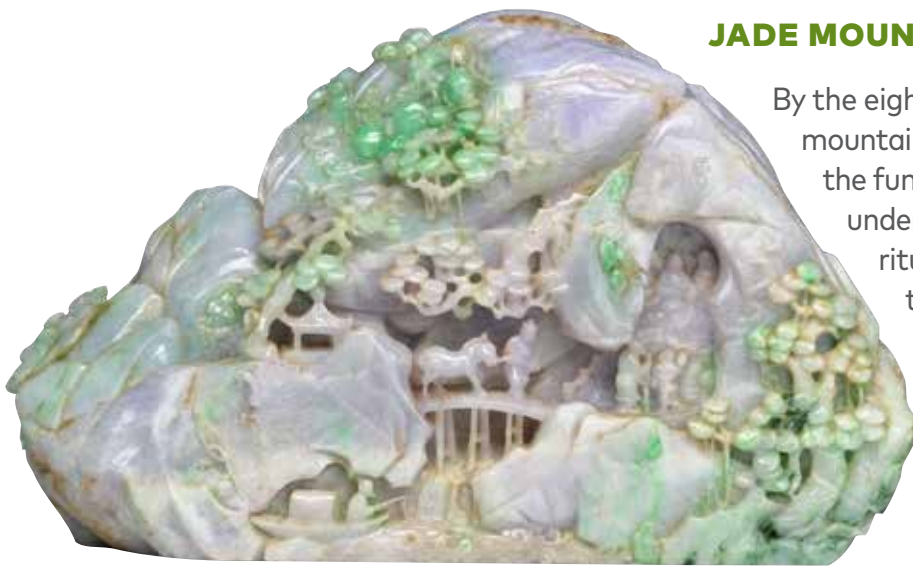
Jade making started in the region we now call China as early as 9,000 years ago, but the first major technical breakthrough happened around 5,000–6,000 years ago in a number of regional cultural traditions. The Hongshan culture along the Liao River in northeast China is one of them. The artisans of Hongshan culture developed sophisticated techniques to make a variety of jade ornaments and ritual objects. More importantly, archaeological records demonstrate that jade also played significant roles in rituals and politics in the society. The Hongshan culture is particularly notable for making a variety of animal-shaped jades such as turtles and birds. These artisans also created some of the earliest jade dragons in China.

This coiled jade dragon from the Dennis Law Foundation is among the finest known Hongshan culture jade objects. Often referred to as "pig dragon (yu zhu long)" in the Chinese literature because of its facial resemblance with the pig, this kind of jade object has been discovered at a number of elite tombs in today's Liaoning Province and Inner Mongolia. As a symbol of status and wealth in this Neolithic culture, it also represents the highlight of jade-carving techniques of that time period in China. It left an enduring legacy: the dragon eventually became the symbol of royalty and one of the most powerful deities in traditional Chinese beliefs.



Dragon-shaped Pendant, China, Hongshan Culture, 3000-4000 B.C.E. Jade. Denver Art Museum: Gift of the Dennis Law Foundation, 2020.600.

JADE MOUNTAIN



By the eighteenth century when this carved mountain-shaped jade sculpture was made, both the function and technique of carving jades had undergone tremendous changes in China. Their ritual and political function faded away and they became more decorative and associated with luxury. With the territorial expansion to Central Asia in the middle eighteenth century, the Qing Dynasty was able to have direct access to the high-quality jade resources in this region.

This availability made it possible to make unprecedented large jade objects, particularly pictorial mountainous sculptures like this one. Often referred to as "jade mountain (*yu shan zi*)" in Chinese literature, both sides of the large jade boulder were meticulously carved with different figures and scenes, resembling a Chinese landscape painting. This side of the sculpture illustrates elders visiting a Daoist cave on the upper level and a reclusive scholar fishing on a boat. The other side depicts a Buddhist temple with a Buddha statue in a cave and two scholars playing chess in front of a bamboo grove and a creek.

- Tianlong Jiao
Joseph de Heer Curator of Asian Art

PLAY THE NEW CREATIVE-IN-RESIDENCE'S

Digital Game

Our 2020 Creative-in-Residence is Michael Sperandio, a local creative who uses new media as a platform. Current technologies, such as augmented reality, virtual reality, 3-D scanning, and 3-D rendering tools, facilitate Michael's love for creating interactive and otherworldly experiences. His work is narrative focused and draws reference from mythology, numerology, and symbolism. He looks to bring a contemporary vision to ancient myths by using technology to help encode meaningful ideas into exciting and fun interactions.



During his residency at the DAM, Michael is creating a digital game Astraldroid with the hope that it will ignite your inner potential, and encourage you to explore the power of artworks to facilitate a deeper understanding of yourself. The game will incorporate both physical art sites and online locations to provide a mix of real-world and simulated experiences. With a deep interest in making digital arts accessible to a wide audience, his residency project aims to build community and create new connections.

Read on to learn more from Michael about his residency and the game. Play along by downloading Astraldroid for Android devices from the Google Play Store. For iPhones, download from the App Store.

What can visitors expect from your residency?

Visitors can expect a new way to explore and play. Through both visits to the museum and a mobile game app, guests become players in a reality-bending narrative. This notion of fun and whimsy is weaved into more nuanced social critiques. I'm really looking to invoke curiosity and critical thinking. I'm hoping to familiarize the players with skepticism and excite people's need for more information. I'm also looking to let people have fun in a safe way. I know, for myself, this current situation [quarantining and social distancing] has been a total drag. I really want to give people a taste of joy, and what better way to have fun than to go on an internet and real-world scavenger hunt.

What kind of mediums do you work in?

I work within the digital landscape. Most of my experience is in 3-D software packages. These range

from Maya, Zbrush, and Blender to real-time gaming platforms like Unreal Engine 4 and Unity 3-D. I love the flexibility of using 3-D software. Being able to simulate both figurative and abstract objects or environments allows my practice to explore a new type of surrealism.

What themes and concepts does your work explore?

With this residency I am really looking to explore notions of simulation, pointing out the flexibility of perception. I also really want to invite people to engage in critical thinking and look at situations and information through multiple lenses. Through gamification, I look to bring light to the veil that sits over the "real world." Mobile devices and digital experiences are a ripe platform for this type of discussion.



Gratitude Amidst Uncertainty

Every year has its ups and downs, but it is safe to say that 2020 is in a class by itself. We started the year enjoying the final weeks of *Claude Monet: The Truth of Nature* and its record-breaking attendance. And, just as we were moving on from that monumental show, we entered uncharted territory as we closed the museum in response to COVID-19.

As I look back on the year and how we weathered the unexpected turn of events, I find there is so much to be grateful for. Even with the constant uncertainty and need to rethink how we operate, the entire museum staff stepped up and delivered their work reliably and professionally. There was incredible collegiality between our own staff members and with our cultural peers in the Colorado community as well as between all American museums. It was only with the flexibility and cooperation of our museum partners that worked with us to accommodate the shifting schedules of each exhibition venue that we were able to still open our ambitious summer exhibitions, *Natural Forces: Winslow Homer and Frederic Remington* and *Norman Rockwell: Imagining Freedom* to the public. I am thankful for the imaginative and respectful way the teams thought through and employed the logistic and hygienic measures that enabled us to reopen our doors safely and responsibly after two months of closure. And through it all, our onsite staff offered superior customer service and a can-do attitude that created a welcoming environment for our visitors to fall in love with art and our museum.

Our members and visitors make us the museum we are. I am grateful for those who came back to the museum as soon as they were able, as well as those who continued to support us from home—attending our virtual lectures and enjoying our digital programs—sharing the belief in the power of art to provide respite and connection.

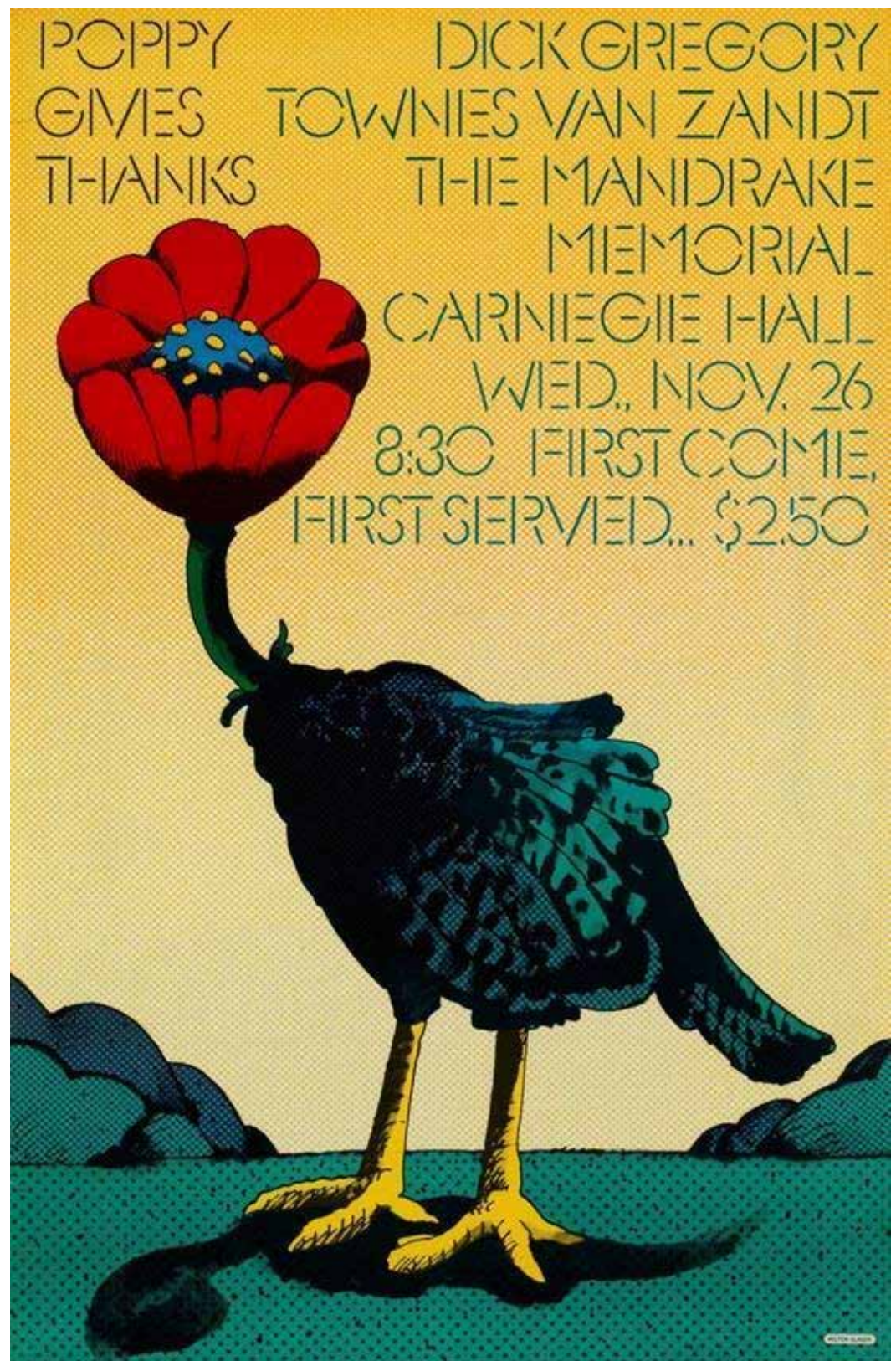
It was also thanks to our exhibition partners that we are able to still have *Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Mexican Modernism from the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection* on view right now despite the challenges of the pandemic. It is a pleasure to be able to bring this exhibition, as well as *Senga Nengudi: Topologies* (opening December 13), to our visitors, and further our commitment to being a platform for Black, Indigenous, and Latino artists as we strive to more strongly amplify the stories and voices of those historically underrepresented in art museums.

Thank you to the staff, to our sponsors, board of trustees, and members. I am incredibly proud to be part of the Denver Art Museum team that has navigated this year's challenges with flexibility and patience, and that has so much to look forward to in the new year.

Onward!



Christoph Heinrich
Frederick and Jan Mayer Director



We have a rather strange poster from the late 1960s by Milton Glaser - the designer and illustrator responsible for the "I ♥ NY" campaign. The poster is titled Poppy Gives Thanks. Poppy Records was the experimental music label of MGM Records at the time and this poster advertised an almost free concert ("\$2.50 - first come, first served") held on Thanksgiving Eve at New York's Carnegie Hall in 1969. The diverse

selection of Poppy recording artists included comedian and activist Dick Gregory and the psychedelic ensemble The Mandrake Memorial. The surreal imagery combines the poppy motif that Glaser created for the recording company and a turkey. It also features Glaser's signature stencil typeface Neo-Futura - one of the many that he had created during his lengthy career.



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Special offer just for members—buy a gift membership for a loved one this holiday season, and receive a special gift for you AND your recipient!

Valid onsite only, November 27–December 31.



Year-End Giving

We believe that creativity powers people, communities, and connections. It encourages new experiences, broadens thinking, recognizes the uniqueness in each of us, and illustrates the things we share. Your support makes this all possible. Consider making a 100% tax-deductible donation before December 31 in honor of your favorite exhibition, museum collection, or a very special art lover in your life.

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